



University Diversity Council Minutes
February 21, 2020
Memorial Union, Room 300

Attendees: Mary Grace Almandrez, Lulu Alryati, Jacquie Britto, Erin Earle, Maling Ebrahimpour, Corey Fernandez, Michelle Fontes, Eileen Orabone, Holly Nichols, Mary Stanley, Annemarie Vaccaro

Absent: Gifty Ako-Adounvo, Brian Heikes, Jen Riley, Martha Rojas

I. Welcome and Introductions

This was a preliminary meeting before President Dooley officially charges the UDC. The meeting began with everyone introducing themselves to the group. Holly Nichols handed out flyers for the LBTQ Women's Group, and Out and Proud at URI.

II. Review of ad hoc committee recommendations

Mary Grace reviewed how the University Diversity Council was formed and talked about what the priorities are for this council. She indicated that the proposal of the UDC's structure, membership, and goals was presented by a summer ad hoc committee and shared with approximately 60 members of the university community prior to being sent to President Dooley and the senior leadership team. UDC members were appointed by their respective groups as representatives (e.g., Alumni of Color Network) or indicated interest in serving. There are staggered terms for members (i.e., one-year terms for students, three-year terms for deans and Providence and Bay Campus reps, and two-year terms for all other reps). There was also discussion about possibly having someone from the Graduate School as a representative on the UDC instead of the Graduate Council.

Mary Grace also indicated that this group would be involved in developing the campus' first campus climate survey, along with other selected members of the community (e.g., subject matter experts) who will join these meetings as part of the Campus Climate Survey Working Group (CSWG).

Discussion ensued about how the UDC needs to be very mindful of the current issues in the community, such as campus climate, creating a safe channel for students to report issues of micro-aggressions, harassment, and mental health issues. Two suggestions were that the Bias Response Team (BRT) could explain report processes to the UDC and the UDC invite someone to do a mental health training.

III. Review of Advisory Bodies to the CDO

There was discussion regarding the advisory bodies to the CDO. Center directors (e.g., Multicultural Student Services Center) were not included in the recommended UDC membership because the CDO already meets with them on a monthly basis.

In the memo, it states: "We recommend that the UDC focus primarily on advising the

CDO to advance university-wide diversity policies, procedures, and initiatives.” A question was brought up as to how do we articulate issues if they concern the CDO or CED office? These issues may be reported on the anonymous feedback form on the CED website and/or directly to the President.

Also, the UDC needs to be able to provide information from the previous commissions, honor the work that they did, and continue the work that still needs to be done. Some groups have continued to meet. A question was brought up as to whether these previous commissions are considered affinity groups. It is up to the groups whether they would like to be considered affinity groups. Mary Grace keeps in communication with affinity group leaders regarding CED updates.

VI. Selection of Co-Chair

Mary Grace indicated from the memo that the co-chair would be selected by the UDC, and that they would serve no more than two consecutive two-year terms. Discussion about the co-chair included whether or not a student should be the co-chair. There were concerns about having a student be the co-chair (e.g., political power within the university system). The UDC needs to make sure that the expectations of co-chairs are very clear and be mindful of what authority the co-chair has. It was decided that a student would not serve as co-chair.

V. Campus Climate Survey

Mary Grace has been working with Rankin & Associates Consulting to coordinate a campus climate in spring 2021. The timeline includes working group meetings in the spring, focus groups in the fall 2020, campus climate survey in the spring 2021, and strategic planning in fall 2021. The first meeting is scheduled for April 8. During that visit, the consultants will also meet with the Senior Leadership Team, Institutional Research, and Marketing & Communications. The next scheduled meetings are September 15, September 16, October 19, November 17, and November 18.

VI. Initial Brainstorm of Expectations, Focal Areas, Ideas

There was a discussion of initial expectations of UDC members, including soliciting information, action-oriented agenda, and community healing. The groups also discussed how to highlight and communicate information regarding work coming out of CED. The UDC will participate in a day-long summer retreat to outline specific goals and procedures. The summer ad hoc committee members will also be invited.