

Equity, Access, and Diversity Committee (EAD)
March 25, 2019
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 reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration or the Board of Regents.

[**In these minutes:** Office for Equity and Diversity Updates; Discussion of Draft Statement on the Board of Regents Meeting on March 8, 2019; Discussion with Members of the Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History]

PRESENT: Keisha Varma (chair), Noro Andriamanalina, Priscilla Flynn, Jonathan Gerteis, Jeremy Jenkins, Wanda Marsolek, Jair Peltier, Teddie Potter, Nan Thurston, Ross VeLure Roholt, Deena Wassenberg

REGRETS: Azrin Awal, Rafael Contreras-Rangel, Oscar Garza, Tayler Loiselle, Marcella Windmuller-Campione

ABSENT: Diane Cilengi, Tina Marisam, Caleb Pedersen

GUESTS: William Jones, professor, and Malinda Lindquist, associate professor, history, and members of the Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History

OTHERS: Julie Reuvers, deputy chief of staff, Office of the President; Sean Garrick, vice provost, Office for Equity and Diversity (for Michael Goh); Jake Steinberg, reporter, *Minnesota Daily*

1. Office for Equity and Diversity Updates

Profesor Keisha Varma, chair, called the meeting to order and introduced Sean Garrick, vice provost, Office for Equity and Diversity (OED). Garrick update the committee on several OED initiatives:

- Aligning the Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence (MCAE)'s programming with the colleges, the Office for Student Affairs, and the Graduate School, in order to ensure MCAE is not duplicating efforts that are happening elsewhere. They are also looking at recruitment efforts for students of color and indiginous students, as part of the president's CORE initiative. This will likely eventually be folded into MCAE, said Garrick.
- Conversations with corporate partners, namely Travelers and Target, brought to the University's attention that students of color and first generation college students are much more likely than their white counterparts not to be in the job they were hired for after two or three years. This is true of students from across many institutions and states. This suggests that while students are being prepared for success in college, said Garrick, colleges are not necessarily preparing them adequately for success in the corporate environment. OED is working with the Office of Student Affairs and MCAE on this.

Noro Andriamanalina asked whether the extent to which the work environment was supportive of indigenous employees and employees of color was taken into account. Garrick responded that many corporations recognize a need to improve the corporate climate, but also recognize the reality that culture change takes time. He added that OED is developing a partnership with Target and the Carlson School of Management in an effort to address this issue.

- The President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP) is an outgrowth of the Partnership for Faculty Diversity, a national program started at the University of California that now includes about 14 colleges and universities. The purpose is to recruit promising new faculty from underrepresented groups. The University is in its second year of the program, said Garrick. Last year, six new faculty members were hired, and tenure offers have been made to three of them. There are three confirmed candidates for this year so far; final decisions will be made this week. Deena Wassenberg asked whether there is there a budget to support PPFP faculty hires. Garrick said that in the proposed budget, there is. At the University of California, he explained, the university covers the postdoctoral salary and then half of the salary for five years once the candidate is hired into a tenure track position. They also cover half of a start-up package for up to \$250,000. At the University of Minnesota, OED provides half of the postdoctoral salary; the colleges provide the other half. The University does not currently cover any of the faculty salaries, but does offer other things that make the package attractive, such as a travel fund. Start-up packages are split between the department and the college. The hope is that these positions will be fully funded in the future, Garrick stated; however, the budget for the program has gone up by a factor of five in the past year, largely due to the success of the program. Teddie Potter asked whether non-monetary incentives such as mentorship, networking, community connections, etc., are part of the recruitment effort. Garrick said yes, but salaries and start up packages are very competitive, so funding is an important issue. Jonathan Gerteis asked whether individuals who are likely to come to the University and succeed are targeted—such as people who did their undergraduate or graduate studies here. Garrick responded that the application for the program is shared among is part of the national partnership, but there are some things—agriculture programs, for example—that make the University of Minnesota unique among that group. The program is heavily advertised, added Garrick, particularly through word of mouth at conferences and discipline-specific meetings.
- A search for a new director of the Office for Conflict Resolution (OCR) is underway. OCR is an important office because it deals with conflicts between all constituencies at the University. The ideal candidate for this position has both a legal background and experience in higher education, a combination that is difficult to find. Additionally, said Garrick, OCR's caseload has gone up by a factor of three in the last 5-6 years, resulting in a heavy workload.

2. Discussion of Draft Statement on the Board of Regents Meeting on March 8, 2019

Next, Varma directed the committee's attention to a draft statement on the conversation around the [report](#) of the Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History at the [Board of Regents Meeting on March 8, 2019](#). She explained that the statement had been drafted by the Social Concerns Committee, and that the intent was for the two committees to issue a joint statement.

