

Equity and Diversity Committee
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences
November 22, 2023, 11:30am-12:45pm
Via Zoom

Attendees: Brad Bolling, Dominique Brossard (arrived at 11:38), Tom Browne, Karie Cherwin (arrived at 11:36), Rosie Gittens, Tracy Hanke, Al Kovaleski, Richard Lankau (delegate for Amanda Gevens), Louis Macias, Mandi Moy, Ivan Rayment, Bre Sinotte Wang, Erin Wall

Not present: Burcu Alptekin, Victor Cabrera, Kerri Coon, Amanda Gevens, Jelena Lee, Amy Trowbridge

Minutes by: Erica Flyte

Attending as public meeting: None

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Brad Bolling at 11:32 am.

Welcome/review agenda

Additional agenda item: brief discussion of segregated fees and stipends for graduate students and international students. Campus is resistant to eliminating segregated fees as they are directly tied to services, such as University Health Services, to which students need access.

Comments:

- Departments can only pay segregated fees from certain accounts. If the fees are reclassified, could they be paid from different accounts rather than changing the stipends?
 - Will investigate the potential of changing accounting classifications for segregated fees.
- The CALS Associate Dean for DEI will be part of a group created to discuss graduate student topics. The EDC will be updated on the happenings of this group.

Approval of October 18, 2023 meeting minutes

Erin Wall made a motion to approve the October 18, 2023 meeting minutes. Bre Sinotte Wang seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

DEI Professional Development Requirement

Review of timeline: the DEI Professional Development (DEI-PD) Requirement was formally recommended by the CALS EDC in 2020 and approved by the CALS APC on May 18, 2021. The CALS Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion was onboarded in January 2022. Since this time, consultations with many stakeholders have ensued to inform strategic planning. The Community Impact Manager was onboarded in January 2021 and prioritized the research for and development of the requirement.

The CALS EDC met with the CALS Dean on October 18, 2023. At this meeting, an update was given on the rollout of the pilot group for the requirement, which was set to launch on October 23, 2023. As of October 23, 2023, the CALS Dean has requested to pause the DEI-PD Requirement. The state pay plan sensitivities were cited as a factor. The current plan and status for the DEI-PD Requirement is unclear. It was shared at the November 21, 2023 CALS Academic Planning Council meeting that the CALS Dean wishes for the CALS APC to reapprove the requirement, followed by a rollout in stages after the pay plan has been resolved.

Questions/comments

- When was this DEI-PD Requirement proposed by CALS EDC?

- A DEI-PD requirement has been a topic of discussion within the committee for many years. [The committee sent a formal request to the CALS Dean on March 17, 2020](#). The requirement was [voted on and approved by CALS APC on May 18, 2021](#).
- Are committee members receiving questions related to the efficacy and need for the requirement, about the execution, or about the pause?
 - All of the above. Questions committee members have received include:
 - Why the pause now? Wouldn't it be useful to launch the pilot to gain data and further insight on efficacy?
 - Concerns related to another requirement/responsibility to already overloaded faculty.
 - Should this be a mandate from campus?
 - All are welcome to reach out to ODEI members for talking points to navigate questions.
- What can this committee do to support the requirement?
 - Climate is built from development of skills, otherwise there is a cycle of repeating issues. If change is desired, something different must be done.
 - A requirement indicates that something is valued and important. An opt-in structure will not create the same level of effective change.
- Time has passed since the approval. Perhaps awareness has fallen, and folks are unsure if this is still of desire?
 - Different departments have different strategies. Some department diversity representatives have a standing agenda item and ongoing conversations about the requirement.
- Can the EDC reaffirm the importance of the requirement and use the prior letter of the template?
 - Support given to this idea.
- Have departments asked questions about the requirement during ODEI visits to departments?
 - The ODEI has personally engaged with hundreds of people in CALS and have only had 1-2 instances over two years where folks have been critical of the requirement. It was a priority to connect with as many people as possible. Have received positive feedback about communication; can examine strategies more closely to continue to improve. Will meet with the CALS Communicators group next month. If departments have a communication specialist, ODEI would like to utilize this resource.
 - Governance groups represent CALS and are not static. The EDC recommendation cited specific reasons for the desire for a DEI-PD requirement, including topics such as racism. These issues still exist and are important to address. It is hoped that values have not changed over the past four years.
- The Senior Assistant Dean for Climate and Engagement meets monthly with other campus EDC chairs. These chairs are curious about the CALS requirement. There is no mandatory campus program, but other schools and colleges are interested and recognize the need.
- How is the pay plan related to the DEI-PD Requirement?
 - Overinterpretation of political ongoings is concerning.
- The EDC is structured to be a direct contact to the CALS Dean. Could the committee ask the dean for transparency?
 - The EDC is an independent body and can operate as such. This type of action is within the purview of the committee.
- The CALS APC is currently not operating in compliance with the policy it passed.

Faculty Peer Interview Proposal

Idea presented by committee member to include a peer conversation as an informal part of the interview process (private and separate from the interview itself). Candidates could choose a faculty or staff peer with whom they have a shared identity. Topics of discussion could include experiences with policies, systems, maternity and paternity leave, climate, etc. The conversation would be a safe space for questions that candidates may not feel comfortable bringing to the search committee. The proposal has undergone one round of feedback.

Questions/comments:

- Need delineation between this resource and Human Resources (HR). Peers will not need to answer HR-related questions.
 - If a need is identified to elevate policy information, can work with HR to make this information more visible.

- Positive feedback. The sample message is a great template.
- A department administrator, who would be involved with enacting the process, believes this would be easy to incorporate and has no concerns.
- Do other schools and colleges incorporate this type of conversation into the interview process?
 - Some do, but it is not a standard piece.
- Is there value in expanding the peer group to folks beyond the CALS community?
 - It could be a valuable campus resource.
- Send additional feedback to Tom Browne. Will provide an update at a future EDC meeting.

Scope of EDC - call for agenda items and action items

Questions/comments:

- Is there an update on the grievance reporting system?
 - The Climate Reporting System is live and is being utilized.
 - As this resource and the Learning Hub move forward, would like to continue checking in on how things are going, how the stories can benefit the CALS community, and what the data shows.
- Heard that the Climate Reporting System was also on hold. How do we communicate to departments that this is available?
 - The Climate Reporting System is not paused.
 - The ODEI members are visiting each department to talk about the resources offered.
 - In the future, there will be an ODEI newsletter and eCALS posts to share information.

Nominations for [CALS awards](#) are due by December 1, 2023

Committee members are encouraged to promote these awards to their units. The CALS Equity and Diversity Award seeks nominations of staff, faculty, and students who have done outstanding work in DEI. A subtle change has been made to the award call to uphold the values of DEI more broadly. Award nomination and recognition is a gap at CALS: if prioritized, it can be an asset to building a more positive climate.

The nomination process is streamlined with a new online form. Supporting letters are optional.

Will need a subcommittee of EDC to review nominations for the CALS Equity and Diversity Award.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:47 pm.