



Committee for Fairness, Equity, and Inclusion (CFEI)

Minutes of Meeting: 12/3/24

Circulated: 1/6/25

Approved: 1/13/25

Present: Maura Seale, Michael Atzmon, Daniel Burns, Fiona Pratt-Macdonald, Lindsay Admon (Chair), Bénédicte Veillet, Nilton Renno, Yongqing Li

Absent: Brandon Bond, Simon Cushing (SACUA Liaison), Amir Eldan, Beth Kuzma, Matthew Spradling, Stefanus Jasin

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe, Luke McCarthy

1:05pm-1:06pm: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes, Announcements

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the November CFEI meeting were approved.

1:06pm-1:58pm: Discussion of email from SACUA Chair Rebekah Modrak titled “DEI at U-M is under threat” (Sent on 11/20/24)

Summary: The Chair introduced this topic and asked the FSO Director to update the committee on the current status of potential alterations to DEI at UM. The FSO Director provided an overview of the state of DEI at UM, including recent developments. There are many unknowns currently.

With the recent election, there is a louder national narrative that is calling into question the effectiveness and necessity of DEI. There may be changes made at UM regarding DEI that are related to these developments. The FSO Director discusses the possibility that the Regents will be reevaluating DEI.

It is not clear how the Regents will proceed. The SACUA Chair sent an email to the Faculty Senate on 11/20/24 regarding the threat of defunding DEI at UM. There were responses from the Regents, denying the defunding of DEI. Public communications from individual regents regarding DEI is discussed. Insufficient diversity of thought is cited as an issue with DEI by certain regents. It is often posed as a financial issue. How is our money best spent?

The recent New York Times [article](#), “What to Know About the University of Michigan’s D.E.I. Experiment” is discussed. Issues with the article are mentioned. Chief Diversity Officer Tabbye Chavous’s [response article](#) is discussed.

On 12/3/24, a rally was held on the diag, outside of the Hatcher Graduate Library, in support of DEI. Hundreds were in attendance, and nine speakers addressed the crowd. The Michigan Daily wrote an [article](#) about this rally.

It is not clear if funding for DEI will be a topic at the December Regent’s meeting based on their agenda. Discussion about responses from upper administration is discussed. Particular programs within the UM DEI umbrella are discussed. What might be funded and defunded?



A member discussed that there are current federal mandates that will provide some guard rails for now, protecting certain aspects. Discussion ensues on some of the factors that have caused concern for DEI at UM.

Members voice their opinions on DEI at UM. DEI has been championed as a core value by UM administration recently, so changes would be abrupt and unexpected. An opinion is stated that the university community should have discussions about what works with DEI at UM, and what does not work. Removing DEI staff and funding does not align with the previously stated core values.

A question is asked about what this committee can do to protect and foster DEI work at UM in light of these potential developments. A suggestion is made to meet with the Regents. The logistical concerns regarding this proposal are discussed. A separate suggestion is that the committee author a Faculty Perspectives article in the University Record that defends DEI on campus. There is support offered for this. A member asks if further media appearances would be beneficial. Institutional neutrality is brought up related to tv appearances.

It is not known what metrics are being reviewed to determine success of DEI programs. The Regents meetings are discussed. A member brings up how DEI at Flint and Dearborn are impacted by these developments. Specific impacts of defunding DEI efforts are raised and discussed.

Action: Discussion

1:57pm: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe
Faculty Governance Coordinator
Faculty Senate Office