

Committee on Diversity (COD) Minutes

February 21, 2014

Committee members in attendance: Amy Ryken (Chair), Michael Benitez, Heidi Orloff, Oriol Maria Siu, Hannah Smith (student member), George Tomlin, Jennifer Utrata, Mike Valentine, Carolyn Weisz.

Meeting called to order by Amy Ryken at 2:00 pm.

Announcements:

- The Race and Pedagogy conference Call for Papers is now posted on their webpage.
- The Wednesday at Four sponsored by the Committee for Writing, Learning, and Teaching will hold a conversation on February 26 in Howarth 109 centered on “Engaging Diversity: Imagining Teaching and the Knowledge, Identity, and Power Proposal.” Several faculty will discuss their courses in relation to the KNOW rubric.
- Chair Ryken has been invited back by the ASUPS Senate for a second conversation about the KNOW curriculum proposal; Dean Segawa mentioned the possibility of sending the KNOW proposal to all students by email; Michael Benitez indicated that the Inter-Fraternity Council was also interested in discussing the proposal. These events would take place before the March 25th faculty meeting at which the KNOW proposal will be up for consideration.
- Michael Benitez reported that there were good conversations at today’s Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) open meeting on socioeconomic status as a concern on campus.

The meeting minutes of February 7, 2014 were approved.

The Committee then returned to the discussion of the Faculty Senate’s charge that the COD identify areas of concern among faculty based on a review of faculty responses to the campus climate survey and make recommendations to the Senate. The two survey categories not discussed at the last COD meeting were race/ethnicity and political beliefs.

Chair Ryken reported that Ellen Peters’ Institutional Research office will run cross-tabulation analyses for demographic categories and survey responses by mid-March, to reveal if sub-groups of respondents had different patterns of reply. Weisz cautioned against giving survey results unqualified credence, due to the survey’s unknown degree of representativeness of the campus community, particularly the views of minoritized members. Several Committee members expressed concern that the COD was being asked to summarize a summary of the survey (that of DAC) and present to the Senate as if the COD spoke for faculty. Chair Ryken voiced the perception that the Senate’s charge indicates a willingness to engage with the concerns revealed by the survey, and that they expected the COD to present what themes the COD thinks the faculty should care about.

Benitez noted that in the campus climate survey from the 2006 to the 2012 administration, concern about socioeconomic issues was the one category that did not drop in percent of (faculty and staff) respondents mentioning it. In fact the percentage increased slightly.

The COD considered the approach of making a table of all concerns and listing possible direct actions to address each. During discussion, however, it was strongly expressed how the one key issue with respect to diversity on campus is achieving diversity in faculty hiring. Committee members advocated focusing on that objective. Increasing such diversity is essential to the university's mission, thus it should be the center of the COD's recommendations to the Senate.

As for possible recommended actions, the COD discussed workshops for departments on more effective hiring of minority candidates (such as de-emphasizing "credentialism"), and expanding incentives for new faculty hires that would improve retention. Since establishing community on campus is related to retention, then new faculty who are members of underrepresented groups could be given a release unit to help them build that community. A focused survey of current minority faculty members to determine their perceptions of need should be conducted.

Benitez volunteered to compose a summary of research on campuses diversifying. Smith asked if data were available for our peer comparative institutions. Chair Ryken replied that there are.

Chair Ryken then resolved to draft a one-page statement that the COD identifies the structural diversity issue as the key one on campus, and thanked committee members for their input.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

George Tomlin