

Equity Council Meeting
Wednesday, December 11, 2013
3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
Student Senate Chambers, Memorial Union
Kingston Campus

Attendance: Michelle Fontes-Barros, co-chair, Lynne Derbyshire, co-chair, Liliana Costa, Kayley Robsham, Sarah Patterson, Alycia Mosley Austin, Kyle Kusz, Kevin Martins, Laura Beauvais, Stephen Baker, Amy Olson, Helen Mederer, Pamela Rohland, Sarah Couch, Lisa Abreu Morel, Mary Jo Gonzales, John Sears, Jerry Holder, David Hayes, Garry Bozylinsky, Melissa McCarthy, Annie Russell and Mailee Kue.

1. Introductions
2. The November 21, 2014 minutes were approved.
3. Updates: Diversity Committee (Melissa McCarthy)
 - a. Research & Economic Development
 - b. New VP is very interested in diversity issues
 - c. Packet regarding diversity and equity committee in the division was handed out
 - d. They've developed a cross section of members and created a mission and goals related to diversity
 - e. They have a priority of helping people find funding
 - f. If there are faculty or students who are interested in finding funds for diversity or inclusion related research, contact Melissa
 - g. Karen Markin helps people find opportunities and will also help people write the grants
 - h. Mary Kate DeMarco oversees employees who assist in finding funding for particular colleges
 - i. Melissa promotes the research that's being done at URI through a variety of methods
 - j. Melissa can help do videos, media, articles, etc. for promoting research being done
 - k. The research office can also help with legal aspects of protecting people's intellectual property
 - l. Are there grants for teaching regarding diversity?
 - i. Yes, there are some opportunities that we're aware of
 - ii. Melissa could check the database to see
 - iii. Department of Education is very supportive
 - iv. The more diversity that appears in grant opportunities, the more likely they are to succeed
 - m. Faculty can participate in a forum where you indicate your preferences and agencies contact you directly
 - n. Is there a way for the institution to make a statement regarding encouraging people to consider diversity elements in research?
 - i. Yes, we could. Research is working on a long term strategic plan to address these aspects
 - ii. We are looking more at diversity at the institutional level, in addition to within the research division
 - iii. We should make diversity more infused as opposed to an add on
 - o. If I'm new to grant writing, is there help?
 - i. Yes, Karen Markin can help
 - p. We've seen that recruiting and retaining people who are diverse in the faculty makes a difference when we strongly support their research with funding in their packages. Can we acknowledge that in the strategic plan?
 - i. Yes.

- q. What do you mean by state and nation level support of diversity events?
 - i. It means to make people knowledgeable regarding these events

4. Old Business

a. Communications & Marketing

Meeting scheduled

- i. This is happening the second week of December
- ii. Attendees will be discussing how diversity is infused in communications and marketing
- iii. Safe Zone training happened with around 30 attendees and has resulted in several conversations concerning how to infuse the information
- iv. The staff will have Advanced Safe Zone workshops in the spring

b. VP Valentino re: cameras

Meeting scheduled

- i. This is happening second week of December
- ii. Conversation regarding the safety of all members of the URI community will be conducted
- iii. VP Valentino has directed the Director of Public Safety to lead a team in order to begin assessment on camera systems campus wide
 - 1. Could the group address lighting on campus?
 - 2. There's a lighting committee run through student senate
 - 3. October was the last time there was a walk through
 - 4. There are several spots that are very dark throughout the campus
 - 5. There is a comprehensive list of issues that are being addressed
 - 6. If people provide statements concerning their safety concerns, it could help move this initiative forward
- iv. Gerry Holder wanted to make sure that information was shared with all parties from Affirmative Action
- v. People want to be sure that there are immediate and long term solutions to the issue
- vi. There are some issues to fix cameras that could be done more quickly

c. VP Sonnenfeld and VP Valentino are unavailable today, but will attend a meeting in the spring

- i. They've been asked and are planning to attend in the spring

5. New Business/Announcements/Q&A

a. Update on student meeting with President re: arming campus police

- i. 55 students were invited to the President's home to discuss this, at the request of a student
- ii. 33 students attended
- iii. Mary Jo Gonzales and Naomi Thompson attended
- iv. There was no consensus, but the goal and outcome was to bring students together again to address issues
- v. Faculty senate panel will happen to address the following:
 - 1. Nonviolence Approaches
 - 2. Mental Health
 - 3. Emergency Preparedness
- vi. Student Senate did a survey and outcome was in favor of arming campus police (66%) and student senate formed an opinion recently in favor, as well
- vii. Students talked about building relationships with university police, counseling, emergency response, and they feel more plugged into the conversation

