

College of Arts and Sciences Diversity Committee Final Report for Academic Year 2015-2016

April 28, 2016

Submitted by

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For academic year 2015-2016, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Diversity Committee consisted of the following members:

Fenda Akiwumi, School of Geosciences
Stephanie Hill, staff, College of Arts and Sciences
David Johnson, Department of History
Diane Price-Herndl, Department of Women's and Gender Studies
Juliette Martin, undergraduate student
Kersuze Simeon-Jones, Departments of World Languages and Africana Studies
Jacqueline Sivén, graduate student
Kevin A. Yelvington, Department of Anthropology (chair)

The Diversity Committee met twice during the fall semester, September 16 and October 21, 2015. It met three times during the spring semester, January 22, February 26, and April 15, 2016.

Goals

In the fall, the committee set about a plan of work in four main areas:

1. To work with the Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity Office to collect and analyze data on the diversity climate at the university.
2. To investigate the possibility of making permanent the successful Diversity Boot Camp initiated by Sisters of the Academy and held on campus after the end of the spring semester, 2015, with sponsorship from CAS that aimed to provide mentorship and support for women professors and advanced graduate students from under represented groups.
3. To promote, co-sponsor, and/or facilitate campus events.
4. To collect and analyze data on the status of women in academic positions at the university, including their tenure and academic rank status.
5. The overall goal of the committee was to build upon the 2014-15 CAS Diversity Committee's

final recommendation to the dean that the College develop a comprehensive diversity policy that would include such policies at the departmental level. To this end, committee members Yelvington and Sívén met with the dean and the College Council on October 23, 2015 to provide further information as to possible models for such a policy and the proposed position of Diversity Officer for the College.

Activities

The Diversity Committee met with interested campus partners, including Gene Murdock, the president of the Black Faculty and Staff Association, and reviewed research on the diversity climate at the university as well as policy statements regarding diversity. The committee decided against planning more events and instead decided to concentrate its efforts into writing a comprehensive diversity plan for the College, which was titled the “Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence Plan” and submitted to the dean on April 17. This 10-page document includes a rationale for such a plan, a working definition of diversity and inclusion, and an outline for the components of the plan. The cornerstone of this plan is to create a Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence officer at the associate dean level. The committee felt that this will give the position legitimacy and academic content and value, and demonstrate a commitment beyond platitudes and rhetoric. The committee provided a position description to include the following duties:

- Creating and implementing a Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence Plan and a set of identifiable and assessable goals that are aligned with the College’s Strategic Plan for 2017-2024. These goals should entail a tangible commitment towards a more diverse and inclusive administrative, research, and teaching faculty and student body. The plan and goals should be updated as necessary.
- Maintaining a database on comparative diversity and inclusion efforts and “best practices,” as well as comparative data regarding the state of diversity and inclusion at aspirational peer institutions and in the wider academic sector.
- Providing a permanent and official presence on the College’s Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence Committee.
- Partnering with academic departments and research institutes for the identification, recruitment, and retention of a diverse pool of candidates for faculty positions.
- Working closely with professional organizations to develop Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence goals.
- Managing a budget that includes funding for incentives for the development of Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence programs by the academic and support units of the College, as well as funding for faculty research on these themes.

- Working alongside various units on campus, building curricula related to Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence.
- Working in conjunction with other units on campus such as the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Graduate School to recruit and retain a diverse undergraduate and graduate student body. This includes identifying sources of external funding that would facilitate this effort.
- Collaborating with permanent staff and staff associations to identify, recruit, and retain a diverse pool of candidates for staff positions.
- Developing and expanding partnerships with minority-serving institutions of higher learning to create bridges to graduate study and further education for students, faculty, and staff.
- With the Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity Office, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs, developing rapid response teams to deal with on- and off-campus incidents marked by all forms of discrimination that affect the university community.
- Preparing and/or collaborating on reports on the university's and the College's Diversity, Inclusion, and Excellence goals and metrics and communicating those to the wider university community and beyond.