

Committee on Diversity  
Minutes  
February 1, 2013

Committee members in attendance: Lisa Ferrari, John Lear, Mark Martin, Aislinn Melchior, Amy Ryken, student member Hannah Smith, George Tomlin, and Carolyn Weisz.

Meeting called to order by Chair Amy Ryken at 9:03AM.  
Minutes from the previous meeting unanimously approved.

Announcements:

The Transgender Health Benefits motion was approved without amendment by the faculty senate and staff senate and the recommendation was forwarded to HR.

Hannah Smith, the student representative for the semester was introduced to all the attending members of the committee.

The New Faculty Orientation held on January 17th elicited positive feedback. The whole was framed as an ongoing conversation and the faculty narratives in particular helped faculty think about unexpected issues that can arise in the classroom and discuss the different ways that they might engage with them. The whole seemed to be particularly fruitful in part because of Sarah Moore's work to keep junior faculty involved in ongoing contact not only with one another but also with more senior faculty.

The hope is to get faculty engaged with diversity issues across their entire careers. Wednesdays at 4 was proffered as another venue in which to continue conversations. It was later noted that Wednesday at 4 on April 17th is reserved for a race and pedagogy issue and so might be a profitable place to open more discussions pertaining to diversity.

And on final announcement: on February 25th, there will a presentation by cellist and multi-media artist Paul Rucker on Education and Criminal Justice.

Meeting times were established for the coming semester:

8:30 AM Monday mornings 2/11, 2/25, 3/11, 3/25, 4/8, 4/22, and possibly also 5/6.

Meeting: The meeting proper began with the opening a discussion of diversity and how diversity is defined within the current curriculum as described by the departments in the 5-year curriculum review process.

Amy Ryken then asked whether the committee should request the floor at a faculty meeting this spring in order to open a discussion about a possible diversity requirement. It was felt that this might be premature in that the committee would first like to sift through the various answers from the departments about diversity within the curriculum as it stands and sort out what needs a possible requirement might answer and how it might do so. It was also felt that the hiring of the new Chief Diversity Officer would

provide the most obvious point person for enacting any of the committee's suggestions.

George Tomlin, who was present when the current core was put in place, provided insight into the various conversations and compromises that resulted in the current core and noted that he felt that the responses demonstrated that the campus had come a long way in engaging diversity in the curriculum.

Other suggestions included keeping student activists involved in promoting their interest and the perceived need for such a core.

Because the enactment of such a requirement will need the full support of the faculty, it was decided that we should request time for sharing at a Deans and Director's meeting and/or that the Fall Faculty Conversation touch upon the topic of diversity at the university and the potential creation of a diversity requirement.

Members will discuss what their home departments might like to see in such a requirement, and discussion of the materials provided by Amy on the departmental assessments will be explored in the upcoming meeting, including helpful charts of approaches subsequently forwarded by George Tomlin and Amy Ryken.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:55.

Respectfully submitted by Aislinn Melchior.