

## JEDI (Justice Equity Diversity and Inclusion) Minutes

Monday, October 16th, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

### Minutes

Present: Martha Cutter (Chair); Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, Caitlin Elsaesser, Kristen Govoni, Micah Heumann, Angelo Montes, Sidratul Muntaha, Jennifer Pascal, Diandra Prescod, Mackenzie Robinson, Yaowu Yuan, Cindy Zhang, Greg Bouquot, Stuart Duncan, Audrey Silva, Frank Tuitt (presenting)

Absent: Becky Bacher, Inge Marie Eigsti, Diane Lillo-Martin, Greg Reilly, Margaret Rubega, Stephany Santos

Guest(s): Preston Green, Jeffrey Hines

1. Approval of Minutes: **Martha Cutter** opened the meeting with a welcome to the group and noted that the meeting minutes were sent via email for review. In future, they will be posted in advance to the SharePoint site.
2. New Business: Frank Tuitt will give a presentation on how Affirmative Action impacts admissions at UConn: **Frank Tuitt, Preston Green** and **Jeff Hines** shared a presentation with the group focused on “UConn after SFFA v. Harvard & UNC.” Slides for this presentation are uploaded to the JEDI Committee MS Team shared folder. The floor was open to questions at the conclusion of the presentation.
  - a. **Frank Tuitt** added that this applies to undergraduate and graduate/professional school admissions as well.
  - b. **Caitlin Elsaesser** asked for confirmation that students’ stories or personal experiences based on race are still eligible for consideration by admissions reviewers, but not the actual race category. **Jeffrey Hines** confirmed this is the case. She also asked if this will potentially have a negative impact on the diversity of our students and if there is any data available to show what we might be able to expect. **Jeffrey Hines** said that there is some data prior to this decision – 9 states had already forbidden the use of race/ethnicity in consideration of admissions decisions for public institutions and data resulting from these decisions did have a negative effect on the number of students from diverse backgrounds applying to these schools. **Preston Green** added that it will help UConn to lean into ensuring diversity is a part of the UConn’s mission, and communicated as such, so that admissions figures do not take a negative hit from this supreme court decision.
  - c. **Stuart Duncan** added to the meeting chat that The Graduate School has launched a new initiative to provide diversity fee waivers (through a competitive application, department-based) to potentially move the needle for graduate applications.
  - d. **Martha Cutter** asked if UConn is considering changing essay prompts in the admissions process to make it easier for students to communicate their backgrounds via other means. **Jeffrey Hines** said that UConn Health will not be changing prompts, but did a lot of work about educating readers on spending time reading personal statements in light of this decision. He said he is unaware of any other admissions areas. **Frank Tuitt** confirmed that undergraduate admissions is also not making any essay prompt changes for now. **Preston Green** added that there are ongoing cases where some of these prompt changes, or requiring of diversity statements, are being considered unconstitutional, so these will be important to watch.

- e. **Jeffrey Hines shared that there will be a university-wide town hall on Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (virtual). Vern Granger and Jeffrey Hines will lead a similar presentation and conversation on this topic. This presentation will also be recorded.**
3. Old Business:  
Continued discussion of ways to increase retention & graduation rates of BIPOC students and decrease DFW and Academic Probation rates of this population.

**Martha Cutter** introduced this topic, which was discussed at length during the last meeting with a concern about how much faculty are aware (or not) of the above issue, and how they can help. She asked Frank Tuitt if a more concerted effort to educate faculty and staff of the university's efforts and their own ways they can contribute to this issue, would be helpful. **Frank Tuitt** mentioned that graduation and retention rates of BIPOC students are important considerations in the strategic planning process. He added that training on this topic at the unit-level might be a helpful action. He also shared that the Hartford Campus was recently awarded an AANAPISI grant and HSI grant for the Waterbury Campus, which is very exciting as they are designed to support student success in these areas. Mackenzie asked about MSI/HSI designations and which campuses are eligible. Frank Tuitt shared details about the designations and added that Storrs has not yet reached the threshold for how the federal government defines these institutions ,but that several regional campuses have in various areas. **Caitlin Elsaesser** likes the idea of engaging in conversation on how UConn can be "student ready" rather than students being "college ready" at the unit level. She asked if ODI has any resources for what it might mean for instructors to consider how to consider diversity and being "student ready" in their daily work. **Frank Tuitt** said that CETL has great resources and that a combination of CETL and the Provost's Office (particularly on equity and assessment) would be a great joint presentation to this group on what they are doing and what resources are available. He added that his office has been working on KPIs for units from a DEI perspective, which is still in development, but is something he would be interested in sharing with this group in the future, hopefully during the Spring 2024 semester.

**Martha Cutter** asked the group if they would be interested in making a motion to the faculty senate on making this information more widely available, with a focus on what is going on and what units can do to be impactful in this space. **She put a proposal in the chat, stated below.** **Frank Tuitt** said that the information shared at the September by Mona Lucas senate meeting be shared more broadly as a vehicle for sharing information more broadly on this issue.

**Proposal:** That all units receive information via a short presentation about the University's efforts to retain, mentor, and keep in good academic standing BIPOC and first-generation students (shortened version of the [presentation given to the University Senate at the September Senate meeting by Mona Lucas](#)).

**Martha Cutter** will discuss with SEC Chair Laura Burton before moving forward.

4. Any new items of discussion.

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 7th, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.