

University Senate Diversity Committee

Annual Report April 2017

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 2016-2017: *Maria Luz Fernandez (Chair), *Alexis Boylan, *Sandy Bushmich, *Casey Cobb *Patricia Jepson (representative of Student Welfare Committee), *Pam Heath-Johnson, *Guillermo Irizarry, *Lisa Pane, *Lisa Werkmeister-Rozas, *John Zack, *Lauren DiGrazia (representative from Senate Scholastic Standards), Alice Fairfield, Wambui Gatheru (undergraduate student government), Matthew Hughey, Devinaa Mangal (undergraduate student government), Joelle Murchison (Associate Vice President, Ex Officio member), Maria Ana O'Donoghue (representative of Curricula and Courses), Willena Price, Mayra Reyes Ruiz (Graduate Student Senate), Eugene Salorio, Pamela Schipani, Robert Stephens, Anastasios Tzingounis, Susana Ulloa, Ernie Zirakzadeh.

*Senate member (2016-2017).

The Senate Diversity Committee will have met 6 times during Academic year 2016-2017: September 8, November 3, December 8, February 15, March 23 and the last meeting will be May 2.

During our first meeting on *September 8*, we welcomed **Joelle Murchison**, our newly hired Chief Diversity Officer, both to the University and to the Senate Diversity Committee. Joelle shared with us some of the initiatives that she will be undertaking in her new position. Her agenda will include students, staff and faculty. Joelle asked the Committee very relevant questions related to our expectations regarding our students and their ability to recognize diversity as a core value. The Committee also shared with Joelle the expectations in increasing number and in retaining under-represented faculty and staff and some of the mechanisms that can be used to accomplish this goal.

In our meeting on *November 3*, the *Human Resource Ambassador Program* was presented by Pam Heath-Johnston. This program may not be well advertised throughout the University. The Program's major function is to provide needed information about life situations at the Storrs Campus and other UConn campuses to newly hired individuals and also provide support during the interview process. Guillermo Irizarry proposed working on a statement on best practices related to diversity in faculty recruitment, retention, merit and promotion to ensure retention of faculty of color by providing job satisfaction, engagement and productivity. He also suggested making a list of ten possible best practices among which are to acknowledge implicit bias, respect diverse points of view and value scholarship in fields that may be different from traditional fields.

In our meeting on *December 8*, there was some discussion regarding the wording that was crafted in the preamble for the University by-laws. It was decided to make some changes for next year. Two members of the Committee offered to contribute to the revised preamble. The positive resolution of the Senate to protect the undocumented students was discussed in this meeting and how the majority of the senate (74= Yes, 2= No) is in agreement with this resolution.

In our meeting on *February 15*, there were several interesting discussions that took place. The issue of problems of retention of under-represented faculty came up again. The discussion based on best practices for hiring under-represented faculty and the best way to support these individuals all the way to promotion to Full Professor. It was mentioned that under-represented faculty often are part of the final pool of candidates to be interviewed but that this does not mean that they will be hired highlighting that the problems are more than metrics. The concern regarding on the time-line to full Professor also came up trying to identify whether this period is extended in women and/or under-represented faculty. Information will be sought on this to better understand the problem.

In our meeting on *March 23*, the Committee met with **Interim Provost Jeremy Teitelbaum**; The Provost discussed with us how our numbers of women in STEM are slowly improving and that more women are now in administrative positions at UConn. We also talked about Martha Povin who had given a presentation to the University the day before on how to support Women in STEM. The Provost commented on how important it is that faculty play a very active role in the recruitment and retention of under-represented faculty since faculty members constitute the Search Committees and provide support to other faculty as they navigate the tenure process. Further he talked about “implicit bias” training for faculty who might be influenced by unconscious bias when important decisions are taken on Search Committees or PTR. The Provost also mentioned that the “diversity” candidate often is the committee’s second choice who could be hired if the upper Administration provided a second faculty line. Finally, another problem that was mentioned was the difficulty of targeted hires in which priority is given to a specific Academic field rather than diversity

We will have the last meeting of the semester on *May 2, 2017*. The Committee will meet with **Elizabeth Conklin** who will be presenting the latest statistics on faculty and staff diversity at UConn. The Committee is interested to find out if the numbers of under-represented faculty and staff have increased since the last numbers were presented for the years 2013 and 2014, for faculty and staff, respectively.

Future Agendas: The efforts of the committee in this Academic year were focused on finding out what would be the agenda from the newly hired Chief Diversity Office and in developing strategies to retain under-represented faculty and staff. Next year, in collaboration with the Diversity Council, we will focus in further promotion of Diversity Agendas.