

SACUA'S COMMITTEE FOR AN INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITY

MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

In attendance: Silvia Pedraza, Chair (LSA – Sociology and American Culture), Christianne Myers (Music, Theater, and Dance), Jesus Casida (Nursing), Tershia Pinder-Grover (CRLT), Yin-Lon Qui (LSA – EEB), Sarah Ahbel-Rappe (LSA – Classical Studies), Maria Castro (Medicine). We met in room 6039 Fleming building.

Absent: Kathleen Dow (University Library), Sandra Gunning (LSA – American Culture), Kamalesh Kumar (Dearborn - CoB), Jeff Moyer (Medicine), Natalie Sampson (Dearborn – Health and Human Sciences), Robert Ortega (Social Work) – SACUA Liaison, Graduate Student Representative vacant.

At this first meeting of SACUA's Committee for an Inclusive University, our discussion centered on what should be the major focus of this committee. SACUA and SENATE ASSEMBLY's charge to this committee, as of September 2015, is as follows:

GENERAL CHARGE:

As the voice of faculty, the committee shall advise and consult on policy and procedure issues related to the broad range of University activities related to an Inclusive University. The committee's advice shall be sought and given in a timely manner so that the advice could affect the decision-making outcome.

The charge was felt to be rather vague. Thus, a number of issues were discussed for us to focus our work for this year. The Chair reminded everyone that we cannot be everything to everybody nor solve all the university's problems, but we need to focus on an issue or two that can be achieved in the span of one year or two. The committee decided to focus primarily on issues that pertain to the faculty. If students were to bring issues to us, we would not ignore them, but our primary focus will be on faculty issues.

The major goal everyone on the committee agreed to was that we must diversify the faculty. At present whether or not there is a diverse faculty varies enormously from one School to another, from one Department to another. Some have a decent representation of faculty from all sorts of backgrounds.

In addition, once the faculty are here there are climate issues at stake for them. Too often at UM we focus on the numbers (this % of that, that % of the other), as opposed to focusing on the climate issues -- whether people feel content with their work environment and feel supported. Our committee wants to look at both of these issues. The first – diversity – is expressed in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts, spearheaded by Robert M. Sellers, our Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. The second – climate – is expressed in the efforts the ADVANCE program has made over time to

collect data on the extent to which women and minority faculty feel satisfied or not at UM, the extent to which they feel discriminated against and lacking respect. We asked: What would it mean for the Department (or School) we belong to to be a welcoming Department? We will try to take these two issues up one at a time. After Abbie Stewart's work for so many years as Director of ADVANCE, the new Director is Jennifer Linderman. Tershia Pinder-Glover will reach out to Linderman to see if Pedraza and Pinder-Glover can initiate that conversation for our committee.

Of the various issues discussed, the one that rose to the top to work on this year was the new DEI initiative around the Post-Doctoral Fellows. The new Post-Doctoral Fellows program is intended to accomplish greater diversity in the faculty. To this end, Pedraza got in touch with Robert Sellers' office and scheduled a meeting with him. He is "our" Vice-Provost – or, put another way, we are "his" Committee, so we need to communicate with him, as U of M's Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs. (NOTE: After this committee meeting, President Mark Schlissel appointed him as our first Chief Diversity Officer).

We managed to obtain the date of **Friday NOVEMBER 4**, when he will meet with us so that we can ask him questions and make suggestions regarding the implementation of the Post-Doctoral Fellowships.

Our Committee will be meeting first among ourselves, at the following meeting on **Friday OCTOBER 21**, to go over the document on the Post-Docs with the goal of preparing ourselves to meet with Sellers.

Other issues were also discussed at this first meeting:

- 1) whether we should ban the box for student admissions whereby students are asked to check a box if they were ever suspended from school or imprisoned, as some faculty felt that it eliminates a good pool of applicants. Pedraza will follow up with SACUA's Tom Schneider to see which Committee made the decision to include the box in the past and which committee should take it up at present;
- 2) whether there should be an equivalent to WOCAP (Women of Color in the Academy program) for men, given WOCAP's success.
- 3) whether we could try to get the slide Angela Dillard uses on the difference between equality and equity. Pedraza will try to get it.
- 4) whether faculty Search Committees and Tenure and Promotion Committees have adequate representation from diverse, minority faculty; and
- 5) whether we should give assistance to the students who reached out to our committee last year, wanting to carry out a survey of student mental health issues. Myers will follow up on this issue with the students.

All in all, at this first meeting we felt that our committee had a sense of direction -- knew where it was going. First, we will examine closely the new Post-Docs program to

accomplish the greater diversity of the faculty. Most likely we will write a short Report with our best recommendations. Such a Report would first go to SACUA and then, with their approval, to the relevant administrators. Second, we will move into the climate issues for women and minority faculty. Those will keep us busy for a year or two!

Participation in this committee is a 3-year commitment, with some people getting off and others getting on every year, so as to preserve continuity and the historical memory. The Chair should also rotate every year.

With my best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lilia Pedraza". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the closing text.