

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Student Relations Advisory Committee (SRAC)
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November 18, 2016
11:30 am - 1:00 pm
2501B Michigan Union

Present: Michael Atzman, Sophia Baur-Waisbord, Royster Harper, Simone Himbeault-Taylor, Marita Inglehart, Jean Krisch, David Potter, Sheema Rehman, Alexandra Rizo, Jumanah Saadeh, Ruby Tapia

Absent: Lisa Low

Guests: Therese Braunschneider, Katy Culver, Teddy Goffredson, Matthew Kaplan, Tershia Pinder-Grove, Shreyas Poddar, Ali Rosenblatt, Abby Zrike

Agenda:

1. Lunch/Call to Order
2. Opening Statement and approval of the previous meeting's minutes
3. Remarks from Vice President Harper
4. DEI Resources for faculty provided by the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching
5. Adjournment

Opening statement and approval of minutes:

Professor Potter welcomed the group and addressed the concerns and issues centered on the presidential election. He and Associate Vice President Himbeault Taylor both acknowledged that they have been dealing with a barrage of emails from this past week due to the aggressive incidents happening on campus. Professor Potter reminded the group to call 911 if you find yourself in a physically dangerous situation.

Remarks from Vice President Harper:

Due to an unexpected commitment, Vice President Harper attended the last part of the discussion. She noted that it was clearly a fabulous discussion and apologized for her absence due to the need to address ongoing physical and psychological concerns on campus.

DEI Resources for faculty provided by the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching:

When discussing the current campus climate, Professor Potter decided to bring in those that have the most influence, thus he introduced CRLT Executive Director Matt Kaplan and his team from the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching by thanking them for attending the meeting.

Director Kaplan started the discussion by noting that he was pleased to be there and have the opportunity to share some of what CRLT does and hear about needs on campus. It was noted that this is really an important conversation in light of the violent acts we are hearing about. Director Kaplan then asked the SRAC to introduce

themselves and note if they have worked with CRLT before, are aware of CRLT in general, or do not have any familiarity with the department.

Director Kaplan provided an overview and goals of CRLT's work:

- consistently embed inclusive teaching into their training
- utilize the talents of a theater troupe to act out various situations based on research collected from instructors and students
- set the department's focus on widening their reach and deepening their connection to the campus community

Theresa Braunschneider, Associate Director and Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives, then addressed CRLT's work at the macro and mezzo levels. CRLT is continuing to develop a framework that can be a resource across campus to prepare all instructors with skills in inclusivity.

When instructors were surveyed about what they needed, most said training as they were not intentional in their exclusivity, but not entirely aware of personal bias. To address this, CRLT recognized that instructors approach DEI from a range of perspectives and they are being mindful of this when acknowledging disciplinary and experience differences. One size does not fit all!

- A small grants program has been funded for Faculty Communities for Inclusive Teaching. \$1,000 grants are being provided for projects to bring faculty together to learn about inclusive teaching practices, which may include reading groups, day long symposiums, and workshops.
- The theater program does some work on inclusive teaching but their focus is more on institutional climate issues, helping to build skills with instructors and administrators.
 - Currently planning a theater program about, "I wish my professor knew..." which will launch an effort to solicit/elicited stories from students about experiences, background, what they wish teachers knew in order to teach them better.
- Current CRLT workshops have embedded a DEI focus in their teachings.
- Customized workshops (based on need, climate, etc.) are provided to schools and departments about handling "hot" moments in the classroom.
- A series called 'Inclusive Teaching at Michigan' was started last May and will begin again in May 2017. This two week intensive program includes 18 different workshops with participants from 19 schools and colleges.
- Instructors are provided a reflection sheet, allowing them to reflect on their own teaching practices. What teachings do they use? How do they use them? What don't do they do? What does/doesn't work? This gives instructors the opportunity to understand how their choices impact the classroom.
- A midterm student feedback service is offered where consultants observe an instructor in the classroom, obtain student feedback, then have a conversation with the instructor in order to brainstorm ideas on how to handle various situations, address difficult conversations, provide guidance to student, etc.

CRLT offers a wide range of web resources. Of interest with respect to the website, traffic increased by 9,000% between the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections, with inquiries about how to handle difficult conversations in the classroom.

Questions from SRAC:

How do you contact departments and make them aware of CRLT?

Work closely with the Deans' offices in schools and colleges (especially LSA and CoE) and offer campus-wide programs so people know it's out there. CRLT also suggests having a faculty meeting or treat in the home department to draw them in.

Is there a way for students to share concerns about lack of inclusivity?

Talking to department chairs is helpful. These issues, when brought to the attention of CRLT, can become case studies or a basis for new CRLT programs.

How is CRLT dealing with navigating this new climate on campus? How are they allowing faculty to grapple with the issues in a productive manner?

It was suggested to just acknowledge it. Determine what is different now - we are not just dealing with micro aggressions, we are dealing with assault. Recognize that this isn't going away and try to find ways to be engaged.

What are things we can do in the short-term for faculty that are struggling?

Instructors want to do/say something, but don't know how. CRLT can provide a multi-tiered approach to support instructors, noting that it is important for instructors to engage and figure out what the students need.

What is appropriate for conversations/discussions held in different spaces on campus?

There is a difference between a conversation held on the Diag, posting on a kiosk, and discussions in a classroom. The goal is to conduct ourselves so that the conversations are productive and equitable. For example, CRLT is not proposing that classrooms should always be comfortable spaces. Many people feel that learning should be uncomfortable, grappling with new ideas is challenging! You can attempt to sort productive discomfort from learning vs. unproductive discomfort that impedes learning.

Adjournment:

CRLT ended the discussion by stating that they are constantly thinking about outreach. If SRAC members or students have ideas about how to reach out, CRLT would be thrilled to hear about them. CRLT can be reached crlt@umich.edu.

Professor Potter ended the meeting by thanking CRLT and SRAC members for attending the meeting and participating in a dynamic discussion. He suggested that the campus community continue to open the lines of communication.