

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

October 12, 2020, 2:00pm-3:03pm

Via Zoom

**Attendees:** Erika Anna, Brian Asen, Bill Barker, Brad Bolling, Dominique Brossard, Thomas Browne, Natalia de Leon, Erin Wall, Christelle Guedot, Laura Hernandez, Carol Hillmer, Bret Payseur, Mark Rickenbach, Matthew Warren

**Not present:** Becky Larson, Mickenzee Okon, Doug Rouse, Bre Sinotte Wang

**Minutes by:** Julie Scharm

**Attending as public meeting:** None

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MINUTES

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The meeting was called to order by Tom Browne at 2:02pm.

**Welcome and introductions**

Committee members introduced themselves.

**Review agenda**

No changes were made to the agenda.

**College updates and questions from the committee**

Dean Kate VandenBosch joined the meeting to provide the college updates to the committee.

Dean VandenBosch expressed her appreciation of the time and energy of the committee and the members' commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. She also shared that she is impressed with amount of work the committee has accomplished and with the members being leaders in their own units. She shared an equal commitment to increase diversity and inclusion in the college.

Over the summer, the college has enhanced its efforts in inclusion and in communication about these efforts. The following are some communication examples:

- Alumni communications related to our anti-racist values
- Column in the WALSA newsletter
- Dean column in the fall issue of *Grow*, discussing working towards an anti-racist environment

Over the summer and fall, the college has also hosted virtual gatherings. The following are some examples:

- August discussion group with students and alumni of color, with alumni from various generations
  - The college is now working to follow up on ideas from that gathering
- Upcoming meeting with faculty and staff of color
  - The college will ask the group about their interest level in having an affinity group in CALS

- Gathering of students and deans from SciMed GRS to discuss meaningful interaction
  - The four deans will give a short presentation followed by an informal Q&A. There will be a similar exchange with the dean's designate in spring (for CALS, Bill Barker).
- CALS department chairs retreat, which focused on diversity and inclusion issues
- CALS administration four-hour workshop on Breaking the Bias Habit
  - It is valuable to take this training as a cohort because it creates shared understanding
- Deans' Council meetings, where diversity, equity, and inclusion is a recurring topic where deans share best practices
- Kate VandenBosch and Mark Rickenbach are having meetings with Cheryl Gittens on items of mutual interest, including student-facing topics and training

The CALS Dean's Office is developing a formal, written response to the committee on its five proposals. Overall, the Dean's Office is aligned with the committee on its recommendations. The next step is to decide on how to best operationalize things.

- Best practices for hiring for faculty and leadership positions: CALS HR has provided some edits, which were discussed with Natalia de Leon. Julie Scharm will now work to put the guidelines into a standard college format. The plan is to put these into practice soon.
- Anti-racism statement in PVLs: The Dean's Office supports this. The dean will charge the CALS leadership team with developing this statement with the goal to have it in PVLs by January. It would be helpful to determine if there are other ways to use this statement where it may also be important.
- Mandatory cultural training of employees: The dean is discussing how to operationalize this with the CALS leadership team. Cheryl Gittens and Beth Meyerand are constituting a committee to look campus-wide at training opportunities and their capacities, so that they can then look at a composition of what training should be made available. If the campus opportunities are not sufficient, the college will need to find other ways to fill the need. The college wants to go beyond something that's a compliance step. The School of Veterinary Medicine has an annual expectation of every employee to be involved in a professional development activity in this area – employees can self-assess where they would like to/need to grow and what they want to participate in; it is part of the annual performance reporting process. CALS could use a similar model.
- Graduate student training: Kate VandenBosch and Bill Barker met with Dean Bill Karpus last week and conveyed the interest of the committee in this training and the concerns about capacity. The Graduate School has hired a diversity manager and has a tool for graduate students to self-assess and identify training. Undergraduate students should be considered as well. One suggestion from the discussion was to create an opportunity for student leaders in student organizations to train together on bias and inclusion topics.
- CALS equity and diversity office: This is an important step in moving the college forward and to help support the college and units in a collaborative manner. The dean is exploring two staff positions for this new office – a chief diversity officer to work on strategic initiatives and a staff member to support efforts and link to units. The college is assembling examples of similar offices on campus and elsewhere, and hopes to have a recruitment plan in place by the spring of 2021.

#### Comments and questions:

- It is inspiring to hear that the training goal shouldn't only be about compliance. The potential of the School of Veterinary Medicine idea is exciting. How difficult would it be to implement that?
  - Possibilities include addressing this in faculty activity reports, expectations in promotion or post-tenure review documents, and eligibility for awards/professorships.
- Dean Markel has been on the leading edge of topics in this space and it's inspiring. He sends emails messages out to everyone. Departmental messaging is important, but Dean Markel provides a good example of what's expected at a higher level. His leadership gets the faculty members excited and helps to set the tone.
  - Please send an example message to Kate VandenBosch with any notes about your thoughts.
- One department held a bias training. It was a good training, but some people were rolling their eyes and didn't seem to care. How do we change that?
- Have there been any comments from the students about feeling powerless in any regard? Students often feel like what they say doesn't make a difference. What is the culture here? And is there anything the college can do to let students know we're listening?
  - The dean's conversation with students was with a small number a people and didn't represent all viewpoints. The students selected for that engagement were known for having a passion for contributing. From that conversation, some students feel like the message is that they don't belong here or they don't know what activities could help them move forward professionally and academically.
  - Many graduate programs have heard from their students about wanting to get engaged and providing recommendations for change.
  - Nothing would please us more than more frequency of hearing from students. The college is thinking about whether to have standing meetings to hear from students on these issues. Action is important but we always need to continue listening.
    - It would mean a lot to students to set a standing regular meeting. Maybe it could be advertised through eCALs.
  - Any suggestions the committee has are welcome.
- A lot of importance lies in being proactive about reaching out and a new office of equity and diversity could help with that. For the positions in the new office, will the college hold a nationwide search or look only within the college?
  - The current thinking is that there will be a nationwide search for the CDO. The college would like to hire someone who comes in with experience in higher education and working with different types of personnel groups who can think strategically about changes we need to make and how to operationalize them.
  - For the staff position, it will likely be open to external candidates.
  - We want to consider internal candidates, but when we hire internally, we don't grow diversity, so we want to cast a broad net.

#### **Approval of September 14, 2020 meeting minutes (attachment)**

Christelle Guedot made a motion to approve the August 18, 2020 meeting minutes with the above corrections. Matthew Warren seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 9 yes, 0 no, and 1 abstention.

### **Subcommittee membership and expectations for 2020-21**

All committee members were asked to sign up for at least one subcommittee at:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1asqzowXD43BeXtAKjIXyWjr62b\\_86mhScQhyGydIeh/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1asqzowXD43BeXtAKjIXyWjr62b_86mhScQhyGydIeh/edit?usp=sharing). The co-chairs will finalize the subcommittee memberships at the next meeting.

### **Critique of EDC trainings at higher ed institutions – discussion topic**

The following article was shared with the committee: <https://heterodoxacademy.org/diversity-related-training-what-is-it-good-for/>. The discussion of this article will be delayed to the November meeting due to time constraints.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:01pm.