



University Diversity Council (UDC) Minutes
September 25, 2020
Zoom

Attendees: Gifty Ako-Adounvo, Mary Grace Almandrez, Jacquie Britto, Marland Chang, Erin Earle, Maling Ebrahimpour, Corey Fernandez, Nisa Ghonem, Brian Heikes, Trish Morokoff, Holly Nichols, Eileen Orabone, Kristina Perrelli, Jen Riley, Martha Rojas, Mary Stanley, Jacqui Tisdale

Absent: Lulu Alyrati, Michelle Fontes, Annemarie Vaccaro

Guests: Matt Bodah, Megan Echevarria, Jay Walsh

I. Welcome

Mary Grace welcomed our guest speakers and everyone on the council. She indicated a lot has been going on in the world, particularly on issues of equity and social justice. She asked if anyone wanted to share their reflections or anything that might be on their minds. Some issues that were shared with the group were about the Executive Order that was signed by President Trump on September 22nd regarding all federal agencies or agencies that receive federal funding must immediately end diversity training that includes issues related to white privilege and critical race theory. She indicated that she put the executive order in the shared drive. Another issue brought up was the Brianna Taylor verdict and whether or not there would be a written statement from the University because of the impact it has on the community. Mary Grace shared she would bring this up at the next senior leadership team meeting. The discussion also focused on how students are struggling with these issues, the upcoming election and the semester in general, and it was suggested that we need to create a space for students to be able to gather for conversation and support. Mary Grace shared that the MSSC is working with students to host a Community Care session to provide space and resources for them to gather in community. Other places of support for students shared were the Counseling Center and the Academic Enhancement Center.

II. Approval of Minutes

The June 26, 2020 and July 15, 2020 minutes were approved.

III. Subcommittee Updates

Jen indicated that Mary Grace and she had a great meeting with the Faculty Senate talking about these subcommittees and how they dovetail with what they are charging their various committees to do. She said that the Faculty Senate curriculum subcommittee would be reaching out to the UDC curriculum development subcommittee in the hopes that they could partner with them because the curriculum really needs to be in the hands of the faculty.

- **Recruitment and retention of faculty of color (particularly Black faculty)**
Trish indicated that this group would be meeting next week and they will send the notes to the full group before our next meeting. They also indicated that they wanted to make sure that staff was included for this subcommittee topic.
- **Curriculum development in all colleges**
Trish gave a brief update on this subcommittee's work. She reported that their subcommittee wanted to acknowledge that there has been improvement in diversity coverage across courses by the addition of the C3 inclusion and diversity learning outcome in the general education program, but that they feel that taking just one course which may not fully target issues of white privilege, racism, etc. is not really sufficient for training our students in this current day. She said they came up with three proposals as ideas. The first one was that each college might consider having a course related to its own disciplinary content that would be required by all students in a large college like Arts and Sciences. It would have to be generated by faculty and it would have to probably be required by majors in order to get it to be a required class. The second idea relates to the infusion of diversity content in existing courses. She indicated they saw a major impediment to the infusion of diversity content in that faculty don't know that area very well and was probably not part of their training. They proposed consultants, like staff from ATL, who could consult with the faculty in STEM areas or Humanities on how to infuse diversity content into their departments. The third idea was to provide more incentives (e.g., curriculum development grants, small stipends) for faculty, either to initiate new courses or infuse diversity content into their existing courses. They could also regularly discuss faculty's contributions in inclusion and diversity as part of their evaluation.
- **Professional development for faculty and staff and Diversity and inclusion initiatives coordination**
Kristina Perrelli gave an update on these two subcommittees. Some of the highlights included having an interdisciplinary task force formed with these two subcommittees to find out what kind of professional development is happening on campus. She also talked about the need for having a diversity coordinator position in each college to help gather information about what professional development is happening and who is doing it. She discussed how there are often people on campus who are tasked with delivering and designing the professional development training who are passionate about it or have the expertise, so it

would be helpful if there could be resources available to them. Diversity coordinator positions could provide a more organized effort with all of this. Other highlights were shared and she indicated that she would share the link to the notes in the chat.

We were not able to get to these last three subcommittee reports due to time restraints. They will report at our next meeting.

- UDC professional development and outreach
- UDC branding and campus education (includes updating language in University Manual, Chapter 5)
- Graduate student diversity

IV. Faculty Development Discussion with Matt Bodah (Vice Provost for Academic Personnel and Budget), Megan Echevarria (Faculty Senate Chair), Jay Walsh (URI AAUP Executive Director)

Jen introduced Matt Bodah, Vice Provost for Academic Personnel and Budget, Megan Echevarria, Faculty Senate Chair, and Jay Walsh, URI AAUP, Executive Director, to the UDC. There was a discussion on whether professional development could be mandatory for faculty and staff.