

JEDI Annual Report (2024-2025)

Prepared by Martha J. Cutter

April 15, 2025

Committee Charge: This committee shall review University policies, practices, and conditions relevant to supporting and promoting justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion among students, faculty, and staff.

2024/2025 JEDI Committee Members:

- ***Martha Cutter, Chair, CLAS, English, Africana Studies, SCI**
- Melisa Adiram, Executive Assistant to the VP for Diversity and Inclusion (ex-officio member)
- Mary Ann Amalaradjou, CAHNR
- *Becky Bacher, CLAS Advising
- *Micah Heumann, Enrichment Programs, Honors
- *Diane Lillo-Martin, CLAS
- Alba Rosario-Medina, undergraduate student (guest)
- *Eleanor Ouimet, CLAS
- *Diandra Prescod, Neag School of Education
- *Ingrid Semaan, CLAS (Stamford)
- *Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, CLAS, Literatures, Cultures, and Languages
- *Yaowu Yuan, EEB, CLAS
- *Cindy Zhang, Geography, CLAS
- Kimberly Curry, The Graduate School
- Greg Bouquot, Registrar's Office
- Phoenix Harper, Undergraduate Student
- Jeffrey Hines, Office for Diversity and Inclusion (ex-officio member)
- Audrey Silva, Center for Students with Disabilities
- Haritha Subramanian, Undergraduate Student

*Senate Member 2024/2025

Summary:

The JEDI Committee met once a month in August, September, October, and November of 2024, and January, February, March, and April of 2025. Our primary areas of concern over the year were as follows:

- I. **Threats to DEI: In Spring of 2025, this topic was discussed at multiple meetings. Information was shared widely on:**
 - A. Actions the University was taking.
 - B. Cards for Students ("know your rights")
 - C. ODI workshops on faculty harassment and targeting.

- D. Current threats to DEI
- E. Ongoing efforts to support DEI.
- F. Support for International Students and Faculty

At the February meeting, JEDI voted to ask the University Senate to approve a resolution supporting DEI. Cutter proposed this resolution at the March University Senate meeting, which was approved:

RESOLUTION FROM JEDI (JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION) COMMITTEE OF THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

Resolved: The University Senate at the University of Connecticut affirms its support for and solidarity with individuals (faculty, staff, and students) feeling threatened here or elsewhere due to religion, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, immigration status, or other factors. In accordance with our strategic plan’s focus on a “[Stronger, More Inclusive University](#),”* we affirm our commitment going forward to diversity, accessibility, justice, equity, and inclusion and to infusing these principles into everything we do.

From our Strategic Plan:

***A Stronger, More Inclusive University**

Our faculty, staff, and students reaffirmed our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) during this strategic planning process. We believe UConn can set the standard across higher education for how to embrace these principles and infuse them across everything we do.

Throughout the year, Jeffrey Hines also gave vital updates on the intersection of DEI initiatives, and federal funding for research considering the current political climate, particularly concerning the recent executive orders signed by the president. Concrete strategies going forward were also shared.

In the spring, Cutter joined the ODI Monthly Meeting with DEI Representatives organized by Jonelle Reynolds and urges the chair of next year’s JEDI committee to continue doing so.

Action Item: Going forward, we must continue to monitor threats to DEI and urge the University to protect DEI. We must be resistant to changing our policies to appease the current administration.

II. Student Protests, Student Life Policies, and uneven enforcement of University policies:

JEDI has concerns with the treatment of student protestors in Spring of 2024 and uneven enforcement of University policies regarding public space, noise, tents, etc. In the fall, we had numerous conversations about the way the encampment at UConn was handled, and we had many concerns about the enforcement of University policies. Specifically, JEDI emphasized that:

- A. Student Life and other bodies should be making all policies accessible and easily locatable on UConn’s website.

- B. Student Life should make clear when policies are changed (time stamp and date) and who is changing them.
- C. When policies are changed after an event on campus has occurred, JEDI asked for leniency in how the administration and/or the police handle violations.
- D. When is the decision made to take punitive action? How is this made? Who is consulted? JEDI was concerned about this.

