

Diversity Committee

9.13.2018

Chair: Amy Howell

Present: Margaret Rubega, Casey Cobb, Pam Heath-Johnston, Dorothea Anagnostopoulos, Sandra Bushmich, Micki McElya, Clarrisa Ceglie, Alice Fairfield, Edith Barrett, Christina Rivera, Susana Ulloa, Lisa Pane, Brendan Kane, Dana Wilder (ex officio)

Introductions

Approval of the minutes

Discussion of Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement:

Dana Wilder –Discussed origins of the Indigenous Land Acknowledgment statement, currently in draft form, that emerged out of Glenn Mitoma’s work with the summer Upstander Academy. Dana reported that the statement was reviewed by the tribal nations and that he anticipates the statement might be approved by October 8. He also noted that the UConn Native American programming center/committee has been involved in the statement. The statement is specific to the land that UConn and its regional campuses are on.

A committee member asked what faculty, programs, organizations, etc should do with the statement.

Dana responded that there is no set policy. Glenn has started using the statement at the start of all programs at the Dodd Center.

Dana asked if the Diversity Committee wants to make a recommendation that the statement be read or posted at all major events on campus, and there was general consensus that there would be support for this. The committee felt that the October senate meeting, since it falls at the start of Indigenous People’s Week, would be an excellent opportunity to mention the statement if approval was in place.

National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity

Casey highlighted the opportunity for faculty to utilize the University’s membership in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity. He inquired about whether we have data on the use and effectiveness of this organization for UConn faculty. This is a non-profit group set up to support faculty and graduate students from under-represented groups. It was noted that they also offer workshops and that most of these are also centered on efforts to support faculty and graduate students from under-represented groups. They pinpoint resources towards very specific groups with particular identities/experiences/life situations. It was also noted that for some of the programs the cohorts go beyond UConn. There was general consensus that awareness about this opportunity may not be broad. A few of the EDLR faculty signed up and raved about what it did for them. It’s a resource that’s here. Amy volunteered to look into the background of this being housed in CETL, how usage is tracked and how the program is evaluated.

Provost's Initiative for Gender Diversity in Academic Leadership

Micki presented the Initiative for Gender Diversity in Academic Leadership. The Provost was involved in these initiatives at prior universities. Micki talked about the importance of expanding gender identities. Gender diversity represents a broad variety of people who have a broad range of experiences based on their gender identities and other intersecting identities. The group is thinking about this as a two-tiered initiative – 1) how to support gender diverse faculty and leaders on UConn campus and 2) how to change deep structures that produce inequalities and inequities. They will be talking about the mission and vision statement with groups around campus. This includes what different groups in different disciplines need; reaching out to university diversity council; working with faculty & staff groups connected to university diversity council.

There was considerable discussion on faculty mentoring. Micki hopes to get a faculty-to-faculty peer mentoring process into place. It seems that there are individual departments that have mentoring programs, but even many of these peter out after a few years. There was also some discussion about how to reward faculty who serve as mentors, as this can be a time consuming process. Gender and diversity issues associated with mentoring were also touched upon.

Another gender (and diversity) issue that was discussed was pay equity. On this topic the consensus was that this is an issue that has been brought up and deflected for more than a decade and that a proper study would be merited.

Other issues

Amy asked those present to come up with some issues the committee should focus on this year

One suggestion was that we pick topics to support others' work.

There was also considerable discussion about the discouraging reception of the Senate Executive Committee to our desire to ensure that each search at the level of Dean (or equivalent) and above include an individual who was focused on pushing for diversity among the pool and for helping to ensure that commitment to diversity is well probed with all final candidates for a position. There was not complete agreement on whether this is an issue that should still be addressed at some level.

There is still a sense that the University has not made substantial progress in recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff. It was, however, recognized that we should be working with up to date numbers as we think about strategies. We will contact OIE to get the most up-to-date reports on recruitment and retention.

2:00 pm meeting ended.