



University Diversity Council
July 15, 2020
Zoom

Attendees: Gifty Ako-Adounvo, Mary Grace Almandrez, Lulu Alyrati, Jacquie Britto, Erin Earle, Corey Fernandez, Michelle Fontes, Nisa Ghonem, Brian Heikes, Trish Morokoff, Holly Nichols, Eileen Orabone, Jen Riley, Martha Elena Rojas, Mary Stanley, Jacqui Tisdale, Annemarie Vaccaro

I. Welcome and Announcements

The meeting started with Mary Grace welcoming everyone and Martha commended Mary Grace and Dr. Joanna Ravello for a great session and discussion that was held on July 14th. She thanked them for their leadership and the way they were all in community. Mary Grace also indicated that there will be a number of sessions coming up in the future. One of the questions that was brought up was how are we going to build a sense of community in addition to our virtual spaces, particularly to communities that might need that sense of community in the fall? Mary Grace and Joanna will be discussing this in the future and welcome any feedback from the UDC.

II. Review of UDC Charge

Mary Grace and Jen opened this discussion with a review of the UDC charge. While there is much work to be done to espouse the University's values and vision, Jen reminded the Council that the UDC is here to advise the President and make recommendations to him, and the UDC does not have to do all of the work. She continued to talk about how the UDC needs to make it a collaborative effort with all of the units across campus because if the work is not institutionalized within each of the units, it will not carry on beyond this Council. She and Mary Grace discussed the importance of getting the right recommendations in place and working with the President to get him to step up and also work on the resources needed across campus. She stated in looking at the brainstorming document, there were a number of good suggestions, but there were a few that were more appropriately addressed by other entities. For instance, the UDC does not need to be the one to change the curriculum. The faculty will have to pick that up. In going through the brainstorming document, the UDC can indicate who the co-chairs might invite to upcoming UDC meetings to find out more information about certain items that the Council may not know enough about to make informed recommendations. Concerns that were raised regarding active leadership in decision-making and information sharing. The UDC needs to be apprised of what is going on and how the Council will function.

Lulu Alyrati gave an update on her conversation with VP Kathy Collins regarding the Women's Center. She indicated that the residential component that was previously part of the Women's Centers will be repurposed to house TD honor students. This will help fill the residential occupancy (in the last few years the Women's Center did not have full occupancy in the building).

III. Review of Retreat Topics Brainstorming

Mary Grace shared the brainstorming topics document that members of the UDC added to and edited. It was noted that there are a lot of great topics on the list, but it would be helpful to know who is doing the work of each of these topics in order for the UDC to be able to strategize effectively. It was decided that the Council would go through the list one by one and put names by the topics to identify who the co-chairs can invite to present to the UDC.

- A. Anti-Racism Training** - Mary Grace updated the group on things that she knew that were happening on campus regarding anti-racism training. She talked about the DE&I 365 Symposium which is focused on Black Lives Matters that Dr. Joanna Ravello is doing. She also said that she has been talking to the Senior Leadership Team about doing some sustained training over the year in preparation for the campus climate survey. She recently convened a meeting with representatives from AAEOD, ATL, Faculty Senate, HR, Office of the Provost, and Title IX regarding mandatory and incentivized training. Greek Life has formed an Inclusion and Diversity Taskforce and will work with Diversity Dialogues facilitators for training. Trish Morokoff updated the group about what Faculty Senate has been doing. She stated that they are making charges for the various Faculty Senate committees and Lynne Derbyshire has agreed to chair the Community Service committee which deals with diversity issues. She will get back to the UDC as to whether they are doing any professional development having to do with anti-racist training. The conversation also focused on whether training should be mandatory for new faculty and staff and that it needs to be systematic. There also needs to be accountability.
- B. Bias Response** – Mary Grace shared that she is overseeing the Bias Response Team (will be renamed to Bias Resource Team). The BRT has implemented a new system and structure. They are also working on educating the community and hope to have this done by the Fall. She explained the process and where to find the information about the BRT, which is on both the CED and Dean of Students’ websites. It was shared that a lot of students and staff do not know about the BRT, so it would be helpful to get the word out about this group. Communication is critical to get the word out. Mary Grace had some suggestions, including a community notice in the Fall. Other suggestions were maybe an app or text code to students about the BRT. More discussion will be had on this topic.
- C. Curriculum** – As noted above, Trish Morokoff shared that the Faculty Senate Executive Committee is drafting charges for each of their committees. They are drafting one for the Curriculum Committee that will be doing a survey to see what faculty are offering in their curricula on social justice. She will share these charges with Mary Grace to share with the UDC. It was suggested that Mary Grace and Jen be invited to attend a Faculty Senate Executive Committee meeting during the summer to discuss how the UDC can be informed about what is going on. Trish will mention to the Faculty Senate chair about this conversation.
- D. Dept. of Public Safety** – It was suggested that the UDC invite Director Stephen

Baker to a UDC meeting to give updates about current and new initiatives in Public Safety and collaboration with local law enforcement (e.g., South Kingstown Police Department, Narragansett Police Department). Director Baker will be invited to a future meeting.

E. Divestment – There was discussion about how the University, when purchasing large orders of furniture, is expected to use the Prison Industries. It was stated that it is a policy issue and that the Council will need to find out more about this. Mary Grace will follow-up with Ryan Carrillo and Tracey Angell to discuss this issue.

F. Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention – Mary Grace gave an update on the Director, Diverse Faculty and Staff Recruitment and Retention search. She also talked about the diversity coordinators in some of the colleges. There was concern about these positions being siloed in different colleges.

We will continue going over the topics at the next meeting.

IV. Update on Campus Climate Survey – Mary Grace and Jen met with the consultants about the campus climate survey. They gave an update about the new schedule that the consultants were suggesting. There was discussion about the changes in the schedule and Mary Grace will follow up with the questions that the UDC members had.

V. Meeting Structure – Ideas were discussed about community engagement in UDC meetings.

VI. Retreat 2 Agenda Topics (currently have July 22 and 24 on hold). – It was decided to cancel the July 22nd meeting, but extend the July 24th meeting time.