



Committee on Anti-Racism

Minutes of January 20, 2021
Circulated: February 26, 2021
Approved: February 26, 2021

Present: Partridge, Damani; Spencer, Deirdre; Thomas-Brown, Karen; Pal, Dinesh;;
Burns, Daniel; Rush, Steven; Hutchings, Vincent; Yimfor, Emmanuel; Kwabi, David;
Lehnert, Nicolai

Absent: Allis, Mark

Time: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes

3:37 Welcome – re-introductions

Yazier Henry is a new member.

3:40 Minutes from December 3, 2020– review and approval

The minutes were approved.

3:42 Updates from committee groups

3:42 to 4:15 Definition of racism – Members Burns and Spencer
Informational support for faculty of color – Members Spencer,
Thomas-Brown, and Yimfor

Spencer and Burns had a phone conversation. This committee is focused on faculty well-being. Micro aggression is part of what to look at, and power dynamics, stereotyping, intrusive questions – micro versus macro aggressions. Micro could have macro implications. Burns – strong feature seems to be deniability – “perceived right to roll eyes.” He spoke with a junior faculty colleague – people in their common department go out of their way to not look at him. Options – Faculty Ombuds – do they offer anti-racism options? AAUP Board – Burns was on this and they never got approached for racial insensitivity. This was a missed opportunity. Spencer described the connections she had with colleagues who were other women of color.

Spencer and Burns will draft a definition and provide it for the next meeting.

Chair Partridge noted that he came from a focus group on sexual harassment and institutional support that isn’t working very well. There is a distinction between administrative and organic groups.

Pal noted that [FASCCO](#) was a helpful resource. There should be more than one option to reach out to others. It is helpful to know that reports are confidential.

Thomas-Brown noted that OIE works for the university. Their job is not to protect the faculty but to protect the university. She noted that supports are not in place at



Dearborn. Thomas-Brown stated that when it benefits the university, Dearborn and Flint are included, but they are excluded otherwise.

Burns asked about legal standing. An employment contract would provide that.

4:15 to 4:30 Data and statistics – Members Hutchings and Yimfor

Hutchings is exploring statistics based on diversity. He is on a college committee. He has identified resources that are available.

<https://diversity.umich.edu/data-reports/>

It was noted that there has been no central accounting or data about racist hiring practices, but more information may be available now.

2015-2019 – the good news is that the data is there, the bad news is that it looks as it can be expected to look.

4:30 Concretizing potential projects

- Who should be invited to meet with the group?
- Analyze data and come up with concrete proposals
- Come up with an event which can help advertise presence and purpose

Other thoughts

- Burns – “great data horizontally” – cases where black colleagues were “dumped” He experienced when two black faculty were let go. These faculty did well at another high level institution.
- Standards are different when you go up for tenure – more direct questioning, undermining credibility
- Professional isolation, double standard – not invited to things colleagues are invited to attend.
- Establish employee resource group that can help aggregate data, and what are the research practices – create resource that goes beyond advice to facilitate faculty of color. The group will need to identify what they experience.

Thomas-Brown identified issues that faculty of color face:

1. macroaggressions
2. double standards: Face different standards and expectations
3. unconscious bias
4. workplace harassment
5. professional isolation
6. receive less support from their managers
7. less likely to have bosses who promote their work contributions to others



It was suggested that the committee could develop a website where they can advertise what they're doing. Acknowledge how people experience life as faculty of color.

There could be a place to make comments on a website. Then someone could follow up.

Thomas-Brown noted that a faculty group may be needed to connect people.

Women of Color in the Academy Project – Spencer is checking to see if this can be expanded to Dearborn.

Burns noted that at the department, you also need to rely on allies.

Lehnert suggested developing concrete action plans – brainstorm – can they develop best practices or guidelines for the issues Thomas-Brown listed.

Potential solutions – best practices are out there. The group can pull the information together.

Pal - Structural racism – focus on deliverables – if faculty come to them, how can they help them.

It was suggested to make the group accessible as a group such as through a website that addresses general issues.

Burns noted that if they have access to information, they can make an annual report. Then there is a gauge for where things are going – are they getting better.

Kwabi noted that students give feedback on their experience. Cataloging problems and issues would be helpful. This could put a light on the issues. He suggested reaching out to people who have left UM to find out what the issues are.

Thomas-Brown recapped the meeting with Rob Sellers, Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion, who attended the Committee on Fairness, Equity, and Inclusion (CFEI).

It was suggested that the group could put together a bibliography – Spencer offered to do this.

Pal shared a link: <https://bera.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/rep-ami-bera-hails-passage-of-gandhi-king-exchange-act>

Partridge requested volunteers to work in areas where people are comfortable working.

The group discussed the reporting structure of the university, and possible informal reporting opportunity for the committee.

4:58 Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

MaryJo Banasik
Faculty Senate Office