

University Senate Diversity Committee

Annual Report April 2015

Committee Charge: The Senate Diversity Committee shall review University policies, practices and conditions relevant to supporting and promoting diversity among students, faculty and staff.

Diversity Committee members 2014-2015: *Maria Luz Fernandez (Chair), Michael Bradford, *Sandy Bushmich, Elizabeth Conklin (representative of the President's office); *Casey Cobb *Manisha Desai, Alice Fairfield, Matthew Hughey, *Cathleen Love *Diane Lillo-Martin (representative, Faculty Standards), *Timothy Lin (undergraduate student representative), *Margo Machida, Huang Nguyen (graduate student representative), Shayla Nunnally (representative, C&C Committee), Willena Price, Eugene Salorio, Pamela Schipani, Robert Stephens, *William Stwalley, Susana Ulloa (representative of the Enrollment Committee).

*Senate member (2014-2015).

The Senate Diversity Committee will have met 7 times during Academic year 2014-2015: September 10, October 30, November 19, February 4, February 24, April 1st and the last meeting will be the first week of May. There was also a presentation to the University Senate on March 2nd by Maria Luz Fernandez on the proposed strategies to **increase retention** of under-represented faculty and staff.

In this Academic year, Members from the Task Force were invited three times to keep the committee updated on the progress on the recommendations on how UConn will address the diversity issues on recruitment and retention of under-represented faculty and staff.

During our first meeting on *September 10*, the discussion focused on two major concerns: 1. The future of the ***Strategic Plan of Diversity***, a document on which a number of members of the Senate Diversity Committee worked in the 2013-2014 Academic year and 2. The future of the office for the Vice-Provost for Diversity following the resignation of Jeff Ogbar. The creation of the new Task Force to better articulate and implement the diversity agenda at UConn and where the Senate Diversity committee will fit in this Task Force were also discussed.

In our meeting on *October 30*, we met with Mark Overmyer, the Director of "El Instituto" so that he could convey our concerns to the Task Force including the major issue of **retention** of under-represented faculty and staff. A suggestion was made to investigate what our **Peers** and **Aspirants** are doing in terms of retention to try and solidify a plan that would be supported by the Senate Diversity Committee.

In our meeting on *November 19*, Elizabeth Conklin (ODE) presented to the Committee the diversity data on the permanent staff, which was collected by her office. The information was

very comprehensive and educational. The trends of retention for the under-represented staff are similar to those of the under-represented faculty. Basically, the numbers of under-represented staff have not changed from 2004-2014 despite the efforts for recruitment, emphasizing once more that the real problem is **retention**.

In our meeting on *February 4*, we invited Dan Weiner and Dana Wilder (who could not attend the meeting), the Co-chairs of the newly created Task Force to give us an update on their accomplishments. We were informed that the Task Force was focused on prioritizing an inclusive environment based on justice, a concept that is not new to the Senate Diversity Committee, since we have thoroughly discussed it as a key factor for understanding diversity in the University environment. The Committee provided several ideas to the Task Force including the creation of a Central Diversity Office, to ensure an Institutional diversity presence, the placement of Diversity in a more prominent place in our web site to ensure that it is clear that UConn supports diversity and that the Institution is committed to Diversity. It was discussed that the Task Force should meet again with the Senate Diversity Committee to discuss their progress and to obtain more input from our Committee.

In our meeting on *February 24*, the meeting was focused on the presentation to the Senate on March 2nd on the proposed strategies for the retention of under-represented faculty and staff. There was a consensus that 3 main strategies would be presented and that these strategies should represent the vision of the Senate Diversity Committee.

On March 2nd, Maria Luz Fernandez gave a presentation to the Senate on the strategies proposed by the Senate Diversity Committee for **Retention**. The presentation has been attached to the minutes of March 2nd. The major points were that UConn has done a great job on the recruitment and retention of minority students; however, despite the number of Institutional Committees and planning surrounding the retention and recruitment of faculty and staff, there has been no meaningful success. The numbers speak for themselves as the problem of retention was pointed out from the data collected by ODE. The Committee is proposing 3 main strategies to help for **Retention**; 1) The creation of a Central Office to address diversity at UConn supported by Faculty (faculty caucus) where the ideas will be prioritized and carried out to completion, followed by evaluation of success; 2. Mentoring of under-represented faculty and staff on all aspects relative to adaptation to a new environment, promotion and leadership training; 3. The creation of yearly awards for students, faculty and staff who have excelled in promoting diversity at UConn.

On April 1st, the Committee met with **Provost Mun Choi**; in this meeting Dan Weiner and Dana Wilder, the Co-Chairs of the Task Force were also present. The provost showed us some hard data on the percentage of faculty who leave the University. From the years 2000 to 2010 57% faculty were awarded tenure and are still at UConn. From the rest (43%), 20%, left the University before the tenure process, 7% left after tenure, 6% were not reappointed and 9% were not awarded tenure. He also showed that there were no differences in these percentages when under-represented faculty are compared. The Task Force discussed with us some of the strategies

that they will be proposing at the end of their charge including the creation of the Diversity Office and a Faculty Council in complete agreement with what was proposed by the Senate Diversity Committee on the March 2nd presentation.

We will have the next meeting of the semester on the first week of May with the Co-Chairs of the Task Force to compare notes and hear about their final recommendations for Diversity Policies and Implementation at UConn.

Future Agendas: The efforts of the committee in this Academic year were focused on putting together a strategic plan for the retention of under-represented faculty and staff. For future agendas, it is proposed that the Senate Diversity Committee put forward the necessary effort to support the recommendations of the Task Force in defining UConn's Diversity Agenda.