

Senate Diversity Committee
Thursday, November 3, 2016
Senate Conference Room

Committee Member present: Sandra Bushmich, Pat Jepson, Pam Heath-Johnston, Guillermo Irizarry, Lisa Pane (left at 3:30), Alice Fairfield, Wambui Gatheru, Joelle Murchison (left at 3:45), Maria Ana O'Donoghue, Mayra Reyes-Ruiz, Pam Schipani,

Staff: Cheryl Galli

1. Meeting called to order at 3:03pm. University Senate Administrator Cheryl Galli shared that Committee Chair Maria-Luz Fernandez was unable to attend the meeting. Cheryl will attend the meeting to help facilitate and record minutes.
2. Approval of minutes of September 8, 2016. Motion to accept by Alice Fairfield; seconded by Lisa Pane; motion passed.
3. Pam Heath Johnston presented on the Human Resource Ambassador program. In the previous Diversity Committee meeting, Maria-Luz asked members to bring ideas on recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty and staff to this meeting. Pam H-J noted that the Ambassador program is a recruitment tool that may not be well known or well-advertised throughout the University. Information on the program can be found at hr.uconn.edu. Pam noted that a new website will be released soon. Currently, Pam H-J serves as the Recruitment Ambassador Coordinator. There have been seven requests for this service since last summer. Departments are notified of the program by an automated email initiated through the Recruitment Solutions system. There was some discussion as to when this happens as many on the committee do not recall notice of the program. There is a need for more Ambassadors however; Pam H-J indicated that the program is still in a defining stage. More work on the program is needed before additional potential Ambassadors will be identified. It is important for Ambassadors to not only know Storrs but also all campuses as well as surrounding communities. When reaching out to faculty and staff candidates, Pam H-J explains that she is not part of the search committee. She asks what they are looking for and what their interests are - & works the program on that basis. Pam H-J finds the biggest challenge is timing. Quite often, she is given only a day or so notice of a candidate coming to campus. This may present scheduling challenges. Pam S noted that the Student Ambassador programs offers a page with information on each student ambassador. The self-written bio can provide information on their interests, history or self-proclaimed area of expertise. A potential student can then review the bios and identify a student ambassador who they feel is a good match for them. The discussion then turned to the newly redesigned program website. Pam noted that more information is needed on local schools as this is an area of great interest to candidates. The ambassador contact page will also need updating. Suggestions for the new website included: picture/descriptions of Ambassadors, more school resource information, more expansive information on regional campuses.
4. The group was then asked for other ideas on recruitment and retention. Guillermo proposed working on a statement on best practices related to diversity in faculty recruitment, retention, merit, and promotion. He expressed concern with the lack of awareness and accountability at

the departmental level and in committees that conduct searches, decide merit, and establish personnel decisions. Guillermo provided the following information, “There are, at other levels and institutional locations, rescue mechanism in case of grievances. There are, as well, academic leaders who can correct errors. But having to rely on those, leads to miscommunications, issues with faculty morale, and frequent departures of faculty of color. A brief, short statement would make department heads aware of the expectations and would allow committees to keep certain recommendations in mind. Examples abound in academia in different formats. Penn State has an office of Educational Equity and has established a Web site. I share its summary analysis, but there “framework” is much broader. I would propose we focus exclusively on statement of best practices related to faculty diversity, clearly establishing a desire to have broad representation of underrepresented national minorities and the need to ensure the best possible outcome of recruiting, promoting, and retaining in the best way (job satisfaction, engagement, productivity).

<http://equity.psu.edu/updates/analysis/best-practices-summary-analysis>

We could make a list of ten possible best practices and include them in a broader diversity statement related to education equity and ask PTR and search committees to acknowledge these practices.

These are some ideas: 1. acknowledge implicit bias; 2. communicate effectively the tenor and system of evaluation; 3. establish mentorship patterns; 4. clarify protocols; 5. seek fair compensation for additional “diversity” labor; 6. respect diverse points of view and value scholarship in fields and publications that may be different from traditional fields, methodologies, and venues; 7. review processes with attention to possible biases in the process; 8. explicitly define best outcomes in terms of diversity—we endeavor to create a more diverse faculty and acknowledge the value of diverse representation in our department, college, university, and scholarly fields; 9. provide significant time for discussion of cases that may not directly convince you or appeal to preconceived notions of a successful scholar.”

The committee discussed this proposal and agreed this was a good, targeted project to work on. Information will be shared with Maria-Luz to discuss with the Senate Executive Committee.

5. Graduate Senate Student rep Mayra Reyes-Ruiz brought to the committee an issue that has developed with the GSS this semester. It has been determined that serving as a GSS Executive Committee member may be considered employment. The GSS Exec Committee Treasurer is an international student who already has a 20 hour GA appointment. The student cannot take the allotted stipend for serving in this position as this will push her over her allowable hours of employment. The GSS feels that this determination effectively mandates an exclusive of international student who have such 20 hour GA appointments. Up until this year, service on the GSS Exec Committee has not been considered employment. There was discussion about drafting a statement from the Diversity Committee in support of the Graduate Student Senate and condoning what may be interpreted as discriminatory practice. The members of this committee felt that more information would be needed before considering such a statement. It was noted that this determination may stem from the new GEU-UAW collective bargaining

agreement. There are also strict guidelines associated with a work visa that may prevent the student from being compensated for anything over 20 hours.

6. The meeting adjourned at 4:27pm.
The next meeting of the Senate Diversity Committee is scheduled for Thursday, December 8, 2016.