

Diversity Committee Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2015

In Attendance: Casey Cobb, Manisha Desai, Alive Fairfield, Diane Lillo-Martin, Cathy Love, Chris Sneed, John Zack

Previous minutes approved with change to Diane's name which was noted as David.

We will meet with Provost Choi, Vice Provost Weiner, and Assistant Vice Provost Wilder to discuss the plan of action following the Diversity Task Force Report on Oct. 27th at 1:30 in the Senate Conference Room.

John circulated language to amend the University Bylaws article 15 that relates to policies and practices of groups to reflect inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. We agreed that inclusive language, denoting all protected classes according to the CT constitution, should be included in the preamble to the University Bylaws and the Senate's By-laws.

We will consult Elizabeth Conklin about the current language used by her office to ensure consistency and discuss this at our next meeting.

We also had preliminary discussion about our response to the Taskforce Report, which we intend to present as a written document to the Senate by the end of the semester or the beginning of the next one.

The discussion focused on: (1) the size and efficacy of the Diversity Council, too large, too many actors with little authority to make changes; (2) the Chief Diversity Officer qualifications, reportage, provost/president, resources, authority, accountability (e.g., need for annual reports to the board of trustees); (3) need to have proactive not just retroactive actions and spaces for students, staff, faculty, and visitors such as an Office of Access (being considered by a group discussing issues related to disability); (4) enhance visibility of cultural centers, including spatial, and highlighting their focus not just for undergrads but also the entire community; (5) need to differentiate diversity, which is often fuzzy and expanded to mean everything, from issues of underrepresented U.S. minorities and see the purview of the office to include issues of equity and retention of students, staff, and faculty of color as well as issues of curricular integration not only via the Institutes but also for cognitive/epistemic justice throughout the university.

Every member is encouraged to read the report and send their specific comments and suggestions to Manisha who will compile and circulate them to the entire committee before our next meeting so we can begin to draft our written response.