



University Diversity Council Minutes  
September 17, 2021  
Zoom

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**Attendees: Gifty Ako-Adounvo, Mary Grace Almandrez, Erin Earle, Maling Ebrahimpour, Corey Fernandez, Michelle Fontes, Brian Heikes, Trish Morokoff, Eileen Orabone, Jen Riley, Martha Elena Rojas, Jacqui Springer, Annemarie Vaccaro**

**Absent: Jacquie Britto, Nisa Ghonem, Mary Stanley**

**Guests : Kathy Collins, VP for Student Affairs and Jean Nsabumureymi, Director, Multicultural Student Services Center**

- I. **Welcome to Richard Song**  
Mary Grace welcomed Dr. Richard Song, Interim Director, New Student Programs, to the UDC.
- II. **Approval of Minutes**  
The August 11, 2021 minutes were approved with no changes.
- III. **Debrief**
  - A. **UDC Retreat**  
Jen thanked council members who filled out the Google form from Eileen asking about being a facilitator, co-facilitator or note-taker for the upcoming forums in November for the campus climate survey. She was concerned that there are too many administrators and not enough faculty and staff to facilitate the forums. She and Mary Grace will be reaching out to the UDC, and they would like to get the times finalized to get on people's calendars.
  - B. **Council of Deans Retreat**  
Jen gave an update about the Council of Deans retreat that was held in August. She said that President Parlange spent the entire day with them and that it was very focused on the future of the University. They looked at four different things, including the trends and issues impacting higher education, now and in the future, and they discussed potential ideas and themes in areas of focus for URI's academic vision. They also discussed institutional barriers and next steps for the University. She also gave an update on the Diversity Action Report templates that the Provost has finalized. She said that every college in academic affairs will complete and submit this document at the end of the year. Each of the colleges will have to submit what they have done and what they have accomplished, as well as what their goals and challenges are for the upcoming year. These reports will help to build accountability in the system.

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**IV. Report Draft**

Mary Grace gave an update about the draft report. She let the group know that she included some of the suggestions from the members who were at the retreat, and that we were vetting out the proposals and recommendations that the members had proposed to the group. She is just waiting on one more group to have conversations, and then the report is just about done. She will resend the report to the group with an addendum, so that when it is sent to the President, he will know that we have vetted the proposals and have had conversations, and that we have made some progress.

**V. Updates from Vice President Collins**

Vice President Collins started her update by introducing Jean Nsabumuremyi, the new director of the Multicultural Student Services Center. He gave a brief introduction of himself to the Council. She also reported that they created a coordinator position at the MSSC instead of having a fiscal clerk. The fiscal clerk position was moved over to the Campus Store. There is a search going on now for the coordinator position chaired by Bobby Britto-Oliveira and they have it narrowed down to three finalists. She emphasized that this is a necessary and needed position to further enhance and create programming for our community. She also reported that the Women's Center has moved over to the Gate House apartment behind Hillside and near Hillel. The Center is still being led by Interim Director, Christiana Molinski, but a search for a permanent Director will be underway. In addition, the Gender and Sexuality Center has hired Manuela Vadis as the interim coordinator, and the G&S Center just celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building. She also shared in the next 6-8 months, they will be forming a Center for Veterans and Military Programs and it will be under the direction of Rachael Garcia. She shared that there are over 350 veterans enrolled in the Kingston campus alone and this center will help the needs of the veteran students. Student affairs formed a JEDI Steering Committee, chaired by Lori Ciccomascolo, Lisa Macaruso and Melissa Camba-Kelsay. The JEDI committee is currently working on an environmental scan (e.g., what is their division doing and what initiatives have they taken on) and they will also look at policies and procedures. She also reported that she is sharing her affirmative action data with her direct reports on a quarterly basis.

Jen also updated the council on the Trans Inclusion Committee. She said that this is a group that was formed with about 80 people to create a series of trans inclusion events for the campus, such as professional development for faculty, events for students, looking at policies and continuing efforts with gender inclusive bathrooms. They convened a meeting over the summer and have broken it down into subcommittees. More events will be happening this Fall.

Mary Grace gave other updates for upcoming guests that will be coming to future UDC meetings. Those include President Parlange, Dr. John Stringer and Interim Provost Laura Beauvais. Other suggestions included HR, Affirmative Action, deans. She also updated the Council about the searches that will be happening. Those include the four assistant dean positions for JEDI, the associate dean in the graduate school, and the two director positions in CED.

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**VI. November Action Plan Meetings**

Mary Grace stated that when we have the presentation on October 14<sup>th</sup>, we should start brainstorming for what constituents we may want to have focus groups for in November. We need to have meetings, facilitators in place so we can offer them in November.

**The next meeting is Friday, October 8 from 10 – 11:30 am at Memorial Union, Room 300.**