Our October meeting was devoted to speaking with Cynthia Costanzo, Assistant Vice President for Student Life, about these concerns. (The policies are available here: <https://policy.uconn.edu/> and here: <https://policy.uconn.edu/recent-updates/>). Costanzo presented a slide deck summarizing the recent policy changes that were made during the summer months. Costanzo explained that the student code was updated to reflect changes voted on by the Senate in 2023 which established an Office of Academic Integrity (for undergraduate students) that has yet to be mobilized, and academic integrity cases are still being managed by Community Standards. Costanzo also reviewed updates to the “Outdoor Activities Policy” and summarized that the policy now identifies prohibited items and practices, and applies to all students, faculty/staff, and visitors on all campuses (unscheduled or planned events). Committee members raised concerns about the changes of the policy, particularly related to tents, and whether that was added during the encampment. Cynthia Costanzo clarified that this policy always existed, but there was confusion due to the previous allowance of tents during the sale of tickets for Athletics. She added that where policy information was available previously made it exceedingly difficult for people to access and understand the right information, which she and her team are focusing on clarifying now because of the confusion caused last spring. Moving forward, Athletics is covered by this policy change, and they have also changed the way that ticket sales take place.

Action Item: We were not entirely satisfied by these explanations, and it still feels to us like UConn policies on noise, tents, etc. are unevenly enforced. For example, it has been reported by onlookers that people did recently camp out in front of Gampel to get good seats for the last men’s basketball game. **We recommend that going forward Student Life and JEDI pay more attention to when, where, and why policies relating to sound, noise, tents, and protest activities are enforced, and the (potentially) uneven enforcement of these policies.** Moreover, JEDI continues to be concerned about unequal enforcement of policies and lack of clarity about how, when, and where disciplinary action is instituted. JEDI should affirm the right of students to protest peacefully. Further, the involvement of police in student protests should be carefully considered and minimal.

III. Exit Interviews for UConn faculty and staff:

JEDI was concerned about the alarmingly high rate of separations of faculty from UConn, especially Black faculty, and that there is little data concerning whether these separations are due to life changes/choices (retirement, a better job offer, etc.) or a hostile climate. In August, guest speaker Lakeesha Brown, Interim Chief Human Resources Officer, spoke extensively with the JEDI committee about a process to capture pending exits of faculty and staff from UConn prior to their final day. Each person would be issued a link to an online, confidential survey and offered a confidential, in-person meeting. This has been used

successfully at the UConn medical school, and the idea is to roll this out for the Storrs campus and regional campuses this year (2024-2025). This data is helpful to identify any specific concerns that need to be referred to OIE or compliance. It also provides the outgoing employee with an opportunity to have a safe space to speak. This was meant to be rolled out in Kuali this year, and we are following up with Lakeesha Brown about how the process is going in our upcoming April meeting.

Action Item: The rollout of exit interviews needs to be monitored. Are they capturing data about why faculty and staff, particularly BIPOC faculty and staff, are leaving UConn? If so, what does this data show? If not, why not? How many faculty or staff participated this year? What are the plans to expand this next year? What happens if there are repeated concerns about a particular department or unit? We need more information about why faculty and staff are leaving, what we can do about this, and whether the climate here at a PWI (Predominantly White Institution) is hostile to BIPOC faculty and staff.

- IV. JEDI Subcommittee for positive messaging on DEI:** A JEDI subcommittee was formed to create positive DEI messaging: Chair, Martha Cutter; members: Kim Curry, Phoenix Harper, Micah Heumann, Haritha Subramanian, Cindy Zhang. So far, this committee has not met due to other pressing matters.

Action item: going forward, Cutter can better chair this sub-committee if she is not chairing JEDI next year.

