



## University Diversity Council (UDC) Minutes

February 5, 2021

Zoom

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

**Absent:** Lulu Alyrati, Marland Chang

**Guests:** Anne Veeger

### I. **Welcome and Updates**

Mary Grace welcomed everyone and shared some updates with the council. She let them know that the Five Cent Cigar did an article about the campus climate survey, and that she has had many faculty emailing her to inquire about the survey. Jen also indicated that they had a great Academic Summit, and she is excited about what the Provost talked about as to what we must do for the URI campus in terms of funding prioritizations. There was concern as to whether there would be any repercussions with the Provost announcing he is stepping down. Jen indicated that she is optimistic and that the Provost would like to accomplish as much as possible before his departure. She also announced that the University would be acquiring a membership to the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity (NCFDD). Mary Grace also shared that starting in the Fall 2021, we will be able to provide full scholarship to Native American students.

### II. **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes were tabled to be approved at the next UDC meeting, due to shortage of time.

### III. **[Anti-Black Racism at URI: An Academic Affairs Agenda for Change](#) with Dr. Anne Veeger, Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Initiatives**

Dr. Anne Veeger was invited to the UDC meeting to discuss the Provost's Anti-Black Racism at URI: An Academic Affairs Agenda for Change document. She indicated that this document was shared at the Academic Summit, and as indicated, it "represents a commitment to actionable strategies that will transform URI and move us in meaningful and measurable ways toward meeting the diversity, equity, and inclusion goals established in both the Academic Strategic Plan and the URI CED Strategic Plan." Anne stated that she would like to hear from the council about what are some of the things that this group is actively working on to move forward, what

are things that we could and should prioritize in the short term, and how do we keep the lines of communication open across the community so that we're very transparent about what our goals are, what we are committed to doing, and perhaps most importantly, the progress that we're making so that we're all holding ourselves accountable. Discussion followed on what can be done to expand our ongoing efforts to educate the URI community on issues of racism and injustice and making the student experience more positive. Some examples of issues discussed were that we need to infuse diversity learning into the entire curriculum of all colleges in addition to the general education program to ensure meaningful education of all students about race, racism and injustice. We also need to do a better job of explaining the financial aid process to families before students even get to URI, possibly during the freshman orientation. Other discussion was about the student experience and how faculty and staff need to be held accountable for their behavior towards students.

IV. [Subcommittee Reports](#)

There was not enough time to meet about the subcommittee reports, so Mary Grace and Jen decided that they should have another meeting to discuss these reports before our next regular meeting. Eileen will send out some meeting dates.

V. **Campus Climate Survey**

Mary Grace gave an update regarding the campus climate survey. She indicated that we are still waiting on IRB approval and will let everyone know when it is approved. She also said that we have confirmation on almost all of the incentives, which include a Fitbit, iPad, a parking space, dining hall swipes and other swag. There was also some discussion about creative ways to get students to take the survey. Erin Earle has formed a group called Operation Hustle to come up with ideas in which to get the students to take the survey so we can get over the 30% that we are looking for. She indicated that they have come up with a number of creative ideas and was looking for guidance on how to proceed. They decided that they would meet to figure out which ideas to pursue, and then they could work with John Stringer to do amendments to the IRB. More discussion followed.