

## **Senate Committee on Diversity Annual Report AY 2012-2013**

Dear Senators and Colleagues,

I write on behalf of the University Senate Committee on Diversity to share some of our activities covering the academic year 2012-2013. We are a body of sixteen members, comprised of faculty, staff, and students, and we are charged under University Senate rules to a unique set of duties and responsibilities. I would like to briefly share those with you now. As per subsection (B) of Senate Rule 3335-5-4816, the Committee on Diversity:

...shall study issues that relate to the implementation of the University nondiscriminatory policy. It shall recommend policies that foster an environment of civility, tolerance, and mutual respect. It shall perform the following functions with appropriate administrative support from the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Human Resources.

The Senate Rules name several other functions of the Committee on Diversity:

- (1) To study and evaluate issues affecting diversity from an overall University perspective.
- (2) To be informed on external requirements on the University affecting diversity
- (3) To advise the President, the Executive Vice President and Provost, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources, and The Vice President for Student Affairs about the institutional climate, policies, and priorities for ensuring justice, fairness, and equitable treatment to all members of the University.
- (4) To educate and inform the University community on issues of diversity, including the letter and spirit of all Ohio and federal rules regarding members of protected classes.
- (5) To oversee administration of University affirmative action grants and awards.
- (6) To report annually to the University Senate.

I would also like to share the University's Nondiscrimination Policy. It reads, simply:

Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

In part because violations of the University's nondiscrimination policy are few, clear, and easily adjudicated, the Senate Committee on Diversity spends most of its time each year evaluating Diversity Reports submitted by academic and support units

from across the University, selecting a recipient for the yearly Distinguished Diversity Enhancement Award, and discussing emergent issues related to Diversity. This is important work and the Committee manages it well and did so again this year.

The Senate Committee on Diversity has continued its work with the office of Vice Provost Mike Boehm in the process of revising the University's Strategic Plan Template with particular concern to how issues pertaining to diversity are reflected. This year, subcommittees composed of membership from the Diversity Committee and the Diversity Officer's working group began meeting with diversity officers in the various units to open conversations about diversity goals and strategies within units. Of paramount importance to the Diversity Committee is making every effort to introduce substantive changes in the way 'diversity conversations' take place. Rather than operating with the traditional conventions of 'outsiders' coming in and judging or evaluating the short-comings of unit efforts to enhance climate, the Diversity Committee and DOWGS leadership seeks to change the culture of engagement. This has meant meeting with units and engaging in dialogue about unit-level desires and needs around 'practices of diversity.'

Additionally, the framework of this collaboration (between upper administration, DOWGS, and the DC) represents a novel structure and imagining of how faculty governance can emerge at Ohio State, allowing faculty and staff to be *proactive participants* in the development of policy, rather than its reactive recipients. The work of the Committee on Diversity over the past two years exemplifies possibilities for faculty governance in ways that demonstrate the relevance of Senate Committees for processes of institutional development.

In the coming year, the Senate Committee on Diversity will continue developing these themes of communication and collaborative transformation as it encourages the *practice* of diversity as the meaningful engagement with difference and inclusion.

On behalf of the Committee on Diversity,

Maurice Stevens, Chair *pro tem*  
University Senate Committee on Diversity