

Senate Diversity Committee Meeting

December 13, 2018

Chair: Amy Howell

Present: Alice Fairfield, Pam Heath-Johnston, Edit Barrett, Sandra Bushmich, Amy Howell, Susana Ulloa, Maria-Luz Fernandez, Brendan Kane, Clarissa Ceglie, Stephany Santos, Ana O'Donoghue. Dana Wilder (ex officio)

Correction and Approval of Minutes: Ana O'Donoghue would like to correct the spelling of her name. Other names for correction – Anagnostopoulos. Committee approved the minutes.

Agenda Items Discussed

Amy informed the Committee that the University's Diversity Council asked for a representative from the Committee. Amy asked Alice to serve as the Committee's representative.

Sub-Committee I:

Amy reported for Micky McElya that Sub-Committee 1 discussed the collecting of data on recruitment and retention of diverse students, faculty and staff. Tables of data from the OIRE website for 2017 included total university enrollment, information on gender (binary) and ethnicity of faculty and staff, etc. However, there were concerns raised by the Senate Diversity Committee about how some categories were defined/counted, particularly in gender, racial and ethnic categories. It was also noted that different groups (OIRE, graduate school, housing, admissions, etc) seem to capture different data. It was agreed that the subcommittee would continue to seek to define best practices and approaches for data collection so truly significant enhancement in diversity can be realized, particularly of faculty and staff.

Senate Diversity Sub-Committee on Gender Inclusive Initiatives (SDCGII)

Pam presented a report on the Senate Diversity Committee on Gender Inclusive Initiatives. The SDCGII identified several categories of actions. The first is to make everyone aware of pronoun use. There are guides and posters in existence or being made. The sub-committee talked about a potential social media campaign. Ideas around this also included having a large University/college event and having the Rainbow Center push out information. It was noted that faculty could be encouraged to put their pronouns on their syllabi. It was noted that there is an evolution in terminology/pronouns with the term "all gender" being favored for inclusiveness. Efforts are already underway to tally information on inclusiveness of restrooms on campus. Some of the proposed action items target particular groups versus students, staff and faculty.

The SDCGII thought a climate survey would be really important, though it is resource-intensive.

There was some discussion of the possibility of including diversity work as a consideration for service activities in the tenure process.

It was acknowledged that the efforts of the Senate Diversity Committee should ideally be coordinated with, or at least conveyed to, the Diversity Council to avoid duplication of effort and to increase “buy-in”.

Dana explained that the Council is currently doing more inventory items than action items and that the information presented will be helpful. It was also noted that there are other groups at Storrs and at the Health Center that are focused on transgender issues. The subcommittee and others also pointed out that the Rainbow Center has some excellent resources and that it might be viable for the Diversity Committee to help ensure that these get widely advertised/ distributed. It was also noted that meeting with smaller groups (like departmental faculty meetings or orientations) might be more effective than additional university-wide training in making true changes in attitude and awareness.

Student Resolution on Declaring Columbus Day

The Undergraduate Student Government approached the Senate, asking their support for a USG resolution urging the University to recognize Columbus Day as Indigenous People's Day on any calendar presented by the UConn. Hedley encouraged the USG to ask the most relevant Senate Subcommittee (the Diversity Committee) to first consider the issue before bringing a well-considered motion to the Senate Executive Committee and then to the Senate. The USG representative was unable to meet with us in December; however, there was some discussion of the resolution.

Dana noted that it wouldn't hurt to bounce this off the Diversity Council. He also suggested that it might not be as complicated as the land statement. Dana will check on this.

There was some discussion about the implications of making a change to University publications/events considering that we are a State institution. In addition, there were suggestions that it might be possible to build consensus for this motion among institutions of higher education, promoting change beyond the University to the State.

Amy will reach out to the USG to again to invite a representative to our Committee.

Pay Equity

Amy noted that it was announced at the last senate meeting that the university has hired an outside consultancy group (Charles River Associates) to look at pay equity (faculty, including teaching faculty, first—at Storrs and the regional campuses, not at the Health Center). There are 3 senate members and 3 administrators who, along with Provost Kennedy, are talking with Charles River Associates, about what data needs to be gathered, what groups need to be included, etc. Discussions will be ongoing, but it seems that the independent process will start in the spring semester.