

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

Attendees: Burcu Alptekin, Dominique Brossard, Tom Browne, Kerri Coon, Amanda Gevens, Tracy Hanke, Louis Macias, Mandi Moy, Ivan Rayment, Amy Trowbridge

Not present: Brad Bolling, Victor Cabrera, Karie Cherwin, Rosie Gittens, Al, Kovaleski, Jelena Lee, Bre Sinotte Wang, Erin Wall

Minutes by: Erica Flyte

Attending as public meeting: None

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Tom Browne at 11:33 am.

Welcome/review agenda

There were no changes or additions to the agenda. Brief discussion about the upcoming University of Wisconsin Board of Regents vote expected to occur at 5:00pm on December 13, 2023 and potential impacts.

Approval of November 22, 2023 meeting minutes

Dominique Brossard made a motion to approve the November 22, 2023 meeting minutes. Burcu Alptekin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EDC ex officio members – CALS HR representation?

CALS Human Resources (HR) representation on the committee will be a useful tool for processes around items like climate response, tenure, etc. The committee agreed to invite the CALS HR Director to serve as an ex officio member of the Equity and Diversity Committee. The CALS HR Director may also send a representative.

Future agenda items and action items

A document of potential topics of interest was shared.

Questions and discussion of topics of interest

- Is CALS considering revising the search and screen, interview, and hiring processes? This has been brought up previously through EDC and best practices have been suggested and adopted.
 - Have seen a need for consistency with process and climate.
 - Does this apply to faculty searches, staff searches, or both?
 - Both. There are inconsistencies; smoothing of processes is needed. Communication about consistency and best practices would be useful.
- Documentation: there is a need for consistent and clear access to college policies and procedures. Links need to be active and easily accessible. Would like a centralized location for supporting resources. Could EDC assist in supporting this initiative?
 - Also applies to resources for students. Need clear access to policies and information regarding accommodations, etc. Students struggle to navigate the pathway to accommodations; need for institutional support. The current wait time for interventions is too long.
 - What would a useful resource look like?
 - One should be able to visit the CALS website, search for 'accommodations,' select student/faculty/staff, select their need, and find a flow chart for contacts.

- Need for focus on graduate students. These cases are more difficult to manage due to the lack of a formal infrastructure. Their experience is fundamentally different: there are physical needs, such as office space, which may need to be considered for accommodations.
 - The graduate student website directs students to contact their advisors. Would be useful to have more resources.
 - Could there be an accommodations liaison in each college tied to a centralized unit who can address items quickly within each school/college?
- What does DEI as a post-tenure review measure mean? What does this look like? What are consequences for poor behavior after tenure? Tenure seems to protect poor behavior.
 - Post-tenure reviews every 5 years are taken seriously. There are HR consequences and financial consequences that could impact salary and merit increases.
 - Each department handles this differently.
 - Too much variance can be an issue. The outcomes could be too low.
 - Some chairs ask for DEI work annually that is considered in reviews.
- How to measure faculty mentoring.
 - Include input from graduate students?
 - Difficult when different students have unique needs and desires.
 - The student's success is tied to the success of their mentor. Potential conflict of interest.
 - Can there be an evaluation form students complete that illuminate behavior trends?
 - How to detect trends if student input is not considered?
 - The graduate school issues an exit survey for graduate students. Responses are pooled due to the small numbers of students per faculty. There is a mechanism for reporting that can be accessed online.
 - Needs to be a standard of set, consistent principles that all abide by. What would these principles be?
 - Could create a guiding document for graduate students thinking about joining CALS with examples of the types of questions they should ask the faculty during interviews.
 - Some departments have contracts with graduate students. Faculty present to potential students how they operate so expectations are clear up front. The contracts are negotiable.
 - New faculty have great ideas that established faculty are interested in adapting.
 - The culture of each department is different, so could a template be created that departments can adapt, and then individual faculty could personalize?
- Centralize existing resources on a website
 - Is this the way folks consume information?
 - Websites are useful during new faculty onboarding.
 - How do established faculty prefer to consume information?
 - Interest was indicated in templates for agreements, policies, procedures, etc. so folks do not have to start from nothing. Could there be a place for shared resources?
- Concept of departments/programs having mentor/mentee agreements
 - Could there be a resource indicating the minimum standards, expectations, and basic principles, which departments could adapt? The language can include the recognition that departments have unique needs.
 - Share best practices for how to personalize?
 - Could this be brought to a department chairs meeting to source guidelines?
 - Or, EDC could create guidelines, seek review from program managers and department diversity representatives, and then bring to department chairs for feedback?
 - This could be a tool for how to evaluate mentors.
 - Some departments already use these types of agreements, but commonality across departments would be useful.
- Difficulties of no paid parental leave
 - A suggested policy was written by EDC about a decade ago. Could use this as a starting point to continue addressing the issue.
 - Graduate students are also concerned about this topic.
 - Other universities implement parental leave. Need institutional support.

Additional questions/comments

- What is the status of the professional development requirement?
 - No change since the last update.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:40pm.