

University Senate Diversity Committee

Annual Report April 2018

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 2017-2018: *Maria Luz Fernandez (Chair), *Dorothea Anagnostopoulos, * Edith Barrett *Sandy Bushmich, *Casey Cobb *Pam Heath-Johnston, *Amy Howell, *Lisa Pane, *Ernie Zirakzadeh, Mansi Chapatwala (undergraduate student), Zach Corolla (undergraduate student), Serena-Susan Jacob (undergraduate student), Donna Korbel, Alice Fairfield, Josh LaPorte, Joelle Murchison (Associate Vice President, Ex Officio member), Willena Price, Christina Rivera, Anastasios Tzingounis, Susana Ulloa.

*Senate member (2017-2018).

The Senate Diversity Committee will have met 6 times during Academic year 2016-2017: September 13, October 11, November 8, December 7, March 8, and the last meeting will be April 26.

During our first meeting on *September 13*, we talked about the priorities for the Academic year. A continuous concern is the retention of under-represented faculty and staff. As discussed before, the University does better in the retention of under-represented students; however retaining minority faculty/staff will support our students better. One of our priorities of this year is to ensure that leadership/administrative searches should have a diversity representative.

In our meeting on *October 13*, the main theme of this meeting was the discussion of the Metanoia that was going to take place on November 8. It was decided that we should bring information regarding our priorities for this year in addition to graphs portraying the information of the race/ethnicity composition of UConn faculty, staff, students and administrators. Another important issue that was discussed was the training of UConn's employees on implicit bias and a special emphasis was made on PTR Committee members.

Metanoia took place on *November 8*. We met at the student Union and had a very good attendance of our Committee (almost 100%). We had several people approaching our table including students, staff, faculty, and administrators. As mentioned before, we had two handouts to distribute: 1) On the priorities for the committee for the year 2017-2018 and 2) the race/ethnicity distribution of faculty, students, staff and administrators at UConn. We invited people to sign our book and provide some thoughts or examples of their experiences on Campus in regards to racism, bigotry and other as a result of the current National Climate.

Some of the comments worthy to mention are as follows:

" I am a Latino undergraduate student and I have never experienced racism"

"I am very interested in hiring/retention of under-represented faculty and staff

"I have heard from friends about discrimination against African American students"

"We need more diversity programs to help understand the majority why the minority feels the way they do"

"We need to continue encouraging dialogue and understanding among faculty, staff and students"

"We need cultural competency for faculty when it comes to students"

"We need to have staff ethnicity ratios more comparable to that of the state".

"Minorities are under-represented".

Overall, we had a very busy morning and we reached a good number of individuals including the kitchen staff.

In our meeting on *December 8*, Janine Cairo visited the Committee to express her point of view on the resolution that the Senate Diversity Committee wanted to bring forward. This issue has proven to be very difficult to come to a consensus so that we have the necessary support from the SEC and the Chairs of the other Committees. We had a long discussion on Lucian Wintrich, the speaker who was brought to campus on November 14. One salient point that was brought up was, what we what we can do as the Senate Diversity Committee, to support those students who felt discriminated against by the comments of the speaker. We also discussed the email sent by President Herbst regarding controversial speakers on Campus. This was a very unfortunate incident that we hope will not resurface in the future

We met on *March 3*. In this meeting we continued to discuss the idea with Hedley Freake, the SEC chair, of having a representative of diversity in the Search Committees for higher administration positions. We envisioned that this diversity member should be a voting member of the Committee. This resolution was proposed to take to the Chair's lunch to assess the acceptability of our proposal. We also discussed the potential implementation of Exit interviews. Finally there was a long discussion on the events occurring in Residential Life regarding the use of pronouns. This was an unfortunate incident for lack of proper communication. Joelle Murchison will put all her efforts to avoid these events in the future.

We will have the last meeting of the semester on *April 26, 2018*. The Committee will meet with **Craig Kennedy, our new Provost** so that we can communicate with him the priorities of the Senate Diversity Committee, the problems that we see on Campus in terms of discrimination, the lack of success in retaining under-represented faculty and the implicit bias training for all levels for UConn's employees. We would like to hear what the Provost envisions as his priorities and how he will try to implement them

Future Agendas: The efforts of the committee in this Academic year were focused on trying to ensure that hired administrators are aware of the implicit bias and the lack of retention of our under-represented faculty so that new policies are put in place to alleviate some of these problems. Next year's agenda will continue to promote a diverse and inclusive environment for all UConn's constituencies (students, faculty, staff and administrators).