

JEDI Committee

2/25/2021 Meeting

Chair: Margaret Rubega

In attendance: Likhita Athina, Edith Barret, Clewiston Challenger, Damani R. Douglas, Maria-Luz Fernandez, Cheryl Galli (Guest Speaker), Julie Guild, Diane Lillo-Martin, Maryann Markowski, Kimberly McKeown, George McManus, Willena Price, Margaret Rubega (Chair), Frank Tuitt, Nissi Varghese

1. Approval of 1/28/21 Meeting Minutes

- a. Willena Price made a motion to approve minutes.
- b. Julie Guild seconding the motion.
- c. Minutes approved.

2. Chairs' Report

- a. The revision of the Senate bylaws that will include a change to our official name change has been up for comment the last month.
- b. This vote will take place on the 3/1/21 Senate Meeting. Assuming nothing stops it, our name will be officially changed after that meeting.
- c. In the biology and physics building, there was someone who went into the men's bathroom and graffitied a swastika and a racial slur in a bathroom stall.

3. Campus-wide Updates

- a. The Disability is Diversity presentation will be taking place tomorrow (2/26/21) and will be presented by Caroline Solomon.

4. University Climate Working Group Report

- a. This working group gets together to learn about what types of climate assessments are being done at the University. They gather information on what would constitute best practices for the University.
- b. This group has met twice.
- c. They have been divided into two sub-committees; one to inventory the climate assessments that are already being conducted on campus, one to create a set of "Best Practices" recommendations.
- d. The committee has a report due in May.

5. Sub-committee Reports

- a. The *Mission Change Proposal subcommittee* is no longer needed as we have changed our name, and we know what our mission statement is.
 - i. Maryann Markowski wants to tackle the issue that there is not a standard that the diversity statement is required of staff job-applicants on campus while it is required for faculty.
 - ii. Maryann Markowski had a meeting with Frank Tuitt and Michael Bradford to discuss this issue.

- iii. If you would like to join Maryann Markowski in tackling this problem, please let her know.
 - 1. Julie Guild and Maryann Markowski will touch base to discuss this issue.
 - 2. Diane Lillo-Martin is willing to help.
- b. *Selection of Distinguished Professor Process Subcommittee*
 - i. We will be meeting next week.
- c. *Resolution Proposal on Anti-Racism Subcommittee*
 - i. We have a draft of the proposal.
 - ii. Maria-Luz Fernandez shared the draft of the proposal.
 - iii. The proposal will be posted on Microsoft Teams so anyone can provide feedback, suggestions, and edits.
- d. *Adding Anti-Racism Coursework to Gen-ed Requirements Subcommittee*
 - i. In March, there the co-chairs of the Delta GE2 committee within the Senate who will be joining us for our monthly meeting. They will be talking about what their proposal looks like and what specific requirements will be in place for anti-racism courses.

6. Senate Representation

- a. The subcommittee of Senate representation has sent a draft of the research they have done and proposals they want our committee to go over and discuss.
- b. Cheryl Galli is here today to talk to us more about why the Senate Representation numbers are the way they are.
 - i. A few years ago, Graduate student Senate President, Justin Fang, and Karen Brushpiano who was the staff representative brought this issue up to the Senate to get more representation.
 - ii. The SSC wanted to discuss why they wanted to increase the number of seats in the Senate, rather than just bringing up that they wanted to increase the seats.
 - iii. The University bylaws explain that there are 91 seats in the University Senate and provide a breakdown of those seats.
 - iv. The SSC investigated why they wanted an increase in the number of seats in the University Senate. They found out that the number of undergraduate and graduate students representatives has not increased since students became part of the Senate in 1973. Also, with great increases in the number of faculty and the number of students who attend UConn, the current number of seats does not reflect the increase in faculty and students.
 - v. Faculty seats are 1 for 30, and then whatever is leftover out of the 72 seats will go into the faculty at large constituencies.
- c. Questions for Cheryl:

- i. What committee is currently working on this topic? How does committee membership get added?
 1. Professional staff members of the University Senate are currently working on this (not a committee).
- ii. How far along is this group working on this? Would it be beneficial for the JEDI committee to help?
 1. The group working on this topic is far along. However, JEDI feedback would be helpful.
- iii. What is the proposal going to look like in terms of increasing representation?
 1. We have not reached the conclusion that it would for example be 1 for every 30 staff/students. However, currently, Cheryl's part is looking at the different sub constituencies and creating more of them in terms of academic affairs.
- iv. How is the group working on telling if the Senate is too big?
 1. We do not want the senate to get too big. Small groups can still make a big impact on decisions being made. George McManus believes the Senate should not be larger than 100 people.
 2. Julie Guild followed up on George McManus' statement by asking if small groups can make an impact on the senate, then why can we not reduce the size of faculty in the senate?
 - a. George McManus responded to this by agreeing with Julie that the faculty can be cut down to provide more spots to students and staff. However, faculty may always be larger because they are involved in the curriculum and accreditation of the University, which is a great part of what the University Senate deals with.
- v. Is it possible for new members to join a committee later on in the school year?
 1. If somebody wants to join midway through the year, they can send Cheryl an email and she will bring it up to the nominating committee, but it must be an extenuating circumstance.
 2. Likhita Athina noted that at the point when students are deciding what committee to join, they do not know their class schedule yet and it is sometimes hard to be able to go to meetings since students schedules are not very predictable at that point in time.
 - a. Margaret Rubega agreed with Likhita that students' schedules may not be as predictable as faculty/staff, however the Committee tries to do polls to determine the time most people can come to the meeting.

- d. Damani Douglas brought up that although we are called the “University Senate”, we are more like a “Faculty Senate”. So we need to fully embrace being named the “University Senate” and find ways to show how we represent the entire university.
 - i. How can we include students in a meaningful way in the University Senate?
 - ii. Margaret Rubega asked Damani Douglas if he believes there is difficulty in filling Undergraduate seats in the University Senate because there is the perception that it takes a lot of time, but the students cannot actually have an impact.
 - 1. Damani Douglas agreed with Margaret Rubega.

7. Plans after meeting with Cheryl

- a. The ad hoc for the professional staff meets next Wednesday.
- b. Cheryl will bring up this conversation to them and will report back to Margaret Rubega.
- c. If people on the JEDI committee think this is a useful approach, then Margaret Rubega can try to attend one of their meetings in the future.
- d. Julie Guild will try to attend the meeting.