

SENATE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL CONCERNS

March 28, 2016

Minutes of the Meeting

These minutes 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 minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** Chair's Report; EOAA Educational Opportunities; Retaining Faculty of Color; Parental Leave for Graduate Students]

PRESENT: Randy Croce (chair), Kendra Okposo, David Fuhs, Laura Duckett, Maria del Carmen Garcia de LaSerrana Lozan, Megan Sweet, Daniel Kelliher, Becca Gercken, Deborah Hendricks, Zan Gao

REGRETS: Rachel Schurman, Lindsay Budde, Sarah Sexton, Sandeep Kataria

ABSENT: Anna Sumangil, Felicia Christy, Stuart Mason

GUESTS: Veronica Postal, COGS

1. Welcome and Chair's Report: Randy Croce, chair, provided the following chair's update:

- “Ban the Box” Application Update: Croce said he met with Student Senate chair Rob Stewart regarding the revised questions asking about criminal histories on the undergraduate student application. They have asked the admissions office to let the committees know what affect the revisions had on enrollment. This item will return to the committee at a later date.
- Notice of Maintenance of Status Quo: The committee wondered to what extent they needed to avoid issues related to terms and conditions of employment. Croce's viewpoint was that the committee could discuss anything and items could also be forwarded on to the Senate for action. At that point, however, further discussion may be stalled until the unionization decision is made. The faculty vote regarding unionization will probably take place in fall, 2016, he said.
- Ex-Officio Members on Committee: Croce reminded the committee that at one point they had discussed having ex officio committee members representing University employees who are members of a union. David Fuhs felt that they should be here but the topics that come before the committee should not be labor law-based. Croce agreed to write up a resolution to that effect for the next meeting.

2. EOAA Educational Opportunities: Kendra Okposo, associate to the director, EOAA Office, shared information on the educational opportunities her office provides. She said that 20% of their work is educational. They are also authorized by the Office for Civil Rights to enforce Title IX, which investigates complaints related to sexual harassment, sexual violence, and gender-based discrimination. Within that Title IX category exist several policies, and the EOAA staff offer training for the entire campus related to these issues. Each training is offered twice a semester, as well as by request. Okposo added that they will custom tailor training to the specific units if requested. She provided the following list of trainings available:

- Supervisors' EOAA Toolkit, which provides practical tools for supervisors to prevent and respond to potential discrimination, harassment, retaliation and nepotism.
- Sexual Harassment: Awareness, Prevention & Response is specific to the Sexual Harassment Policy. It defines and identifies sexual harassment and identifies the signs of potential sexual harassment.
- Responding to Sexual Misconduct & Sexual Assault is primarily aimed at advisors and supervisors who want to learn more about their obligation to report instances of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and relationship violence.
- Religious Accommodation at the University of Minnesota explores the rights and responsibilities, University policies, and state and federal law pertaining to religious discrimination and reasonable accommodations. This training is being phased out, as the Office for Equity and Diversity is incorporating religious training discrimination into their certificate program.
- Incorporating Equity and Diversity into the Job Performance discusses strategies for making equity and diversity part of everyday work, by including it into position descriptions, job performance, and the classroom and/or workplace.
- Incorporating Equity and Diversity in the Search Process describes how to incorporate equity and diversity principles into all stage of the search process from writing a description, through using diverse recruiting sources and drafting questions.

Fuhs asked if the workshops were optional or required. Okposo stated that they are optional unless a supervisor has required a unit or employee to attend. Fuhs said he felt training should be required for all employees. Professor Daniel Kelliher asked if there were strategies to encourage department heads to require this training. Okposo stated that if a complaint is made to the EOAA office they can call the head and state they had heard of concerns and would like to provide training. But, she said, EOAA cannot require the training. Megan Sweet, chief of staff, Office for Student Affairs (OSA), added that training can be required as a consequence of a disciplinary finding.

Okposo added that Anne Phibbs, director of education, Office for Equity and Diversity (OED), offers a training on implicit bias that she thought was quite effective. The training addresses snap judgments, how individuals identify more closely with like individuals, and the idea of negative stereotypes and positive stereotypes and decisions individuals make based on those assumptions.

Fuhs stated that it is in the purview of this committee to say that this training should be required of all employees and that many corporations require it. Okposo said that three of the trainings are available online, including the Responding to Sexual Misconduct training, which is about forty minutes long. Croce asked Okposo what she would like to see happen in regard to University employees. Okposo said that if a requirement were made, she would suggest that her office develop a new training covering all the materials, so that everyone became aware of their responsibilities and rights. Croce proposed the committee write up a resolution to pass at the next meeting.