Varma asked Amber Bathke, senate associate, University Senate Office, to summarize the events of the Board of Regents meeting, which she did, and Jeremy Jenkins added his impressions as well. Jenkins cautioned against conflating the conduct, comments, and attitudes of certain regents with the substantive question of renaming the buildings. He suggested that the two issues should be separate discussions. Members also commented that it appeared that the regents in question were letting their concern about the reputations of the individuals for whom the buildings were named get in the way of really hearing what the report was saying, and that if the integrity of members of such task forces was open to attack, it would be difficult to find people to serve on them in the future.

3. Discussion with Members of the Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History

Varma then welcomed William Jones and Malinda Lindquist, history faculty and members of the Task Force on Building Names and Institutional History. Jones and Lindquist stressed that they did not speak for the Task Force, but rather as individual members, and that they were operating on the assumption that the Task Force's work ended when it submitted its report to the president and provost. Additionally, they clarified that the Task Force was asked by the president and provost to do the research and make recommendations; it was the president who made the report and recommendations to the Board of Regents. They noted that the regents directed their comments, many of which were negative, to Dean John Coleman and Professor Susanna Blumenthal as chairs of the Task Force, rather than to the president. They expressed disappointment that Coleman and Blumenthal had not been given the opportunity to respond to questions or criticisms, while stressing that it would have been more appropriate for the president to respond.

Jones and Lindquist reminded the committee that the work of the Task Force was grounded in the principles developed by the [President's and Provost's Advisory Committee on University History](#) ("the Coleman Committee"), not legal standards, and expressed dismay that certain regents compared it to a trial. Lindquist noted that the Task Force was asked to make arguments for and against changing the names, which is not the norm in scholarly research, but that they had gladly complied with this request.

Finally, Lindquist and Jones emphasized that it is important for the University to get this right, and in order to do that, the president, provost, and the Board of Regents will need to figure out a way to have the necessary conversations respectfully. They stated that the regents should be able to ask questions and the president should be able to respond, and that it would be appropriate for the president to ask members of the Task Force to assist him in those responses. They would also be happy to have a conversation about the process of deliberation, they said.

Jones and Lindquist also revealed that the media has put in an open records request for all communication related to the work of the Task Force, between its members as well as with the president and provost.

Priscilla Flynn asked if the political pressures that were part of society at the time were taken into consideration, noting that there may have been threats or other pressures that are not part of the public record that led the administrators in question to make the decisions they did. Lindquist answered that this was addressed in the full report, which contextualizes the different pressures of the time. She stated that there were many at the University at the time who were aware that legal protections were not being upheld and who were calling for change. She added that the members of the Task Force were aware of the limitations of the historical record, but that this had been addressed in the report. Furthermore, continued Lindquist, renaming the buildings is only a small part of the work that the University needs to do around equity and diversity and repairing relationships with communities affected by its past actions. If the University wants to be a leader in the region, she said, it should be a leader in terms of equity and diversity, including acknowledging the ways in which its policies affected not only the climate at the University, but also in the region. Finally, Lindquist said that the Task Force recommends making the University archives more accessible so that people can do this work themselves, as well as an oral history project to amplify those voices were not preserved in institutional archives. Flynn thanked Lindquist for her response and said that she would read the full report.

Potter asked Lindquist and Jones whether they felt supported by the administration. They remarked that they felt that the president and provost had issued strong responses in defense of the Task Force's scholarship, but expressed disappointment that a response had not been issued until six days after the Board of Regents meeting. They said that the Board of Regents and the administration have acknowledged that there were problems with the way the meeting was planned, including lack of sufficient time for this weighty discussion, as well as the physical configuration of the room. Jones mentioned that he would like to see a statement from the president in support of the recommendation to rename the buildings, which he had endorsed.

Finally, Jones expressed great concern about the open records request. If scholarly exchange and work in progress is discoverable through an open records request, he said, that is a threat to academic freedom. He commented that he was aware of an [effort by the Faculty Senate](#) in recent years to propose legislation to exempt scholarly work in progress from the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, but indicated that the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) had made it clear there is currently no legal basis for such an exemption. He said he would like the University to respond to this issue.

Wanda Marsolek asked what will happen to this discussion in July, when President Kaler leaves. Julie Reuvers, deputy chief of staff, Office of the President, noted that President Kaler had hoped the work would be concluded before the end of his tenure, but it is now clear that President-Designate Joan Gabel will have some role in the conversation, whether it be wrapping up the discussion or dealing with the aftermath. She remarked that if the president does not have the votes needed from the Board of Regents to change the names, there are other recommendations in the report that could be implemented.

As the meeting time had expired, Varma thanked Jones and Lindquist for their work on the Task Force and for making time to speak with the committee. She noted that revisions to the draft

statement would be made and distributed to the two committees for an electronic vote later in the week. She then adjourned the meeting.

Amber Bathke
University Senate Office