Equity and Diversity Committee
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
January 11, 2023, 3:30pm-4:30pm
103 Taylor Hall (Taylor-Hibbard Room)

Attendees: Erika Anna, Christiana Binkley, Brad Bolling, Thomas Browne, Victor Cabrera, Karie Cherwin, Kerri Coon, Rosalia Gittens, Al Kovaleski, Louis Macias, Justin Moua, Mandi Moy, Ivan Rayment, Amy Trowbridge

Not present: Dominique Brossard, Joya Headley, Jenyne Loarca, Breanna Sinotte Wang, Erin Wall, Angela Waupochick

Minutes by: Erica Flyte

Attending as public meeting: None

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Tom Browne at 3:32pm.

Welcome
Committee members introduced themselves. Mandi Moy introduced herself and shared her background and experience. Mandi will be an ex officio member of the EDC.

Review agenda
No changes

Approval of November 9, 2022 and December 12, 2022 meeting minutes (attachments)
Victor Cabrera made a motion to approve the November 9, 2022 and December 12, 2022 meeting minutes with one misspelling updated in the December minutes. Erika Anna seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Subcommittee of EDC to review the CALS Equity and Diversity Award nominations
Awards nominations are due February 10, 2023. Committee members were encouraged to nominate their colleagues. A small subcommittee of EDC is needed to review the nominations and submit a recommendation. A subcommittee will be recruited in the upcoming weeks.

Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) updates

Project management tools & snapshot of ODEI work
Goal is to generate a monthly or quarterly update of ODEI projects and initiatives; an efficient way to share the work that is being done so that EDC meeting time can be used strategically for deeper conversations on topics.

Timeline for launch of initiatives
Rosie Gittens gave an update on the DEI learning hub. Progress is being made toward the creation of a central online location for CALS DEI resources. The learning hub will be organized by topic; users will be able to search by topic or by type of resource. The current focus is on resources for faculty and staff. The
ODEI is working with CALS IT on set-up and content upload and hopes to launch a prototype with which people can interact and provide feedback between February and the end of the academic year. Users will be able to offer feedback on what is working well, what is missing, etc., during this trial period, after which the hub will fully launch by the beginning of academic year 2023-2024.

The CALS DEI consultation service will be a part of the academic year 2023-2024 launch. EDC members were encouraged to consider what may be the most effective communication plan to promote users of these resources so that meaningful feedback is provided to the ODEI team.

Mandi Moy will work on the launch of the DEI professional development requirement. More updates will be available in the future.

Graduate student climate update to departments
A pattern of accounts detailing concerns about graduate student climate has emerged. A communication from CALS leadership will be sent soon framing this as an urgent issue and detailing steps that will be taken over the next six months. CALS' HR, Academic Affairs, and DEI teams have met to discuss an action plan for a consistent source of information for graduate students, how to provide resources for the appropriate levels of support, and who will provide the support including areas of mediation, learning and training, advocating for policy revision, and investigations.

Comments and questions:
- Do mediation services exist now?
  - Not directly. There are university services, but not CALS services. The Employee Assistance Office (EAO) is a university option that exists, although some people have been told that mediation is not something EAO can provide. Ombuds is another resource that may be able to sit in on mediations.

Note: a follow-up message was sent to EDC members outlining the resources that the EAO does provide for conflict resolution.

- What should a person do if they reach the Ombuds limit and are referred to the EAO, but the EAO is unable to assist?
  - An important consideration is impartiality, which is a key component of successful mediation. The CALS team is better suited for relationship building than informally mediating. Open to feedback on a centralized, coordinated resource.

- What prompted the sense of a concerning graduate student climate? The desire for a clear reporting system?
  - This is one of many contributing factors. Much outreach has been done to groups and to graduate students, and an increasing sense of climate concerns became apparent in November/December, with many accounts of repeating issues that need to be addressed to move forward.

- What will be included in the letter from CALS leadership addressing the graduate student climate?
  - The letter will include details about the team that will support graduate students and related concerns, a plan for DEI learning and consultation, and opportunities for forums.

- What types of grievances do graduate students want to report? Are there patterns besides frustrations with advisors?
  - Two core themes are climate, much of which is related to advisors, and funding. Some
students are experiencing issues in one of these areas and some are experiencing issues in both. Each is complex and if attention is given to just one area, resolutions will not be reached.

- What is the dean’s office’s motivation and investment in recognizing and addressing these issues?
  - Historically, some situations have been managed passively. The dean is invested in the new possibilities that will become achievable if the graduate student climate is increased.

- Addressing hostile and intimidating behavior needs to be a priority.

- New faculty have received mixed messages from leadership about the balance of focusing on one’s own tenure track regardless of the negative impact it may have on others.

- Is there an inverse relationship between the quality of research output and graduate student climate?
  - No, not at all. It should be the opposite: if people are taken care of, quality and output should increase, for both students and faculty.
  - How prevalent is the perception that high quality output is arrived at by pushing harder?

- How will the college advocate for assistance with fees for graduate students? When faculty are told to have fewer graduate students, this feels dismissive and seems that there is a lack of the college’s commitment to these issues.
  - Bring these concerns to the upcoming forums so leadership can hear directly from the people who are affected.

**Subcommittee breakout sessions:** Organizational Learning & Rosie Gittens, Assessment & Mandi Moy, Community & Louis Macias

Subcommittees separated to discuss their initial ideas for subcommittee work, to assign a facilitator, and to schedule a subcommittee meeting to occur before the next EDC meeting.

**Adjourn**
The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:50pm.