

**Year-End Report
Senate Diversity Committee
2016-2017
Submitted by: Wendy Smooth, Chair**

Introduction

We began our work this year later than usual. Our former chair, Lilia Fernandez, PhD (History) departed the university in Spring 2016 to join the faculty at Rutgers University. Professor Fernandez's departure was significant to the work of the senate and as an engaged faculty member of color her departure and others weigh heavily on the university and have consequences for the service and mentoring work of the fewer remaining faculty of color we have at OSU. We open our report with this reality as it underscores the challenges the university faces in terms of retention of faculty of color as well as recruitment to sustain a faculty of color presence at the university. These twin issues remain a critical challenge to OSU and one that informs much of the focus of this committee.

On September 16, 2017 Tim Gerber, University Senate Secretary convened the committee with the purpose of electing a new chair. The committee selected, Wendy Smooth, PhD (Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies) as chair of the committee for the 2016-2017 year. At that time, the committee discussed re-evaluating its bylaws to create a leadership succession plan, including the possibility of instituting a vice-chair model with the understanding that the vice chair will serve a one-year term and succeed the current president.

2016-2017 Campus Climate

This year, the university along with the nation endured the tense and polarizing rhetoric of the 2016 presidential election. Our campus, along with others across the nation became a central space of dialogue that often centered on contentious topics and resulted in what many understood as acts of hate speech on campus. The Senate Diversity Committee worked to monitor the campus climate throughout the year and worked to support those campus units with direct responsibilities for campus climate such as the Office of Student Life and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. The committee actively supported these units in their responses to campus climate prior to and post the election. During this period, the campus community reported an increase in incidents that negatively impacted the overall campus climate. For example, we saw an increase in BART reports related to hostile acts, threatening speech and or threats to community members. As well, several of our campus buildings became sites for white supremacist groups, linked to national organizations to communicate hate based rhetoric. These campus incidents and overall climate issues catalyzed a campus-wide conversation on civility and freedom of speech.

At a sizeable post-election forum, students gathered in Hale Hall, and reported that the incidents immediately following the election actually marked a continuance of a persistent chilly climate that they were experiencing even prior to the election. This suggested to the committee that the election only uncovered deeper systemic issues of campus hostility around racism, islamophobia, and hatred against minority groups.

Faculty expressed concerns regarding their roles, rights, and responsibilities around protected and unprotected speech, particularly in the classroom. After hearing several reports of incidents taking place in classrooms, the committee became very concerned about preparing faculty to teach in this current climate. We were also concerned about support and training for graduate teaching assistants. The committee determined that the campus community needed

instructions regarding free speech on a university campus and academic freedom. During Faculty Council, we shared the committee's concerns with President Drake. We continue to advocate for greater campus education on freedom of speech so that all students, faculty, and staff members are clear regarding what is acceptable and unacceptable as well as our responsibilities to act when violations occur. We view this as essential to creating a non-threatening environment where all students feel free to learn and contribute.

In addition to the 2016 election climate, the campus also collectively mourned the November 28, 2016 act of violence. The incident made our committee more aware of the concerns of our Muslim students and offered an opportunity to address diversity and inclusion as it relates to religion. In the process of conversations with student groups and the Office of Student Life, we identified a need for additional spaces for meditation and spiritual practice on campus, particularly located within the academic core. Our committee continues to work with units on campus to better understand these needs and address the lack of space for religious practice, spiritual meditation and reflection within the university's academic core.

With these significant issues unique to the 2016-2017 year, we were challenged not to move into a reactive mode. While these issues re-shaped our committee's work in some ways, we maintained that they underscored the critical need for our committee to increase its activity aimed at ensuring our campus is a welcoming and inclusive space for all its members. We engaged an agenda setting process which produced the following agenda items for the committee's work this year and outlines for the upcoming year. As the senate leadership on diversity, we understood our role as central to continuing productive discussions on how to address these issues of campus climate and culture. We addressed the following agenda items this year:

2016-2017 Agenda Items

Diversity & Discovery Themes Hiring

Following up on last year's (2015-2016) committee visit with Mike Boehm, vice provost for academic and strategic planning the committee sought to focus on diversity hiring both *inside and outside* the Discovery Themes as Boehm stressed the number of hires that are taking place beyond the Discovery Themes. This year we had vice provost, Sharon Davies present on the hiring and retention numbers for faculty of color and women with a special emphasis on disaggregating Discovery Theme hiring. We specifically asked the impact the Discovery Themes are having on our goals to recruit a more diverse faculty. We also asked which units are making strides toward increasing their faculty diversity and what best practices we might learn from them and potentially share across campus. Additional questions that emerged during this discussion:

- How are we assuring accountability to diversity in hiring around Discovery Themes? What is the provost's office requiring of search committees in the process of hiring regarding the diversity of the pool and diversity in the final selection of candidates? Could this be made more specific, more encouraged?
- What did we learn regarding the 2016-2017 hiring season at year's end regarding diversity? We will request a meeting with Boehm's successor to discuss a reflective conversation on what was gleaned and what we can expect going forward to address

the trends emerging of the Discovery Themes presenting limited opportunities to increase our faculty diversity in the long term.

The results of these questions require our follow-up as a committee and will remain at the center of our work.

