



To: Professor Colleen Conway, Immediate Past Chair, SACUA

From: Professor Irina Aristarkhova, Chair, Committee on Fairness, Equity and Inclusion (CFEI)

Subject: Report on Activities of CFEI for 2020-2021

Members: Mark Allison, Barry Belmont, Yi-Su Chen, Anne Cong-Huyen, Yazier Henry, Jason Kosnoski, Carolyn Kuranz, Nicolai Lehnert, Dinesh Pal, Alys Peisley, Holly Sorscher, Carmen Stokes, Karen Thomas-Brown, Sarah Williams

SACUA Liaison: Sara Ahbel-Rappe

Meeting Dates: 9/9/20
10/7/20
11/11/20
12/9/20
1/20/21
2/17/21
3/17/21
4/14/21

Summary (prepared on April 20, 2021):

This year the committee focused on three key areas: inclusivity; fairness, equity and inclusion issues between three campuses; impact of the pandemic. Detailed summaries are provided below.

The topics of focus for the year included:

Summary Topic 1. **Inclusivity.** In the Fall meetings, we discussed extensively the negative experiences of faculty, staff, and students from socially discriminated groups on all three campuses (especially experienced by faculty of color), making them feel excluded from the majority community through overt and covert discrimination in the assessment and evaluation process, distribution of resources and macroaggressions creating a toxic climate for them in their respective units. When we considered actionable steps of inclusivity, we analyzed the ongoing DE&I initiative. The key take-aways were that the Ann Arbor campus DE&I funding mostly focused on recruitment of under-represented minority groups without a plan for inclusion (and hence, retention, support and climate). In January 2021, CFEI committee met with Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion, Chief Diversity Officer Rob Sellers, to hear his perspective and updates on fairness, equity and inclusion and to express dismay that the only indicator of DE&I initiative's attempt at "inclusion" - climate surveys – have no real action plan

on inclusivity or follow-up data based on the survey findings. This supported our own anecdotal evidence that inclusivity is not something that is funded or focused on in the University's DE&I Plan. To understand better how our students get impacted by the same question of "inclusivity," we met with Nadia Bazy, Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs Director and Kierra Trotter, Director, Comprehensive Studies Program and Adjunct Lecturer in Comprehensive Studies, College of Literature, Science and the Arts, at our committee meeting in March 2021.

Summary Topic 2. **Fairness, equity and inclusion issues between three campuses.** The above-mentioned guest visits to our meetings and our own deliberations this year supported our overall concern that DE&I initiative's stated goals and corresponding resources (that are funding those goals) do not reach Flint and Dearborn campuses and there is very little (if any) communication between DE&I initiatives on the three campuses. This created an impression that President Schlissel's signature ambitious DE&I Plan only applied to the Ann Arbor campus, through the appointment of V/P for Equity and Inclusion, Chief Diversity Officer Rob Sellers, hiring, recruitment and other funded priorities, all on the Ann Arbor campus. DE&I initiative website does not provide any materials, data, or links to Flint and Dearborn campuses' DE&I work. One actionable item from CFEI was Resolution in Support of One University Campaign (adopted December 2020, led by Professor Jason Kosnoski). Specifically, it called for extending the Go Blue Guarantee to and increasing of funding for DE&I initiatives for Flint and Dearborn campuses.

Summary Topic 3. **Impact of the pandemic.** We discussed the pandemic related topics at various meetings and adopted **Recommendations on mitigating the effect of ongoing pandemic on the UM faculty across all three campuses** at our April 2021 meeting (led by Professor Dinesh Pal). Our statement focused on the impact of the pandemic on the P&T clock and processes. While acknowledging that the whole university community has been affected by the pandemic year, the committee discussed how faculty have been continuously asked by the administrators to be "flexible" with regards to students' needs, including grading, time to finish assignments, and other accommodations. Faculty, on the other hand, were expected to spend their 2020 summer on preparations for online teaching by the university that had not invested adequate resources in online teaching platforms or training in the past (outside of centralized partnerships with MOOCs and boutique, also centralized, initiatives in data and technology driven pedagogies or start-ups). Therefore, we did not have infrastructure in place on a unit level with IT and CRLT support for online teaching. Instead, unlike other research universities that promoted online courses among their faculty for years, and heavily invested in their infrastructure, we all "scrambled" in Spring 2020. We all did our best. However, this "scrambling" continued over the summer as faculty were inundated with invitations from various non-academic units on campus to attend "online training" webinars and felt pressured by their unit administrators to "volunteer" to be trained in online tools and pedagogy during the summer months of 2020, outside of their 9 months contracts (while those who "trained" them or invited them to get trained were often paid for their time). During teaching, faculty often faced unhappy and distraught students in their online, hybrid and in-person classes. Increasingly, students needed more counseling than faculty were trained for to provide, impacting their own mental health over the past year. Our April 2020 Recommendations call on

the university as a whole to acknowledge this difficult time in which teaching faculty operated as a separate group on all three campuses. We also rejected the perception implied in the tone of some administrators' communication that despite of the uncertainty and hardship of pandemic realities, faculty somehow found online teaching "easier" or more "desirable" than being in the classroom. At the same time, our planned research has virtually stopped in 2020, due to time being consumed by teaching as well as the university's withdrawal of research funding for those who did not have outside grant support. Our Recommendations seek the university to acknowledge the impact on research productivity and timeline to results as factors outside of faculty's control. Our deliberations also focused on aspects of unfairness, inequity and exclusion with regards to how those pandemic pressures and their outcomes have been experienced unequally by various faculty, often more negatively affecting women and persons of color.

Topics to be continued or carried forward to next year are:

Topic 1. Inclusivity and its "measurable" outcomes for all three campuses.

Topic 2. Impact of the pandemic on non-tenure track teaching faculty and instructors. Our April 2021 statement focused on tenure-track faculty, though over year we discussed the need to include contingent faculty and GSIs into the next year's conversation on the pandemic impact and their unique needs and challenges.

Topic 3. Discussion of how to bring together faculty from all three campuses to model discussions around FEI topics we have benefited from at our diverse-membership CFEI.