V. Strategic Plan and KPIs (Key Program Indicators):

Last year, JEDI asked for representation on the Committee working on KPIs for the Strategic Plan. We were not given representation, and ultimately when we saw the KPIs presented we found that they lack specific attention to diversity. We subsequently formulated a list of KPIs and sent this to Phil Hunt and Margaret Feeny, as follows:

KPIs for Strategic Plan from JEDI shared with Margaret Feeney and Phil Hunt

Preamble: Because our Strategic plan strongly emphasizes the values of diversity, equity, and inclusivity, we recommend KPIs dealing with this be incorporated throughout the plan. We recommend the following KPIs:

1. Increase enrollment of BIPOC and first-generation students by 20% across all campuses from current (2023-2024) levels.
2. Increase faculty and staff diversity by 20% from current (2023-2024) rates across all campuses.
3. Increase six-year graduation rates of BIPOC, first generation, and students with disabilities across all campuses by 20% from current (2023-2024) levels. Bring this level closer to 90% goal for all students.
4. For faculty, staff, and students: Ask questions on data sets such as “I find UConn to be a place that is inclusive and respects diversity of all types” (yes or no). Aim for 70% yes response rate. Collect qualitative data as well.

5. Survey BIPOC and first-generation students about inclusivity and involvement on campus: “As a first-generation or BIPOC Student, I feel included and involved on my campus.” (Goal: 70% feel included and involved)
6. Survey whether the University attends to students' mental health and/or disability needs: “I feel that adequate resources exist on my campus for dealing with mental health and disability.” (Goal: 70% yes). A goal of our strategic plan is “wholistic student health,” so attempt to measure this in some way.
7. Add a KPI dealing specifically with regional campuses: “At my regional campus, I feel that resources and support for student success are adequate.”
8. Consider best ways to measure retention of BIPOC faculty and staff (exit rates are high, but we don’t know what these exit rates mean). “As a BIPOC faculty or staff member, I value my time at UConn and would be hesitant to leave.” (70% yes; collect qualitative data as well). Consider “stay” or “retention” interview data rather than exit interview data.
9. Include more measures that track faculty excellence not only in the Sciences (i.e., National Academy membership is a KPI but is only open to faculty in science) but also across all schools and colleges.
10. The KPI on student debt needs revising. “I feel confident that the level of debt I have incurred during my years of education is manageable”: Aim for a rate of 70-80% “yes.” Collect qualitative data on what we could do better in this regard.
11. New KPIs can be added every year to follow up on whether we are meeting our goals. Yearly or bi-yearly assessment and tracking of KPIs needs to be part of the plan. If progress is not being made, consider what can be done to improve the situation.
12. For any quantitative data collected, also include qualitative data so that we can know what the data means.

Subsequently, we met with Margaret Feeney, and she agreed that many of these goals were feasible.

Action Item: Going forward, the KPIs need to be closely monitored. As of this date, they do not reflect diversity and inclusivity. The KPIs appear to remain unchanged. JEDI also suggests potential new KPIs responding to the current situation, such as “I feel freedom of speech and assembly are protected by UConn” and “I feel that international students’ rights are supported and protected by UConn.”

See:

<https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=https://strategicplan.media.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3794/2025/02/UConn-KPIs.pdf&hl=en> (slide 15), where the KPIs have remained unchanged.

VI. Updates on ABR (Anti-Black Racism) and other Anti-Racism classes:

This came up at several of our meetings. One department is in the process of taking over the delivery of this class. But we remain concerned about the slow pace of this: the motion for the ABR class was passed at the May 1, 2023, Senate meeting and the class will not be in existence until August 2026, it seems.

There is also concern about why the other 1-credit antiracism classes are not being taught any more (such as “Why the Jews” or “Anti-Muslim Bias” or “Confronting Anti-Asian Racism.”)

Action Items: JEDI looks forward to the ABR being available for entering students in August 2026 and very much hopes the other Anti-Racism classes can be brought back (Cutter was told they make no money and there was no longer any budget for them, but there are good DEI reasons to offer them regardless).

VII. JEDI name change: JEDI voted to change its name to DEIJA: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility. The vote was approved during the Senate’s meeting on April 9, 2025. Updating the JEDI acronym has been discussed in the committee for the last few semesters ([particularly citing this article as to why](#)), but other items had taken priority.

