

Equity and Diversity Committee
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
September 13, 2023, 11:30am-12:45pm
240 Steenbock Library

Attendees: Burcu Alptekin, Brad Bolling, Dominique Brossard, Tom Browne, Karie Cherwin, Kerri Coon, Amanda Gevens, Rosie Gittens, Tracy Hanke, Jelena Lee, Louis Macias, Ivan Rayment, Bre Sinotte Wang, Amy Trowbridge, Erin Wall

Not present: Victor Cabrera, Al Kovaleski, Mandi Moy

Minutes by: Rosie Gittens

Attending as public meeting: None

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Brad Bolling at 11:31 am.

Welcome/introductions

Brad Bolling welcomed the committee. Members introduced themselves and shared highlights of their summers.

Review agenda

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

Approval of May 8, 2023 meeting minutes (attachment)

Erin Wall made a motion to approve the May 8, 2023 meeting minutes. Dominique Brossard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Committee overview, purpose & expectations

- Approach to EDC projects moving forward
 - Brad Bolling clarified the objectives of the committee.
 - There was an internal discussion regarding the meeting format (virtual vs in-person). Decision to continue with in-person meetings due to the nature of the group.
- Department Diversity Representatives & Graduate Program Coordinators
 - Three core groups in CALS involved with conversations surrounding diversity, equity and inclusion are the Equity and Diversity Committee, the Department Diversity Representatives and coordinators of CALS graduate programs.
 - Each group is unique and allows for different stakeholder participation. Each has its own power structure, advocacy level and scope of discussion. The groups can advocate to various circles of influence and have insight into sense of pulse in these circles.
 - Future: ODEI will connect with the CALS Committee on Academic Staff Issues (CASI) to explore collaboration and engagement with staff.
- Follow up on:
 - Lab safety manual
 - Broader conversations will take place. Louis Macias will connect with Kelley Kula, the CALS safety coordinator.
 - The CALS Agricultural Research Stations (ARS) worked with the ODEI to make their job applications more inclusive and to help improve access.
 - Discussions were held about how to improve the onboarding experience, i.e., safety training and other lab safety training.

- Questions/comments:
 - The prior CALS safety coordinator was working on a lab manual. Will this work continue?
- DEI best practices
 - Tom Browne shared information regarding the new climate reporting system.
 - A best practices document can be created as a resource. Many of the themes are already incorporated into the initiatives the ODEI is leading.
 - Questions/comments:
 - Where does accountability begin? How do we build a sense of accountability and decide what to track?
- Goal 4
 - One of the college's five strategic priorities is climate. This is a complex topic and is a work in progress.
 - Conversations being held about what resources need to be in place to support folks at the individual level.
 - Questions/comments:
 - Each department has a different reality. General, college-level metrics may impact departments differently based on the size of the department.
- Prospective employee peer support
 - Idea to implement a Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) peer support group; brought to committee by Al Kovaleski last spring.
 - Work in progress. Goal is to have a pool of BIPOC peers that prospective candidates can identify with. Meet during the interview process to answer questions about life in Madison, campus, etc.
 - Tom Browne will work With Al Kovaleski to develop the idea. ODEI very supportive.
- Food Justice Summit & approach to DEI programming
 - ODEI has created a series of programming to increase knowledge around DEI topics and to help fulfill the professional development requirement.
 - Programming has been planned for different days of the week and times of the day with the goal of meeting a wide range of scheduling preferences.
 - Topics include general DEI concepts and engaging in difficult conversations in the workplace.
 - ODEI is committed to supporting CALS departments planning DEI programming by offering financial support to departments/units doing this work. Budget limitations may impact the financial support available. ODEI will work within reason to support events with an average of \$1k.

ODEI updates

- Year ahead for ODEI
 - Tom Browne joined the ODEI team in June 2023 as the senior assistant dean for climate and engagement.
 - Louis Macias shared a PowerPoint presentation. Described how the work of the ODEI aligns with the local and broader community. Explained gaps and areas for growth.
 - Significant progress regarding how hostile and intimidating behavior (HIB) is managed at the local level.
 - ODEI communication plan will begin in October 2023. Will aim to share new initiatives to CALS community.
- Share-out: [ODEI website](#), [Learning Hub](#), [Climate Reporting](#)
 - DEI consultation services may help support unique needs for the college that are not covered through the Learning Hub and/or the professional development requirement.
 - Will assist in data collecting and inform themes related to issues people are facing over time.
 - ODEI annual report: will include a variety of data; working to identify the parameters.
 - CALS Climate Response Team: partnership with CALS ODEI, CALS Academic Affairs and CALS Human Resources.
 - Creation of this team encourages collaboration and promotes less siloed work.
 - Louis Macias and Troy Runge are involved with new faculty onboarding sessions in the fall and spring semesters. Spring sessions will include lab culture and DEI-related content.
 - EDC members can serve as communicators; encouraged to spread the word on these initiatives.
 - Further question/comments regarding these initiatives can be emailed to odei@cals.wisc.edu

Overview & discussion re: summer developments regarding DEI

- May campus incident
 - ODEI will lead a tabletop exercise in December. The goal will be for leadership to explore a real time case study to evaluate how they will respond to a given situation.
- State legislature
 - Acknowledgement of the \$32 million budget cut to funding designated for the diversity, equity and inclusion programs across the UW System schools. Campus will absorb this cut. The chancellor stated that the budget cut will not impact any DEI programming or roles. Uncertainty as to what will happen in the future. Assumption that the university may benefit from decisions made at other states by having an influx of people join UW-Madison.
- SCOTUS
 - Affirmative action decision is impacting specific programming on universities.
 - During admissions, race is being removed before the process starts.
 - In states where affirmative action has been eliminated, there have been drastic declines in the number of students of color applying to college.
 - Questions/comments:
 - What about the TOP?
 - The chancellor renewed TOP for one more year; direction is unclear.
 - What is happening to scholarships directed to support people of color?
 - Less than 1% of scholarships are dedicated to only people of color. Most scholarships are based on merit.
 - Does the affirmative action decision apply to graduate college admissions?
 - Yes. There will be admissions workshops offered by the graduate school to help understand this process.
- UNC and campus safety
 - Not addressed.
- ODEI strategy
 - Not addressed.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:47 pm.