



University Diversity Council Minutes
August 21, 2020
Zoom

Attendees: Gifty Ako-Adounvo, Mary Grace Almandrez, Marland Chang, Erin Earle, Maling Ebrahimpour, Michelle Fontes, Nisa Ghonem, Brian Heikes, Trish Morokoff, Eileen Orabone, Kristina Perrelli, Joanna Ravello, Jen Riley, Martha Elena Rojas, Mary Stanley

Absent: Jacquie Britto, Corey Fernandez, Holly Nichols, Jacqui Tisdale, Annemarie Vaccaro

I. Welcome & Announcements

Jen Riley welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting started with a discussion about how faculty in various departments are experiencing microaggressions and bullying among their peers. Members of the Council shared examples of some of the microaggressions happening among their peers and also shared ideas on what could be done about it. Some of the ideas were finding a way to guide and mentor our new pre tenure faculty, figuring out a way to help get the tools necessary to stop the micro-aggressions and bullying practice in meetings in ways to be able to safely call out the faculty members who are doing the bullying and having them recognize that they are doing it. There was also discussion about how there is no formal performance appraisal process to hold people accountable on the staff side because that would be a way to check off the competencies. On the faculty side, there are structural changes that need to happen as to allow us to have conversations without negative consequences on the junior faculty. It was agreed that there are structural changes that need to happen and that these issues need to be brought forward to the new President or the Board of Trustees.

II. Approval of Minutes

The June 26th and July 15th minutes will be approved online by the committee.

III. Council of Deans Retreat Reflections

The conversation continued with Jen giving an update on the Council of Deans Retreat held this week. She said the Provost framed the meeting by discussing how to create a transformational action agenda for the University and that Academic Affairs can play a role in recognizing that all of the colleges can help push these things forward. Jen shared that Dr. Kathy Obear, organizational change consultant, facilitated the first day of the COD retreat. She said that Kathy guided all of them through self-reflection and some challenging conversations but forced everyone to think about their perspective and where they were and are. It also led to some good

conversations about faculty and staff competencies about what we're looking for from those competencies to create a change in climate and culture for the campus. She was also very clear about the importance of structured deliberative hiring practices that can get you to that cultural change. Mary Grace then facilitated the deans through that process and Don summarized several of the ideas that came up. Jen said what she liked about it was that it captured things that people saw potential with and worked with. There was agreement amongst the deans that the campus needs more diversity in the curriculum and faculty competencies was brought up again regarding searches and how we can do them better. Also, professional development and an idea on how can we build our own faculty. Then Mary Grace discussed how deans can integrate diversity, equity and inclusion into our colleges and across the University. The deans also talked about the diversity coordinator positions and how can each college make visible their diversity action plans. They also discussed how would the coordinator help the college reach those objectives effectively. There was a Q&A after this update.

IV. Educational Development Initiatives Presentation and Discussion by Dr. Joanna N. Ravello, Director of Community and Organizational Development

Joanna Ravello gave a presentation on the Social Justice & Inclusion (SJ&I) Micro-credential offered by the Office of CED. She explained that these are educational development anti-oppression workshop modules for University faculty, staff, and affiliates. The four modules that are offered are Advancing Anti-Oppression in the Workplace; Understanding Social Identity, Power, and Privilege in the Workplace; Disrupting Implicit Bias with Inclusive Behaviors in the Workplace; and Combatting Microaggressions with Inclusive Language in the Workplace. She explained that these workshop modules will be offered regularly throughout the calendar year and that individual faculty, staff, and affiliates may complete any number of them or they can take all four modules to earn the Micro-credential. After completion of the modules, they will be invited to submit an SJ&I Microcredential portfolio and the portfolio will be evaluated by the Microcredential Review Committee using the ACPA/NASPA SJ&I Microcredential Rubric. Those who present evidence of their knowledge, skills, and dispositions in anti-oppression will earn the SJ&I Microcredential Certificate. She also indicated that she is working with departments on campus that have requested these workshops for their areas. After the presentation, there was a Q&A discussion.

V. Subcommittees

There was a discussion about the subcommittees that the UDC came up with and the process for these subcommittees. Jen indicated that she would write something up and put it at the top of the subcommittee document. The following was submitted by Jen:

Subcommittee Guidelines

Goal: For each subcommittee to develop recommendations for their area to bring to the UDC for discussion and endorsement. Recommendations will then be forwarded to the President.

Recommendations are focused on how to make URI stronger and more effective in working through a DEI lens.

Subcommittee process:

1. Conveners have been assigned and will organize the first subcommittee meeting (see **bolded** names); subsequent meetings could be organized by a lead convener or the responsibility be passed around to committee members
2. Subcommittees should meet as soon as possible to discuss the area and process. An update should be provided to the UDC as a whole at our next meeting (September 25th)
3. Subcommittees will then take four steps:
 1. Identify the current status of the area/issue at URI
 2. Identify what is working well and what is less effective in URI processes/practices
 3. Review best practices at other institutions
 4. Make list of recommendations in order of priority.

Timeline:

Subcommittee initial meeting and discussion with report out at September 25th meeting

September 26th - December 3rd -- subcommittees meet to complete work

December 4th - subcommittees report out status of work

January - March - subcommittee recommendations finalized and brought to UDC for discussion and endorsement

April - Present recommendations to President and senior leadership team