

**Equity and Diversity Committee
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences**

March 6, 2024, 11:30am-12:45pm
240 Steenbock Library

Attendees: Burcu Alptekin, Brad Bolling, Tom Browne, Victor Cabrera, Kerri Coon, Rosie Gittens, Anam Khan, Al Kovaleski, Veronica Law, Jelena Lee, Louis Macias, Mandi Moy, Erin Wall.

Not present: Dominique Brossard, Karie Cherwin, Amanda Gevens, Ivan Rayment, Amy Trowbridge, Bre Sinotte Wang

Minutes by: Muhamed Sadiku

Attending as public meeting: None

MINUTES

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

Welcome/review agenda

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

Veronica Law, CALS HR Director, was introduced as ex-officio to the committee.

Approval of February 14, 2024 meeting minutes

Without any revisions, the February 10, 2024 meeting minutes were approved.

ODEI Strategies – continued discussion

Louis Macias, CALS Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, continued the conversation regarding recent changes related to Professional Development and DEI in general.

- CALS is preparing to communicate the changes at the All-College meeting on March 22.
- There is a reason and a purpose to the change of strategy.
- A mandatory requirement does not guarantee the outcome. Dean has expressed that she is not comfortable with PD being a requirement, and the ODEI team is working on achieving the outcomes without training and workshops being mandatory.
- Individual departments are allowed to make DEI professional development a requirement.

Comment: At the APC meeting, the Dean was asked to provide an update on the Professional Development requirement and in the response, no suggestion was made to change the existing policy.

Committee members continued a discussion that included:

- the process for departments to request workshops,
- the development of code of conduct by departments and how it is discouraged by CALS HR, and
- free speech.

Question: All this will be presented at the All-College meeting?

Answer: Yes, the professional development part. Remember, the idea is to achieve objectives via a route with less resistance. The goals and aspirations do not change.

Question: Are departments/units going to set those goals? And how does that fit with the global goals?

Answer: The themes are very much the same across departments. Individual departments might fall into different points in the spectrum but are not very far apart.

Concerns regarding the attendance of training/sessions that are not required and the challenges of evaluating mentorship without communication and guidelines were raised.

Members were assured that there will be forthcoming communication regarding such issues.

Annual Department Reviews Take Aways

Key points from the Annual Department Reviews included the following:

- DEI continues to be narrowly defined by many departments.
- There appears to be low psychological safety from chairs.
- There is a desire among chairs to build cross-department community and learn/share DEI successes and challenges.
- Underdeveloped CALS connection to Democracy and Citizenship dimension of campus research initiatives
- Hiring processes generally appear to value collegueship, teaching and mentorship is a promising way (faculty onboarding).
 - we will be talking about mentoring and how important that is.
- Significant progress has been made related to climate accountability, but we must be cautious about legalistic HR processes becoming how we define DEI.
- Chairs are being asked to take on a larger leadership role
- There is a need for greater connection to 'soul' of our disciplines in a more accessible way.
- We need to improve the connection to DEI work within departments in the following areas:
 - Chair awareness
 - Greater collaboration
 - Ensure awareness of ODEI services

There was a brief discussion around CALS making data/reports accessible to all and the issues regarding this idea.

Question: Will the learning hub still be available?

Answer: The learning hub will be available to use and will continue to evolve.

Question: Would we be able to organize this kind of talk?

Answer: It is possible...if you have ideas let us know.

Finally, members discussed the maternity leave policy and called for action regarding this policy. CALS HR representative noted that such policy is under consideration at campus level, and any news will be communicated to all. Additional action was suggested to consider following up if the policy under consideration is not sufficient.

Meeting adjourned at 12:48pm.