

EQUITY, ACCESS & DIVERSITY COMMITTEE  
Minutes of the Meeting  
April 13, 2015

[These notes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these notes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

In these minutes: [Campus climate and committee's role in Office for Equity and Diversity (OED) work; follow-up on Whose Diversity? conversation; sexual assault, stalking and relationship violence mandatory reporting policy]

PRESENT: Geoffrey Maruyama, co-chair; Deena Wassenberg, co-chair; Naty Lopez, Irene Duranczyk, Kimberly Hewitt, Andra Fjone, Yi-Ping Chang, Richard Graff

REGRETS: Teddie Potter, Judith Katz, Ellyn Woo, Priscilla Flynn

ABSENT: Christopher O'Brien, Cynthia Messer, Susan Seltz, Tyler Lande

GUESTS: Katrice Albert, vice president, Office for Equity and Diversity

OTHER: Shakeer Abdullah, assistant vice president, Office for Equity and Diversity

Co-chairs Wassenberg and Maruyama welcomed the committee.

### **1. Campus climate and committee's role in OED's work**

Wassenberg welcomed Katrice Albert, vice president, Office for Equity and Diversity (OED), who gave a brief update on the campus climate report and racial descriptors in campus crime alerts.

Albert began by saying OED had received a lot of feedback from the Campus Climate event in February. She said OED had not received any additional funding during its compact process, but they were trying to rework their budget in order to meet some of the recommendations put forth in the campus climate report. One of the first initiatives they were working toward was implicit bias training. Albert said this was necessary for search committees, and crucial to increasing diverse faculty in the hiring pools and helping them become part of the top three candidates for a position. Albert said OED would also be piloting a mentoring experience for diverse faculty to get those recruited to the tenure process. Albert noted they are almost out of bridge funding, but they will receive funding in the next compact so deans and chairs are able to take advantage of opportunity hires.

Albert went on to discuss core initiatives related to enhancing the multicultural student population, the foundations of which are community outreach, retention and engagement. She also noted OED was looking to fill a position for a K-12 liaison, in order to recruit students at a younger age. This strategy, Albert noted, also reaches students who are under-resourced and under-prepared, and helps them understand what is needed to become eligible for the University of Minnesota. In the next ten years, the University wants to actively engage with K-12, and close

the achievement gap by working with middle-schoolers, she said. To this, Albert said, they were working with Project Success and the Northside Achievement Zone in the Twin Cities to help identify 8th graders who are admissible to the University, as well as those who may need additional preparation. Albert noted there was a large population of diverse students who apply to the University but do not end up selecting the University.

Maruyama noted bridge funding was intended as a three-year bridge, and Albert said they now had so many deans requesting bridge funding that they were running short. It's a good problem to have, she said, because deans are seeing bridge funding as a way to strategize and support diverse faculty coming to the University.

Wassenberg asked how the implicit bias training was implemented and who was required to take it. Kimberly Hewitt, director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, gave some background on how search training was created and said the developers had then trained two search committees at the University of Minnesota Medical School. Hewitt said they then began to consider how they could use the model for faculty searches. Wassenberg asked if it would be available to anyone who wanted it. Hewitt said yes, although it would be geared toward faculty searches. Fjone asked when the training would roll out. Hewitt replied fall 2015, and that they were planning to execute a pilot within a community of practice. Wassenberg asked how people would request the training. Hewitt said they expected to advertise it with the rest of OED training, and Albert added that because it was part of the campus climate work group, it would be rolled into the communications thread and there would be multiple communication points for faculty.

Albert then discussed the issue of racial descriptors in crime alerts. She referred to a campus-wide email from vice president Pam Wheelock that described the change in policy. In short, when a suspect description provided by a victim or witness includes enough information to help the community identify a specific individual, such as some combination of race, gender, clothing, height, body type, build, accent, tattoos, hair color, facial hair, etc., the information would be included in a crime alert. However, when the description is too general, such as only race and gender to help the community identify a specific individual, a suspect description would not be included in the crime alert. Albert emphasized this was integral to a campus climate that was as free from bias as possible. She said the conversation around racial descriptors in crime alerts was continuing and she noted several institutions wanted to follow the University's lead. Albert also noted there had been a lot of reaction to the change, saying many people wanted whatever information was available even if it was only race and gender.

Wassenberg asked Albert what her ideal would be regarding crime alerts. Albert said the alert would be related only to the crime itself and the location of the crime. Professor Duranczyk asked if some institutions had already moved to that, and Albert said yes. However, she noted, they were institutions that were much smaller and did not have their own police force. The University of Minnesota is bound by the Clery Act. To Wassenberg's query, Albert clarified that city police are also bound by the Clery Act but they had more leeway in how it was communicated. Maruyama asked how system campuses were affected. Albert said system campuses were opportunities for collaboration and that they had shared the strategic plan, the OED vision framework, and the campus climate report with the system campuses. Albert said

they planned to meet four times a year with those campuses to further collaboration efforts, including ways to drive diverse students to those campuses.

