

Equity Council Meeting  
Thursday, October 16, 2014  
9:00-10:30 a.m., Memorial Union  
Student Senate Chambers  
Kingston Campus

*I speak not for myself but for those without voice... those who have fought for their rights... their right to live in peace, their right to be treated with dignity, their right to equality of opportunity, their right to be educated. ~Malala Yousafzai*

**Attendance:** Diane Kern (co-chair), Robert Samuels (co-chair), Melissa McCarthy, Tamara Bolotow, Debbie Suggs, Annemarie Vaccaro, Nancy H. Kelley, Melvin Wade, Ted Shear, Maggie Charpentier, Joe Maynard, John Sears, Trish Morokoff, Roxanne Gomes, Kyle Kusz, David Hayes, Helen Mederer, Robert Vincent, Carol Pegg, Carolyn Sovet, Sarah Couch, Michelle Fontes-Barros, Annie M. Kosar, Garry Bozylinsky, Zulmy Cortez, Pamela Rohland, Lynne Derbyshire, and Faye Boudreaux-Bartels.

**Invited Guest:** Bruce Hamilton

- 1. Welcome and introductions**
- 2. Confidentiality Policy was read to the council members and affirmed.**
- 3. The minutes of September 10, 2014 meeting were approved.**
- 4. Election of Equity Council Co-Chair**
  - Bob Samuels was unanimously elected the Equity Council co-chair.
- 5. Information Session on Student Senate Funding of Student Organizations, Bruce Hamilton, Director, Memorial Union and Student Activities**
  - Student Senate recognizes and funds all student groups, works on issues on and off campus.
  - There were a number of groups that were not recognized; they began to work on changing the senate to be more inclusive.
  - Non-discriminatory policy: Student Senate may not discriminate against any group. Non-discriminatory policy created a problem with single-sex groups. To allow single-sex teams they created an affiliate status.
  - Affiliate status signifies not entirely open membership, can be recognized as funded or non-funded. Unfunded groups include philanthropic groups, groups that support a political candidate, groups with a religious mission, academically funded groups, and ones that don't express need.
  - Groups which have limited membership have affiliate status and they can be funded or unfunded.
  - Finance process: Next week all groups will be recognized as either funded or unfunded. Groups will get 7 different notifications about the process; they will fill their budget information on Sakai. They will have to explain what they need and why such as X number of classes for X number of items. Two officers have to

sign for recognition with funded or unfunded status, it is an online process. It is sent to every organization. Organizations can appeal for funded status if they are rejected.

- All the by-laws have been changed to reflect the organization summarized above, all forms needed is on the senate website.
- Q: MUSIC has applied as a status for full budget and stipends. What are the criteria?  
A: MUSIC was recognized last year. They were recognized after the finance process. They still can have funding after the process. The term “full budget” does not apply any more.
- Q: Does it get subjective at the finance process? It looks like a fairly subjective process because it is up to somebody to decide which groups get what.  
A: If we get an answer for why they need something, they get it. There are specific criteria.
- Budget processes are very similar to department finance process. People have to allocate money to different things based on previous years’ spending.
- Recognition process is on the website and it is very clear.
- Q: is this the same process for students asking for space in the union?  
A: It is not. It is a different process.
- It is not the Senate’s responsibility to recognize Sororities and Fraternities.
- Q: Is it a zero-based budgeting; if I get 5 hundred this year, is it guaranteed that I will have the same it?  
A: It depends on need; they will look at last year. They usually get the last year’s money.
- Q: What is the benefit of being an unfunded group?  
A: To use URI name as an undergrad group, they need approval from the Senate. Also, to take advantage of other things, groups have to be recognized.
- Q: MUSIC missed funding process. Capital items for all groups, affiliates have limited membership. What it the difference between other groups that have stipends?  
A: There are 6 existing groups with stipends. They will come to the budget process; they can put it for that to see if they meet it.
- Q: What if you are out of money and there are groups unhappy with their budget?  
A: Not happy groups will debate and the senate will decide if they are successful. The Senate can reduce the money they put aside.
- Q: The criteria for the stipend are being changed right now. It will be available in approximately 3 months.

## 6. New Business

- Goal-setting for 2014-2015: Diane Kern read the current mission to the council members and it was followed by a discussion on the goals of the council.
  - We do not have goals on the website. We want to set goals for the academic year 2014-15. We have a brainstormed list. Diane synthesized the ideas from the last year’s brainstorming activity to come up with goals. After the goals, we will move to indicators. Also, operational procedures are not very clear.
- What are trying to achieve in the Equity Council?

- University manual language includes “to make recommendations to the president, to advise president.” We had a meeting for that. The website needs to reflect that. There are not substantial changes.
- Student organization: equitable funding and power sharing for student organizations. We should continue to guide and help student organizations. The goal will be broad and indicators will be more specific.
- We should add words ‘inclusive, equitable, diverse.’
- There are other commissions that already tackle issues like MUSIC. We may have concerns about certain groups but there are different commissions like President’s LGBTQ Commission and Commission on the Status of Women. The issues we tackle should relate the whole community.
- There is ambiguity about where this Council stands. We have to build a network, talk about these things in a safe space. Once we have the sense of our identity as a group, this will help us to achieve our goals.
- Student Affairs Diversity Task Force—Robert Vincent, Carol Pegg
  - o Ask Big Questions: It is a forum to talk about the impacts of recent happenings in the US and in the wider world. It helps reframe hard questions regarding race, harassment such as “what is my responsibility for things that are happening here, in my community or in the world?” It aims to create an inclusive community through dialogue. We will bring together a form to nominate or self-nominate. It is an opportunity to take the impact from the community and discuss it.

Meeting adjourned 10:30am.