



University Diversity Council (UDC) Minutes
October 30, 2020
Zoom

Attendees: Mary Grace Almandrez, Marland Chang, Erin Earle, Michelle Fontes, Nisa Ghonem, Brian Heikes, Trish Morokoff, Eileen Orabone, Kristina Perrelli, Jen Riley, Martha Elena Rojas, Jacqui Tisdale, Annemarie Vaccaro

Absent: Gifty Ako-Adounvo, Jacquie Britto, Maling Ebrahimpour, Corey Fernandez, Holly Nichols, Mary Stanley

I. **Welcome**

II. **Subcommittee reports**

UDC Branding and Campus Education – Marland Chang gave an update on the progress of this subcommittee. He shared that this group was working on taking the language for the Presidential commissions and councils out of the University Manual and replacing it with language for the UDC. We will be reaching out to Faculty Senate to work with them on making this happen. Mary Grace will also be reaching out to Publications to create a logo, letterhead and other print materials for the UDC to reflect more on what this council does that is different from the Community, Equity and Diversity office (CED). Other updates included ways to communicate to the University community about the climate survey (e.g., Tik Tok videos, swag). We also discussed meeting with different groups on campus, such as the Student Senate, the Graduate Student Association, Council of Deans, etc., and we need to identify what is being done in each of the colleges and other departments so that we have the same brand of what we are presenting to the URI community. There was also discussion about the diversity coordinator positions in each of the colleges and whether or not it should be filled with a faculty member, staff, or a full-time person devoted to diversity work.

Graduate Student Diversity - Martha Rojas gave an update for this subcommittee. The topics discussed were about the Graduate School standardized testing in admissions versus more holistic approaches to evaluating candidates and recruitment efforts for Graduate School applicants. Discussion followed.

Recruitment and Retention of faculty of color – Erin Earle gave an update for this subcommittee. Examples of topics that were discussed were the perceived recruitment challenges in hiring faculty or staff, such as the amount of time it takes from the interview process to the offering of the position, salaries are not

competitive with our peer institutions, and then specifically, startup packages for faculty are not competitive. Also, it is difficult to update job descriptions at URI, and we do not have a culture of reaching out to other peer institutions to recruit people. Also, with retention, there are challenges with promotion, job descriptions, and there are no exit interviews. These were just some examples and discussion followed.

Professional Development for Faculty and Staff and Diversity & Inclusion

Initiatives Coordination – Kristina Perrelli gave an update on these two subcommittees. She reported that they had met with two undergraduate students, Carlee Kerr and Maya Moran from the CED office, to talk about a workshop that they have been piloting in URI 101 and CSV 302 classes for first-year students on the topic of social justice. The subcommittee would like to find a way to support this program and make it more into a peer educator program. Another topic discussed was the fact that students are struggling with asynchronous classes and not having live opportunities to engage with faculty or teaching assistants. There was more discussion on this and Trish said that she would bring this to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to look at.

III. **College of Arts & Sciences Diversity Committee Proposal re: URI Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement and Indigenous Welcome Reception at Yearly Commencement (Enc.)** – Tabled until next meeting

IV. **Update from Board of Trustees Plenary Session**

Mary Grace wanted the UDC to be aware of the Board of Trustees plenary session that happened the week before. She said the board is completely supportive of this group, the campus climate survey and its importance, and they have committed their June retreat to focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

V. **Campus Climate Survey progress**

Mary Grace checked in with Genevieve and depending on how next month's meeting goes, we may need to have a meeting in December with the campus climate survey working group to wrap up the questions for the survey. She encouraged everyone to make sure they review the document before that next meeting.