VIII. JEDI Review of the “Final Report of the Salary Equity Analysis Working Groups” from December 5, 2022, https://provost.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2165/2023/03/Salary-Equity-Analysis_Final-Report_Fall-2022.pdf). Laura Burton asked JEDI to review this. Martha Cutter reviewed and sent JEDI recommendations to Laura Burton. (See Appendix One)

.....

Appendix One: Cutter/JEDI Recommendations on the Final Report of the Salary Equity Analysis Working Groups (https://provost.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2165/2023/03/Salary-Equity-Analysis_Final-Report_Fall-2022.pdf)

Section One: Gender Disparities:

Key findings: Significant gender pay gaps exist:

p. 3: The data shows that female faculty were paid \$15,923 (13% of average female salary) less than male faculty on average in 2020 and have a disproportional under-representation in schools/colleges and in the three ranks of professorship. The average differences vary among the college/schools, and among departments.

p.7: Data summarizing average salaries for the CLAS faculty: Figure 2 reports average 2020 salaries by CLAS division, and shows that male faculty earn between \$6,145 (Humanities) and \$18,979 (Physical Sciences) more than their female counterparts, on average

p.8: Gap worse for Associate and Full Profs: Table 2, this table shows more female salary disadvantage at the associate and full professor ranks than at the assistant ranks. Seven of the 23 CLAS departments listed have average salary gaps disadvantaging females at the assistant professor level, 13 departments at the associate professor level, and 15 departments at the full professor level.

p.18: Gap does not seem to pertain to race/ethnicity

“Adding race/ethnicity to the model does not change the gender gap, but adding the department female percentage proves to have the largest downward effect on average salary gap, reducing it by nearly 5 percentage points. In other words, departments with more female faculty are correlated with lower average salaries. Adding the years of service variable to the model reduces the salary gap further in half, by 4 percentage points. Adding faculty rank and department reduces the estimated gap further by a percentage point each, leaving an estimated 2% gap. However, to the extent that these additional controls are gendered, this reduction in the salary gap is less a meaningful reduction than a partitioning of the salary gap among potentially gendered variables.”

JEDI/Cutter Conclusions: Additional research is required to address a range of issues related to Gender-based inequities in pay. While it is likely that a variety of variables affect these pay differences, they are robust and in need of further study going forward.

..... **Section Two: Dual Career**

Key Findings:

- 1) Data is woefully inadequate.
- 2) There is a wide gap in reported Dual Career requests and accommodations between Department Heads and AAUP members themselves. Department Heads report that partner accommodations are rarely requested and usually granted. AAUP members report that partner accommodations are often requested and only sometimes granted.
- 3) Individuals seeking, but not granted, partner accommodations are often paid less than other faculty of commensurate rank.
- 4) Individuals granted partner accommodations often earn more than other faculty of commensurate rank.
- 5) Individuals hired as the primary employee often earn more than those hired in a partner accommodation.
- 6) There is a lack of transparency and effective communication about the process, or even the possibility, of a dual career hire.
- 7) There is also a lack of a centralized process that can be readily located on the UConn website.
- 8) Follow-through is lacking on partner hires into positions different than requested.

Conclusions: “Despite, but not dismissing, the limitations of the datasets, the regressions perform as expected and explain more than half of the salary variance . . . These data consistently indicate that females may be paid less than others. . . These results are consistent with many individuals in a dual career relationship experiencing difficult professional circumstances” (25).

Recommendations:

- 1) The Provost should reinstate Partner Hires for Dual Couples to recruit and retain talented faculty.

- 2) Create Dual-Career formal policies that are readily accessible and transparent. Features could include:
 - a. Advertise that UConn has a partner hire policy in job postings.
 - b. Use the process in recruitment and retention.
 - c. Develop a process for promoting top non-tenure track faculty members into tenure-track faculty positions.
 - d. Institutionalize a framework to implement policies and monitor their effectiveness:
 - e. Collect systematic and complete data on dual career couples.
 - f. Assign administrative responsibilities for such tasks.

JEDI agrees with all of these recommendations.

Section Three: Merit

Key Finding:

Due to departmental differences in how merit was awarded and evaluated, it was hard to draw conclusions about how merit affects salary and may be biased by race or gender. Statistical results suggest that, on average, women have received higher merit awards than men over the last several years. However, while the results indicate clear differences, the size of these differences is small: only around \$5-6 difference within the average merit award of around \$2000.