Moving the Needle on Faculty Diversity Recruitment beyond the Discovery Themes

What innovative strategies are campus units using to move the needle on hiring--beyond Discovery Themes? We sought to identify innovations in hiring strategies that could potentially act as models to share across campus. We invited two units to discuss their strategies:

- Jan Box-Steffenmiser, associate dean of social and behavioral sciences in the college of arts and sciences who instituted a cluster hiring strategy this year to address the limited diverse faculty in the social and behavioral sciences and the limits of diversity issues taught researched by those departments.
- Tom Gregoire, dean of the college of social work who implemented successful strategic hiring plan to make sure his faculty demographics better represented the field of social work.
- We also looked to our peer institutions, particularly our Big Ten Alliance colleagues to learn from best practices. Allison Mincy (OHR & committee member) connected us with our peers at Penn State to discuss innovations they have instituted regarding faculty hiring strategies.

We continue to seek additional models within and beyond OSU. We recommend that our more successful strategies receive recognition and are disseminated to other units.

Student Climate Concerns:

In light of the challenges to the overall university climate, we remain critically concerned about campus climate for our students. We met with Office of Student Life leaders, Javaune Adams-Gaston, senior vice president for student life and D'Andra Mull, assistant vice president for student life to build relationships with the office and understand efforts to address climate issues and potential changes across the year. We discussed:

- uptick in BART reports
- outward facing student dorm room postings of Alt-Right icons
- availability of spiritual practices spaces & status of religious inclusion in the Office of Student Life
- UGS concerns regarding the availability of culturally inclusive meal options in the dining halls including halal and kosher items.

Diversity in the Curriculum

We hosted a session with the General Education Curriculum Review committee led by Randy Smith, vice provost for academic programs and chaired by Larry Krisseck; and Catherine Montalto. We also invited Amy Shuman (DISCO director) and other leaders of the Diversity and Inclusion Collective @OSU (DISCO) to join us for a discussion of diversity within the general education curriculum.

During that session, we discussed the needs to enrich our diversity GE offerings and encourage global engagement in our core curriculum. We discussed how to best prepare students for the work place of the future; how to equip students to act within a democracy; increasing students' communication skills related to increased diversity.

Distinguished Diversity Enhancement Awards

In addition to the above committee items, we also reviewed nearly 30 entries for this year's DDEA award. We awarded five awards that reflect the broad range of diversity efforts across the university, including the regional campuses.

Additional Agenda Items to Address in the Upcoming Year (2017-2018)

Faculty & Staff Retention Issues

- What structures exist that address our retention goals? We will potentially host a discussion with Kay Wolfe that explores retention of faculty of color—what are we doing on this front?
- Similarly, how can we explore these questions with staff?

Diversity & Staff Issues

- Host discussion with Allison Mincey who can update the committee on service delivery of new employee orientation
- Host discussion with Allison Mincey and HR personnel on the EON in Discrimination to review existing policies

Diversity & Graduate School Education

- Host a discussion with graduate school & interim dean M. Scott Herness on our recruitment of graduate students and get updates on recruitment packages for underrepresented students.
- Request a briefing on the graduate school's recent review of graduate education over the 2016-2017 year as it pertains to diversity.
- Discuss new efforts emerging from graduate school to address diversity across graduate programs, including the expanding role of the diversity recruiter in the graduate school.

Addressing the needs of post-docs

Diversity & Student Recruitment

- We will host a discussion with Vern Granger, interim vice president for strategic enrollment planning to discuss diversity issues related to our enrollment planning. Specifically, we would like to think with him and his office surrounding new opportunities to recruit a more diverse class.
- Building the incoming class: Do we have new opportunities around student recruitment now that the Fisher Case is settled? What are the implications of Fisher for higher education? What does this allow us to move forward with in a more proactive way?
- Transitioning students between regional and main campus & diversity—specifically asking: What transition programs do we have in place to facilitate the move from regional to main campus--particularly for first generation college students and students of color?

Monitoring New University Student Advising System

Initiating a discussion on OSU's new student EAB Advising system:

- Are we attentive to the potential of priming implicit bias with our new advising system designed to determine "success markers" for "at risk" students?
- How are we training advisors in using this newly available data? How will our new advising system impact diversity for more difficult to access majors like engineering & business?
- Host discussion with Wayne Carlson, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduates who is leading the initiative on the new advising system (or his successor)

Attending to this issue echoes student protests last spring (2016) which called for attentiveness to cultural competence training for staff interacting with students

Engage College Diversity Officers

- What best practices around building robust diversity practices exist in the colleges? How can we facilitate sharing best practices in our highly decentralized environment?

Strategic Planning

- How do we interface with the university strategic planning process? How do we address diversity in that conversation?

2016-2017 Members

Member	Source	Term Expires
Deanna Wilkinson	Faculty Council	2019
Jesus Lara	Faculty Council	2019
Richard Yerkes	Faculty Council	2019
Joni Acuff	Faculty Council	2018
Colette Dollarhide	Faculty Council	2018
Julie Fox	Faculty Council	2017
Wendy Smooth	University President	2018
Ousman Kobo	University President	2017
Lila Andersen	Staff - USAC	2017
Derek West	Staff - USAC	2019
Krystyne Savarese	Staff - University President	2018
Trina Thomas	USG	2017

Sheneese Thompson	CGS	2017
Alex Lee	IPC	2017
Sharon Davies	Provost/designee (non-voting)	
Alison Mincey	AVP OHR/designee (non-voting)	