



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

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Annual Report Faculty Senate DEI Committee 2021-22

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Submitted by Rebecca Tsosie, Regents Professor of Law and Chair, Faculty Senate DEI Committee

Committee Members:

Dr. Rebecca Tsosie (**CHAIR**) | Law Instruction/LAW (6/21-5/22)
Dr. Nolan Cabrera | Educational Policy Studies and Practice/COE (6/21-5/22)
Dr. Aileen Feng | French and Italian/COH (6/21-5/22)
Dr. Melanie Hingle | Nutritional Science/CALS (6/20-5/22)
Professor Mona Hymel | College of Law/LAW (6/21/5/22)
Dr. John Milbauer | School of Music/COFA (6/21-5/22)
Dr. Praise Zenega | Africana Studies/LAW (6/21-5/22)

Our first meeting was held on September 9, 2021. We revisited the minutes from the last meeting of the prior year's Committee and articulated a list of potential goals for the year, including:

- (1) To meet with AVP Ivy Banks and determine how she had restructured the DEI portfolio at UA
- (2) To determine how the OMBUDS program had been restructured
- (3) To determine whether there was interest in a Faculty Senate resolution in support of academic freedom given developments over the summer in states seeking to curtail certain forms of academic study
[End of year update: we decided against this based on data from other states]
- (4) To survey the various DEI Officers among the different academic units and schools at UA and see what the current "best practices" are for diversity and inclusion and what the challenges were.
(End of Year Update: we are working with Dr. Alvarez on this)
- (5) To meet with ABOR at the UA meeting and engage a discussion of inclusion in Higher Ed
(End of year update: this could not happen due to covid restrictions)
- (6) To determine whether existing surveys had generated a complete data set on inclusive excellence or whether we should design a further instrument as part of our Committee role.
(End of year update: we decided against generating another survey)

We thought it was important to start with the meeting with AVP Banks because we did not want to overstep and we felt it was important to align our work with her goals. We scheduled a meeting with AVP Banks and it was cancelled and rescheduled three times before the end of the Fall semester. We then got notified in early January that AVP Banks had resigned her position.

In the meantime, we received correspondence from campus constituents expressing confusion on what should be done if a faculty member is facing a challenging workplace environment, but this is not a case of “discrimination” under prevailing legal standards. We did not understand the role of the Ombuds Office or HR, and we were told that OEI is under a separate Office. We wanted to explore this question with AVP Banks.

The Committee also received complaints about the UA training on discrimination because it did not address the issues that confront Latino faculty at an HSI and concern reactions to language and accents.

We were unsuccessful in getting any information about the organization of DEI at UA until Maribel Alvarez was appointed in Spring 2022. We understand that DEI at UA is part of a “silo culture” in which best practices are not made uniform or shared among units.

In Spring of 2022, Dr. Alvarez was appointed to her position and we immediately reached out to congratulate her and invite her to meet with our Committee. She responded immediately and within a week after her appointment, she met with us and we could see what an excellent leader she will be. Dr. Alvarez is a faculty member who truly understands the issues and she has a sophisticated, but grounded, view of how to operationalize DEI. We had a wonderful exchange with her and we shared our goals and objectives and got her feedback.

Recently, Dr. Alvarez shared her initial chart on the structure of DEI and she also shared her insights from meeting with the students and several faculty affinity groups. She also explained the plan for the OMBUDS process.

We are now back on track and discussing how to achieve our goals. We hope to coordinate a meeting with the DEI officers campus-wide in the future. We will be inviting Vice Provost Andrea Romero and Dr. Judy Marquez-Kiyama to our final meeting in May to discuss the input from faculty campus constituents in light of the innovative programs that her Office has generated.

We are confident that the current leadership of DEI at UA is fully able to effectuate the desired changes that the campus community would like to see. As Chair of the DEI Committee, I strongly recommend that the Chair for next year should be appointed from the membership of the Faculty Senate. It has been difficult for me to chair this Committee because I am not an elected member of this body and do not fully understand the protocols. The Committee members have been wonderful. Our Senate members have the knowledge and capacity to chair the Committee next year.

I would also recommend that the Faculty Senate DEI Committee should be part of a larger Senate governance team to examine the impacts of larger structural changes (i.e., the AIB process), which could affect diversity and inclusion at UA. We currently do not have input and lack the ability to make our insights meaningful in avoiding unintended harms.

Thank you for the invitation to share a brief report of our Committee’s work for 2021-22.