Albert then went on to discuss ways the committee could be involved in the work of OED, and expressed her hope that they could work together in partnership on policy, and that the members of the committee could be ambassadors as faculty to talk about OED's goals and strategies. Wassenberg asked what the committee could do insofar as being liaisons to the greater University community. Duranczyk noted the one thing they had done was spread the word about the bridge funding for faculty of color. Albert agreed, and pointed out that while bridge funding was a recruiting tool, there had been times it had been used as a retention tool. She said they were now tracking the funding so the provost would be knowledgeable about its necessity.

Maruyama noted that the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) and others see the EAD meeting agendas, so they can be alert to issues that are bubbling up. Duranczyk said while there were long range plans in place, she was curious about plans for the next four years for recruiting a more diverse student population. Many could thrive at the University if there were a larger cohort of minority students, she observed. Albert said there were several initiatives to increase the diversity of student body population in the near future, such as the VIP Weekend in which is high school juniors visit the University for a weekend.

Wassenberg asked if there was any way to put more money towards scholarships for students, saying the top achieving high school students in the area often acquire full scholarships to other schools. Albert agreed, and that Bob McMaster, vice provost, Undergraduate Education was also a proponent of more money towards scholarships. Albert said they heard from parents that their child had a full scholarship at another institution, yet only received a partial scholarship from the University of Minnesota. It is difficult to sell the value proposition of a flagship institution and what a degree from the University will mean when another institution has offered a full ride and the numbers are right in front of them, Albert said. However, they are using those data to help support increasing scholarship amounts. Albert said they were trying to be thoughtful about how to assist in this endeavor, as well as housing scholarships. Students want to live on campus and housing is often financially out of reach. Abdullah stated research indicates that students who live on campus are more engaged, have better GPAs and graduation rates, and higher first- and second-year retention.

Wassenberg and Maruyama thanked Albert for the information, and Albert thanked the committee for the opportunity to meet with them.

## **2. Whose Diversity?**

Duranczyk discussed the committee's discussion that took place the previous month with Whose Diversity? She said she felt it was a good meeting but that the committee had some implicit biases. There should be a way to support students who put their academic life on the line to promote a more just campus, Duranczyk said. Wassenberg said she would like such students to grow as leaders, and asked about the committee's role in that. She wondered if the committee should make an official statement about the group's leadership capabilities and if so, to whom would that statement be submitted. Abdullah noted that although President Kaler had responded to Whose Diversity?, the group had not yet answered back. Duranczyk said they had a website,

and Professor Lopez said she had seen a video they had created and their passion for their cause was evident. Duranczyk suggested a statement acknowledging their passion and leadership might be posted on the group's Facebook page. The statement could also indicate the committee would like to find a bridge with them in working on diversity issues. Wassenberg said she would form a statement and distribute it to the committee for approval. Abdullah said OED had reached out to Whose Diversity? to let them know some of OED's efforts to address their concerns, and had given them multiple opportunities to respond to no avail. Wassenberg said the group's yearlong ban from Morrill Hall was an impediment to a dialogue with them, and the committee discussed alternative meeting places on campus. Duranczyk said making that effort would be part of the message to them. Abdullah clarified that the ban from the building was not something the University had imposed. Hennepin County adjudicated the protest and trespassing incident, he said. Wassenberg said she would draft a message to the group, and noted it may be just a matter of changing the meeting location.

## **2. Sexual Assault, Stalking, and Relationship Violence Mandatory Reporting Policy**

The committee discussed the mandatory reporting policy as outlined in the University policy statement ([www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Operations/Safety/SEXUALASSAULT.html](http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Operations/Safety/SEXUALASSAULT.html)). Maruyama expressed his concern about the mandatory nature of the policy. Hewitt said it was it had come from the Department of Education and was not a policy issued by the University of Minnesota. It is, she noted, the responsibility of the University to adhere to the policy, as the institution is a recipient of federal funds. Hewitt went on to say the message they were trying educate people with was that someone did not have to sit alone with information about an assault. If someone learns about a sexual assault, she said, we do not want people to go it alone. However, Hewitt emphasized, the wishes of the victim were of primary importance.

Maruyama said it seemed compulsory, and Hewitt noted the law school felt as though it violated academic freedom. Fjone said she was curious to know how the policy affected the health care providers at Boynton Health Service. Hewitt said places like Boynton and the Aurora Center did not have to report confidential information. She added that if someone learned about a sexual assault, the best thing would be to refer the person to the Aurora Center. Hewitt went on to clarify that the word "mandatory" was not really accurate language, however, they did not want a situation where no one acted on information about a sexual assault. She said the policy was messaged to the entire University at the beginning of the year but it was difficult to educate the entire campus. Hewitt emphasized to the committee that there be a balanced perspective in its discussions about the issue. The idea, Hewitt said, was to be responsive to sexual assault, and not to force people who may be traumatized to have to deal with it on their own. Wassenberg said it was a conundrum in terms of treating victims of sexual assault as people who cannot advocate for themselves; they are not children, and some people may perceive this policy as a communication that victims are powerless. Wassenberg said the committee would keep Hewitt in the loop as the issue is of interest to the committee and the committee would address it.

## **3. Issues for the committee for 2015-16**

The committee discussed its possible work for the following year, including:

- Revisiting the MLK Day of Service

- Diversity on the University Senate committees
- Admissions and retention of students of color from the previous year
- Sexual assault reporting policy

Hearing no further business, Wassenberg and Maruyama adjourned the meeting.

Mary Jo Pehl  
University Senate