- viii. There needs to be more student representation in these conversations on a variety of issues campus wide
- ix. Students want a yearlong first-year experience type of program to learn about campus resources
 - 1. Maybe we need an alternative format to infuse these resources
 - 2. Is there a way to reinforce this in different formats, like an app for first year students or handbook, etc.
 - 3. Could university police attend all URI 101's?
 - a. A video will be coming soon about emergency preparedness from the campus police
- x. Can there be a social structure to allow students to get to know police, as opposed to people simply being in trouble
 - 1. Campus police offer ride alongs and 4 students of color participated this semester
 - 2. Let's continue to have people engaged in this process intentionally because students who are marginalized experience police interaction differently
- xi. A subcommittee of the student success team is looking at resources and we are hoping to streamline resources for students on campus to potentially launch in September
- xii. Visibility of police force could also extend to all officers
- xiii. Mailee did research on students' connections to services
 - 1. Students of color as a group trusted campus services far less, which means that the relationship factor is very significant
- xiv. If students are uncomfortable with campus police or have issues, they need to report those things to Director Baker so that those items can be addressed
- xv. BOND has had discussion about this and the two extremes often go between having a shooter on campus (then arm police) or if I'm just walking home on campus (don't arm police)
 - 1. When we go for a majority vote, we leave out the most vulnerable population in that effort
- xvi. Officer Mark is a model of how to be involved with students on campus; how can we make sure this is the model for everyone? He's been nominated for diversity awards
- xvii. We should go on rides with police in order to understand what our police go through
 - 1. This is a two way perception issue
 - 2. There are certainly issues on both sides of this matter
- xviii. Should we make a statement to the administration that we understand that people who are in the numerical minority will not be heard by a majority vote?
 - 1. We are a grassroots coalition that is sometimes comfortable and sometimes not; we understand that people disagree
 - 2. This is not a black/white issue; many more students will be impacted
 - 3. Let students have voice in the effort to create inclusion
 - 4. Hidden bias is hidden for a reason; everyone has bias and it impacts all of us; we can work to combat that in different capacities like training and education
 - 5. Future meetings and conversations will continue to happen; if the decision is made that police will be armed, it won't happen for a year and planning stages will follow
 - 6. As an institution, we have a responsibility to continue to create space and involvement for students at every stage of the process; students will need the support from us in the form of making sure they can have voice
 - 7. Were all students invited and allowed to attend meetings? We should be inclusive in selecting students to attend and/or provide forums for that
 - 8. Students won't have confidence that their voices are being heard if they are not included in the conversation

9. No one owns students who are marginalized and we need to recognize that; how we choose students and provide access matters as a structure
- xix. Has the president's office had training?
 1. Safe Zone, yes.
 2. We need to ensure this
- xx. Is there a definition of being armed that has been presented to students?
 1. Carrying a firearm is the definition
- xxi. Does the confidentiality policy mean that we shouldn't follow up to address issues?
 1. No, please do follow up as appropriate and needed for issues.
- xxii. There are a lot of corporate and foundation agencies on grants for diversity; can we have the foundation folks speak to this?
- b. Commission on Equity and Inclusion for People with Disabilities has mission and goals now that have been submitted
- c. MLK Week is February 3-7
 - i. February 5th is Unity Luncheon where Peacemaker Award is presented
 - ii. Extended deadline for peacemaker award
 - iii. That Wednesday night, we're doing a musical event; anyone who has any interest is encouraged to participate
- d. Honors Colloquium concluded last night and the major theme for the semester was really highlighted around equity in education
- e. The LGBTQ Center Symposium is happening February 9-14 and Bishop Gene Robinson will be the keynote speaker on February 9th at 2pm in St. Augustine's church.

Confidentiality policy

No one will speak to the media concerning issues discussed at an Equity Council meeting unless agreed upon at the meeting.

All discussion at Equity Council meetings will be confidential unless otherwise designated.

Minutes will be made public after approval.