

Committee on Diversity March 26, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Present: Tim Beyer, Joel Elliot, Lea Fortmann, John Lear, Christina Mills, Ariela Tubert, Erin Valoros (student guest), Carrie Woods, Steven Zopfi (Chair)

Agenda: Discussion on Cultural Competency Training and work on Annual Report.

Chair Zopfi called the meeting to order at 12pm. Minutes from the February 10 meeting were approved. Discussion focused on continuing efforts around cultural competency. Mills proposed that such training should be mandatory for faculty--student leaders are required to undergo such training, so why aren't faculty required? Mills and Valoro shared a link for a student "Survey for Mandatory Faculty Diversity Training." Survey data show a clear desire among students for mandatory cultural sensitivity training for faculty. The Posse program was noted as a good model that could be universalized. Others agreed that it was important to have universal training, but acknowledged--given the current transitions, virus-related distractions and limited resources--that it was better to have something small in place first that can be expanded over time to include and require participation by all faculty.

We discussed the related mechanisms by which students report the cultural insensitivities of faculty in the classroom. Currently students can report concerns to BHERT and mechanisms exist to protect their identity and/or delay their report until grades are in. These mechanisms might be improved and linked to broader efforts to improve the cultural competency of faculty.

Though COD members consider support for faculty cultural competency training a priority, it was tied to faculty mentoring issues. There is no formal mentoring program on campus. We noted past COD discussions that have considered mentoring programs offered the National Center for Faculty, efforts of NW5 colleges to create separate and shared programs, and ongoing discussions by Tubert and Associate Dean Christophe with a working group of faculties that include the issue of mentoring. Ongoing questions are whether mentoring should come from administration, senior faculty or more lateral peers, and how such generalized mentoring of untenured faculty can address issues of cultural competency and the needs of faculty from under-represented groups.

COD members acknowledged the uncertainty of the current coronavirus moment and the relation of COD efforts to the ongoing search for a V.P. of Diversity and Inclusion. We agreed to hold two additional meetings, April 6th and 13th, to consider formal recommendations on cultural competency training and mentoring and to prepare the final COD report for the senate.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Lear