

## JEDI (Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion) Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 18th, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Hosted via WebEx

Present: Martha Cutter (Chair); Rebecca Bacher; Gregory Bouquot; Stuart Duncan; Inge Marie Eigsti; Caitlin Elsaesser; Kristen Govoni; Diane Lillo-Martin; Angelo Montes; Sid Muntaha; Diandra Prescod; Greg Reilly; Mackenzie Robinson; Margaret Rubega; Audrey Silva; Frank Tuitt; Eduardo Urios-Aparisi; Yaowu Yuan; Cindy Zhang; Leo Lachut (presenting, guest); Joanna Rivera Davis (presenting, guest)

Absent: Micah Heumann; Jennifer Pascal; Stephany Santos; Kelly Schlabach

- I. Approval of Minutes (May 1, 2023)
  - a. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of May 1, 2023
  - b. The motion to approve minutes from DATE passed unanimously
- II. Procedural Issues:
  - a. Minute Taking: it was determined that a minute taker is needed for future meetings.
  - b. Meeting recording: the committee agreed not to record the meetings.
- III. Introductions
  - a. Each committee member introduced themselves to the group
- IV. Old Business: Updates from the Committee
  - a. **Martha Cutter** asked the group to share any old business on issues that were not addressed fully during the last academic year
  - b. **Greg Reilly** asked for clarification on the role of this committee and what shared objectives exist between the University Senate and how to support university administrators whose work is wholly focused on DEI (ODI, etc). The group discussed this topic as a potential new business item.
  - c. **Martha Cutter** asked for an update on where this committee stood on the issue of gender-neutral bathrooms, which was discussed during this committee last academic year.
    - i. **Frank Tuitt** reviewed what was discussed last year surrounding this issue and highlighted that Kelsey O'Neil at the Rainbow Center has a [Storrs campus map of all gender neutral bathrooms](#). He also highlighted a survey that the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is working on which will provide a list of all full or part-time employees whose roles have a DEI focus. He said the results of this survey will be available later this semester.
    - ii. **Greg Reilly** added that he confirmed with Laura Crookshank in April 2022 that all new building projects and major renovations will include individual all gender bathrooms.
    - iii. **Margaret Rubega** shared that her unit converted a single toilet/sink space into a gender neutral bathroom just by updating signage and adding a lock and that there were no barriers on any unit controlling their space in doing so.
- V. New Business: Work for the Upcoming Year
  - a. **Academic Probation and BIPOC Students: Overview:**

From last year's annual report: "Data from 2017-2021 show that much higher percentages of Black, Latino and Hispanic students than white students end up on academic probation at the end of their first semester at UConn, and that these numbers worsened during the COVID pandemic. The committee would like to learn more about this important issue and Tadarrayl Starke, Associate Vice Provost for Student Success, is scheduled to speak to the group during the May 1 meeting."

Some questions to consider:

- What is the percentage of BIPOC students who are on probation? Is this substantially higher than non-BIPOC students?
  - What efforts are currently in place to mentor/support BIPOC students?
  - What can we do to help these efforts?
- i. **Martha Cutter** reviewed the above note from last year's annual report and noted that statistics shared during the last senate meeting by Mona Lucas on this topic were also alarming. She also shared that she reached out to Tadarrayl Stark for his thoughts on how the Senate might contribute to improvements in DFW rates and academic probation amongst BIPOC students.
  - ii. **Leo Lachut**, Director of Academic Support, shared a report and several statistics on the topic (report attached to these meeting minutes). Leo Lachut also shared other pathways through which his unit follows-up with students who are at risk in a holistic way, such as working with the bursar's office and student advising to follow-up and help students who are struggling financially to alleviate the pressure of these bills. He also emphasized the importance of learning communities such as the Scholars House and La Comunidad in supporting these students.
  - iii. **Joanna Rivera**, Assistant Director (First Year Programs, Learning Communities, Academic Achievement Center, Innovation Zone), presented information about the UConn Connects Program and its impact on traditionally marginalized students, and how the program works to support them.
  - iv. Discussion ensued on how the committee can help faculty to become more aware of these issues and the resources available to students for them to get support and be successful. **Frank Tuitt** stated that his office can help engage with departments and unit leaders on these issues and highlighted these issues are a top priority. A concern was raised that perhaps this message is not filtering down from leadership.
  - v. Eduardo Urios-Aparisi asked about how mentors (in the UConn Connects Program) work with advisors, and also how students transferring either from outside of UConn or from a regional campus are supported. Joanna responded with an update on the recent opening of the Academic Achievement Center on the Waterbury campus to help alleviate some of these challenges.
  - vi. Martha Cutter suggested that the committee brainstorm ideas for improvements on a Google document. She also asked about how to share the information to faculty with three key points: 1) the issue [statistics on BIPOC

student gap vis-à-vis retention and academic probation]; 2) efforts to change the statistics; 3) What faculty can do. Perhaps information can be shared via departmental meetings.

- b. **Assessment procedures:** Are they sensitive to diversity and inclusive? Should we take up this question?
  - i. **Martha** Cutter summarized concerns regarding assessment procedures as they relate to DEI. Frank Tuitt shared that there is an ongoing assessment initiative (2 years) with a strong equity focus and said that his office hosted a professional development day for faculty which was focused on how to be equity-minded in assessments. He added, however, that he is unclear whether there is a formal plan to standardize this methodology across all units. Frank added that all units have access to SERU data which can be disaggregated for race, ethnicity, and gender, and that depending on the size of the program, it can be a very helpful tool (smaller programs may not have a large enough sample size to give accurate data).
- c. **Other New Business?** What should we work on for upcoming year?
  - a. There was no other new business raised by the committee

VI. Next two meetings:

- Monday, October 16th, 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. (Frank Truitt will speak about challenges now that Affirmative Action has been overridden in Admissions)
- Thursday, December 7th, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

VII. Adjournment 3:18 p.m.