

Senate Diversity Committee
9/14/20 Meeting

In attendance: M. Rubega, C. Ceglio, S. Mishra, J. Guild, D. Lillo-Martin, K. McKeown, A. Silva, W. Price; F. Tuitt, G. McManus, C. Challenger, A. Tzingounis; M. McElya, L. Athina, T. Bontly, S. Santos, E. Barrett, M. Markowski

M. Rubega called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

- A. Introductions; chair asked members to introduce themselves and highlight any recent DEI accomplishments in their units.
- a. Margaret Rubega
 - i. Professor in the Dept. of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology; Committee Chair
 - ii. Just produced & delivered a report on a 18 month effort to build and conduct a climate survey in our department; we also just eliminated the GRE in our graduate admissions.
 - b. Clarissa Ceglio
 - i. Assistant Professor of Digital Humanities in the Digital Media and Design Department of the School of Fine Arts.
 - ii. Completed a climate survey on how remote learning and covid is affecting the different types of students based on where they live in the School of Fine Arts in Storrs and Stamford campuses.
 - c. Sandeep Mishra
 - i. Senior Computer Programming Analyst at Storrs campus.
 - ii. Part-time Grad student at Hartford.
 - d. Julie Guild
 - i. Minor Protection Coordinator in HR.
 - ii. HR has added a diversity component to orientation for new employees to ensure that they are integrating attention to diversity in their work from the start.
 - e. Diane Lillo-Martin
 - i. Professor in Linguistics department in CLAS.
 - ii. CLAS is doing the work they need to do, and they are hanging in there.
 - f. Kimberly McKeown
 - i. Associate Director of the Center of Students with Disabilities.
 - ii. Glad disability is becoming part of the diversity committee.
 - iii. Trying to ensure access is equal for all students.
 - g. Aida Silva
 - i. Undergraduate admissions office

- ii. Ensuring that when going to recruit incoming students we emphasize UConn and current students promote student diversity.
 - iii. This year we will be doing more holistic review of the students due to becoming test-optional.
- h. Willena Price
 - i. Director of African American Cultural Center.
 - ii. The African American Cultural Center will be initiating a series of conversations involving both undergraduate and graduate students to talk about these current issues on a weekly basis.
- i. Frank Tuitt
 - i. VP and Chief Diversity Officer, Professor of Education of Higher Affairs in the Neag School.
- j. George McManus
 - i. Located at Avery-Point campus.
 - ii. The Marine Science Department made the GRE optional for admission into the graduate program.
 - 1. Professors in the department brought up how the GRE could be expensive for people coming from disadvantaged backgrounds or developing countries, which contributed to the department deciding that the GRE is not required for admission.
- k. Clewiston Challenger
 - i. Assistant Professor in Counseling Education in Counseling Psychology in Neag School of Education.
 - ii. Works with masters and doctoral students.
 - iii. Works with a multicultural course and specifically recruit students who want to work in urban schools.
- l. Anastasio Tzingounis
 - i. Faculty in the neurobiology department.
 - ii. Department eliminated the GRE.
 - 1. Quality has increased, and has necessarily lost any good students.
 - iii. Department is trying to do different talks on diversity to try to be more inclusive.
- m. Mickey McElya
 - i. Professor in the History Department.
 - ii. The History Department has gotten rid of the GRE requirement.
 - iii. Concern: Black and BIPOC faculty have more burdens on their time and emotional labor due to this summer events and the university's means in addressing the situations.
 - 1. Must be more intersectional in our thinking.
- n. Likhita Athina

- i. Undergraduate Student in Computer Science and Engineering Major.
 - ii. Involved in USG.
 - 1. Looking to create a Chief Diversity Officer position to ensure fair positions in USG and Diversity and Inclusion Commission to ensure that the organization is representative of the student body.
 - 2. Started a Diversity and Inclusivity committee.
 - o. Thomas Bontly
 - i. Faculty member in the Philosophy department.
 - ii. The department has thought a lot about diversity.
 - 1. Completed a climate study to help guide the department to being more inclusive and promoting diversity.
 - p. Stephanie Santos
 - i. Assistant Professor in Biomedical Engineering and Associate Director in Engineering Diversity and Outreach center.
 - ii. Working on creating an inclusive environment for both staff and students in the School of Engineering.
- B. Chief Diversity Officer Frank Tuitt gave an overview of his outlook and goals as the new VP and Chief Diversity Officer;
- a. How are we capturing the important work that is happening across the system? Where can we find information about this?
 - b. Been getting to know the people who are engaging with the students and faculty who are promoting diversity.
 - c. Values and Priorities
 - i. Self-care
 - 1. If this is not prioritized, we are going to burn out.
 - ii. Being consciously aware of historically marginalized citizens.
 - d. Frank's goal is to build structure and have longevity within the structure, so that his job is less needed and people would feel confident to facilitate by themselves.
 - i. Goal: Empower others to their work
 - e. Prioritize advocacy and grace for historically minoritized groups at UConn.
 - i. Must do this with integrity and grace.
 - ii. Must always be engaged in the work. Must realize we will not always get it right, but we can create change through our work.
 - f. Take an intersectional approach to our DI effort to pay attention to systems of power, privilege, and oppression.
 - g. We will prioritize two-way communication and radical honesty.
 - i. Radical honesty: Being committed to being a truth-teller.
 - h. Inclusive Excellence
 - i. We can do this through University Climate assessments, acknowledging people come from disadvantaged backgrounds, and through climate surveys.

- i. Life-long learning development
 - i. Institutions fall short as the workforce has not gained all the resources it needs to be successful.
 - j. DI Committees
 - i. How they are being supported?
 - k. How do we know we are having a transformative effect? Does this impact our surrounding borders?
 - l. DI Landing Page
 - i. This is a page to answer questions about diversity.
- C. Questions/Comments to Frank
- a. BIPOC Communities
 - i. Black Indigenous Persons of Color
 - ii. No human-being fits into one box.
 - b. How can we stay connected?
 - i. Possibly use Microsoft Teams (Suggestion).
 - ii. Try to use some kind of form to inform people of what they are doing.
 - c. What is your vision for UConn and what would it ideally look like? (Especially for students who want to help and contribute to the movement?)
 - i. The long range vision is:
 - 1. Addressed the capacity question. We will have a workforce that is operating at a high level on delivering an inclusive institution.
 - 2. All students and staff are feeling a strong sense of community where individuals will not have to leave some parts of the identity outside of UConn.
 - ii. Educating Students
 - 1. Holding students accountable to the standards and values UConn has while providing support.
 - 2. Provide staff the tools they will need to encourage diversity in the classroom.
 - iii. How do we balance teaching people when they are at different levels and paths in their educational journal?
 - iv. As an institution we need to become more comfortable at engaging with our students' emotions.
 - d. Do you have an idea about how this committee can support what you are trying to do?
 - i. We have to put our goals together and figure out how to put our goals in action.
 - ii. Pick one goal and strategically focus on this semester.
- D. What does the committee exist to do?
- a. Review and Recommend

- i. We must do background research on issues involving diversity and providing solutions on what the University can do.
- b. We need to decide what we can do to support diversity.
- c. As a committee we should be supporting inclusion , and equity, not just diversity; chair will investigate options for discussion about the committee name and remit.
- d. Seek out opinions of students and faculty on their concerns about diversity on campus.
- e. Must pay more attention to what is happening on the regional campus, as they usually get pushed to the side.
- f. We must tear down barriers around things that are often not talked about.
- g. We need to be more proactive in our duties and be more progressive.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.