Several recommendations were made in the report, with which JEDI agrees:

- 1) “Departments and units using multiple-year merit evaluations should examine the impact of averaging multiple year evaluations of merit on gender. If they find problems caused by leave or additional at-home responsibilities, they should consider other options. For example, they might grant merit based on the level of activity when the faculty were not on approved leave. They might also consider giving faculty who were on parental or caregiver leave during the merit cycle the choice between multiple-year (before leave) or the past calendar year” (p. 75).
- 2) “Departments should closely examine their merit criteria to determine whether their merit criteria create gender and racial/ethnic disparities. They should not only consider their weighting of research in relation to service and teaching, but they should examine whether they are evaluating research in ways that create gender and racial/ethnic discrepancies” (76).
- 3) “The university should encourage departments to consider how differential job expectations and duties intersect with the process for determining meritorious performance and how that performance is rewarded.” (77)

JEDI agrees with these recommendations.

Section Four: Retention Study Working Group

Recommendations from the Report:

- 1) Exit survey findings are available and can be analyzed fully. “A separate working group will be established in the next academic year to analyze and disseminate the results of this

- 2) Creation of a best practice guide to support retention efforts at UConn. When looking at other institutions and conducting the interviews for this study, members of this working group particularly liked the extensive guide provided by Columbia University. Was this ever created? JEDI suggests follow up.
- 3) Specific training could also be provided for department heads to ensure that they have the knowledge and tools to implement proactive strategies related to faculty retention. Was this ever implemented? JEDI suggests follow up.
- 4) Data on retention also continues to be an issue. Gathering historic data on retention is complicated and relies on institutional memory. One recommendation of our group is that during faculty offboarding, information should be gathered that could help improve retention practices going forward. JEDI believes the new exit interviews will help deal with this issue.

- 1) Be aware when there is salary compression or salary reversion. If these issues are solved in a timely manner, faculty do not feel the need to look somewhere else. This can be taken care of either by merit or by specific requests to Deans/Provost to fix the salary compression problem.
- 2) Merit pay systems need to be transparent.
- 3) Make sure that faculty members are informed that they are valuable members of the department and to the University by nominating them for an award or by providing small packages for laboratory resources or support of graduate students.
- 4) Retention offers should reflect the career stage of the faculty. For junior faculty spousal hire was a prominent issue in retention. At Associate level support for promotion and at Full support for graduate funding, named awards however small, in addition to other support such as endowed positions, were also effective.
- 5) Be proactive by asking faculty every year what they need.
- 6) Formal mentoring programs keep junior faculty engaged and help ensure faculty are treated equally.

- 1) Conduct exit interviews with all individuals. Data from exit interviews should be added to a centralized database addressing equity: gender, rank, appointment status (tenured, tenure rank, or CIRE), and ethnicity.

- 2) Faculty appointment letters for tenure track faculty should include two specific dates: (1) “no sooner than____” a candidate may apply for promotion and/or tenure and (2) “no later than ____” a candidate may apply for promotion and/or tenure.
 - 3) With a submitted tenure application, whether it be at the “no sooner than” date or the “no later than” date, candidate signs a statement acknowledging this is their only opportunity to apply. They cannot reapply, regardless of the outcome (l.e. even if they choose to withdraw the application).
 - 4) Criteria for an early review need to be clear.
 - 5) The committee recommended the establishment of a university-wide PTR committee to proactively make recommendations on PTR to the Provost on every application PRIOR to Provost review and replace the current Faculty Review Board. This committee would be charged to:
 - a. Create and disseminate procedures.
 - b. Utilize By-Laws statement, “there must be evidence of strong performance in both scholarship and teaching and superior achievement in at least one of these” (UConn Bylaws Article XIV D1).
 - c. Review all applications for tenure and/or promotion.
 - d. Make recommendations to the Provost Review Committee on each application.
- (JEDI remains unsure if this committee exists and/or if it would be helpful but endorses the other recommendations).