3. Retaining Faculty of Color: Croce said that a subcommittee consisting of Professors Becca Gercken, Zan Gao, Naomi Scheman and himself met to discuss the issue of retaining

faculty of color, and they had developed a draft of proposed steps. Gercken thought their list of ideas could be grouped by category. For instance, she said, some of the items were human resources issues and others were tenure and promotion issues. Croce stated that one topic that came up was how to collect data on the experience of faculty and staff of color. One idea the committee had was to distribute a survey to faculty of color, asking about their experiences working at the University, while assuring that it protected the anonymity of those filling it out. Additionally, a website for individuals to post their stories anonymously was another idea. Scheman stated that there are websites such as “What It’s Like,” where an individual can share their experiences of being a woman in the male-dominated field of philosophy. Gercken thought both a survey and a website collecting narratives would work well for providing feedback, as some people like data, and some like narrative claims. She also thought that narratives help in areas of training, to hear specific instances of how language can be hurtful. Sweet felt that P&A employees should also be included in this survey because she is aware of struggles with retention in her department.

Gercken added that the way faculty of color get talked about in the hiring process can be problematic, because a lot of language shows how embedded the notion is that people of color are not as qualified. Examples of language she heard on the Morris campus included “Try to have a person of color in the pool, especially a qualified one.” She said that this is problematic in that it assumes an individual of color is less likely to be qualified, and it also infers that they are in the pool only because they are a person of color. She added that it is okay to talk about statistical reality; for instance, there are a small number of Native Americans with Ph.D.’s, so it could be difficult to find someone in any specific field. But, she stressed, that is different from saying it is difficult to find a qualified candidate.

Croce asked Okposo if the implicit bias training addresses these issues, to which Okposo replied that was a question best asked of Anne Phibbs. She added that the training “Incorporating Equity and Diversity in the Search Process” does deal with exactly these hiring issues. The training is offered twice a semester, she said, but it is not mandatory for any human resources representatives. Croce thought perhaps the committee could require this training for human resources staff, or at least for one representative from each college. Scheman asked for clarification about who “human resources” refers to. In her experience, faculty members write the position descriptions, and some of these problems begin at the first stages of crafting the description.

Fuhs stated that he thought all the recommendations of the subcommittee were good, but did not believe it was the committee’s job to draft a survey. He felt the job of the committee was consciousness raising. Scheman replied that the committee needs to think about what sorts of institutional changes must take place to make the University a place where faculty of color wish to come and stay. Croce agreed, as often things the administration identifies as priorities are not part of people’s awareness or implemented across all colleges and units throughout the University.

Croce suggested the subcommittee continue to refine the issues and meet with EOAA and Office for Equity and Diversity staff to see what work is already being done. The committee could then craft a resolution that is not just a platitude, but not so specific as to prevent it being

approved and implemented. While some committee members thought suggesting a survey would take too long, others thought it was important because too many people do not believe that faculty of color face racism at the University, and proof that it does occur fairly regularly is necessary. The committee agreed to craft a resolution addressing general concerns, but incorporating specific ideas.

3. Parental Leave for Graduate Students: Victoria Postal, Council for Graduate Students (COGS), stated the existing policies regarding parental leave have many problems, which are especially problematic for graduate students. She brought up the following concerns of COGS:

- Female graduate students giving birth are eligible for six weeks leave, with an adoptive parent granted two weeks. Individuals on fellowships are not considered employed by the university. So a student on fellowship would not be eligible for coverage. This prevents some students from seeking fellowships.
- Some births don't happen at the "right time." For example, if a student gave birth in the summer, before the fall semester started, they would only be eligible for two weeks of medical leave and no maternity leave.
- Accommodations should be made for the semester in which an individual has a child. It is unclear when unpaid leave is available for graduate students to step out for a term.
- The policy does not serve LGBT students very well as the language is gendered. Primary caregiver and secondary caregiver should be the terms used. Currently the birthing parent is considered to be female so it would not include trans men. COGS would be interested in helping to draft any language that addresses these issues.
- While the University has a child care center, the current wait is 12 to 15 months and the full time cost is \$1100 a month.

COGS, said Postal, was interested in how to make these policies become a concern to unit heads. Croce said that Katrice Albert, vice president for equity and diversity, OED, suggested that an OHR 'czar' on parental leave might be useful, given all the concerns of all the various constituents. This would be someone who understands all the issues that touch on leave for all parent employees and students. Professor Laura Duckett added that students on a job like a fellowship are not served by OHR and the needs are vast, so that would be an additional wrinkle.

Croce wrapped up the discussion by saying that he met with Debra Fitzpatrick, program director, Humphrey School of Public Affairs. Fitzpatrick did the research for Governor Dayton's bill extending parental leave to twelve weeks for state employees. She told Croce that Dayton's bill would have to include the University unless the University proposed something better. Croce said that Fitzpatrick had agreed to project the cost to the University to expand parental leave, based on her calculations for the state, but using the demographics of the University.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Patricia Straub
University Senate Office