

## DANIELS DIVERSITY AND EQUITY COMMITTEE MEETING JULY 23RD

### In Attendance

- Jane Wolff
- Rob Wright
- John Shnier
- Nene Brode
- Fadi Masoud
- Nicole Tratnik
- Kurtis Chen
- Aidan Cowling
- MaryLou Lobsinger
- Randa Omar
- Jenny Hill
- Danijela Puric- Mladenovic
- Janice Miyagi
- Clara James
- Harold Tan
- Markus Peterson
- Andrea (from 5:35 pm)

### Convened at 5:05 pm

Jane introduced Harold Tan to the committee.

Jane introduced Nicole Tratnik, representing FGSA

Jane introduced Markus Peterson, representing staff

Jane introduced Kurtis Chen (guest)

### People made round introductions

- Nene manages events and outreach, works with Aidan.
- Fadi is an assistant prof of Landscape Faculty. Been with committee for 3 years.
- Kurtis is the president of GALDSU.
- Rob is the Interim Dean.
- John is an Associate Prof of MArch.
- Markus is part of student services and forestry graduate admin.
- Randa is going to 4th year, rep for AVSSU.
- MaryLou is an Associate Prof representing MDR (PostProf ) and PhD
- Danijela is an Assistant Prof of Forestry and Landscape, but reps for forestry.
- Clara is in 4th year and is the summer equity advisor.
- Harold is here to support the committee. Brings skills and background in mediation and community negotiation. Organisational development consultant.

- Janice is the Equity and Diversity Officer for GALDSU.
- Nicole is chair of the FGSA.
- Aidan is the coordinator of public programming.

## Approve meeting minutes from July 2nd

Motion brought by: Marylou

Seconded: Danijela

Vote: Carried unanimously.

## Discussion about the meeting of July 2nd

Jane spoke:

Students hadn't felt heard.

Need to take a step back and find better means of engagement.

Need to respond quickly. Short term directions will be covered at the end of the meeting.

## Presentation from Representatives of SEA

Janice began with:

US  
YOU  
TOGETHER

All student reps are driven by the experiences of their peers. Many students feel closed off from faculty and decision-making processes. Students are fearful of speaking out.

GALDSU Health and Wellness study: 85% feel that Staff and Faculty treat people differently. Quote from someone who has been shut down physically from speaking/presenting to a Prof.

Randa talked about the initiatives that have already been undertaken [*to be found in the Presentation slides*]

Clara filled in with info from AVSSU including open meetings and townhall that have already occurred. Also details about a reading list/reading group.

Janice: GALDSU also held meetings already and have more planned. Have produced self-checklists for faculty and students. Also, a working document of resources on Space+Racial justice.

Nicole informed the committee that FGSA are adding an Equity Officer position.

Randa: Clubs including Black Students at Daniels (BSD) a club aiming to create a Safe space and a support group for Black students and create mentorship opportunities from Black professionals. BSD is in its early stages (began a month ago). Making Difference is a club run out of the DFALD, dedicated to focusing on the barriers in both educational and professional settings that gender poses in the fields of art and architecture. It provides a safe space for all those identifying as women and queer folks to discuss their experiences with gender bias. It also runs educational programming in the form of poster campaigns, seminars, and more to help educate students and the broader U of T community on issues of gender discrimination in art and architecture. DAD is an art-centred club, creating events and design competitions and installations; but they have also been promoting equity through their projects and presence on social

media. SEA working group was created for accessibility to decision making, increase transparency and create a feedback loop between the student unions and students, distribute the workload and build unity and community between FGSA, GALDSU, AVSSU, and their respective student bodies.

Nicole showed timeline for the last 6 weeks, about how the students groups came together. Student groups are corresponding through Slack and Zoom. Non-hierarchical structure. All students and alumni are welcome. 45 people are members currently. Correspondence with the faculty is genuinely the product of the whole group, not just the leaders. To date only a couple of students are members of the committee. In GALDSU's survey, 52% of students responded that they didn't know who to go to with equity problems. The problem with the committee is the hierarchy. Student fear repercussions. Actions are not guaranteed. The proposed structure does not ensure that students will be informed about how actions are being considered and taken (or not). Ideally, we would have a horizontal structure allowing students to comfortably voice their thoughts and have these translated into actionable items.

Clara: Let's clearly outline our roles, so we understand how we are working together. The Student Equity Alliance (SEA) will create programming, the faculty can help by promoting and supporting a public lecture series. The SEA will hold bi-weekly consultations and have an anonymous forum. The faculty can develop equity focused communication plans, and a plan to promote and celebrate the work of black and indigenous creators/designers. [*Continued in the presentation slides shared*]

Randa: We intend to engage students beyond the curriculum through workshops and public lectures. The Faculty could include BIPOC history that is relevant to all respective disciplines, beginning with the first year of each program. You could engage students in thinking critically about the role of the built form in systemic racial violence and inequity to prepare them to properly address these systemic issues in our careers. Decolonization of the curriculum must happen in all courses. Together, we can work together with an Independent Equity Office to decolonize the curriculum in all streams. Regarding Transparency and Accountability, as a community, we will continue to be active participants in the Equity and Diversity Committee and keep you updated on the work we are doing. SEA will remain open to all student and alumni. You could begin to collect race-based data on core faculty, adjunct, and sessional faculty, and students, to be published. You could solicit advice and an external audit by experts in the field, such as the Social Justice Education at OISE and the numerous decolonial and anti-racist researchers at UofT. Together, we can create a plan to ensure that all members of the Daniels Community, faculty, students, and staff feel acknowledged and safe. We can collectively look at the budget (even in a limited way) so that we all are aware of where resources are being allocated.

Janice: Let us work together to ensure that plans of action are implemented with student input and faculty support.

### **Jane chaired a discussion on the presentation**

Jane: Compliments on a thoughtful and clear presentation. Are you envisioning a process where we all work in parallel?

Janice: yes

Jane: To date there are a few different areas of the SEA focus? The development of resources for our community. Gathering information from students. Figuring a structure and process to work together between student groups.

Randa: Yes, also about gathering people together as a community.

Jane: Establish an understanding of where we are today? How are you sharing and disseminating information?

Janice: The SEA is an extension of the student unions and through them, we have reached out to all streams and all cohorts.

Randa: Used as many platforms as possible.

Jane: As you collect info, how do share that information back with the students?

Randa: Aim to set up a website, with each student union linking to it. Want to have a webform. Anyone can contribute.

Jane: Is there a mechanism for the SEA to feedback to the unions?

Janice: Yes, it is a feedback loop with open communication between the Student Unions, SEA and alumni.

Randa: Having members from each union to the SEA is an important feature of the structure.

Janice: It's exciting as this is the first time all three unions (plus alumni) have worked together like this.

Jane: Is there a high degree of overlap between the community of each union?

Randa: Curriculum, programming, financial resources, are common themes. Naturally there are difference about the details relating to curriculum.

Janice: There are opportunities with the new MArch director. We're also trying to engage the other programs a bit more.

Jane: Timelines?

Janice: The Consultation demonstrated the Committee's hesitation to change precedent, but we need to create long term change which requires time. Students who come after us will be our future colleagues. We want to prepare the curriculum for them.

Randa: Some initiatives are already being worked on and can happen right away. Curriculum we understand will need more faculty help and may take longer.

Jane: What can the committee, or Harold in particular, do to help?

Janice: Let's take some time to think this through.

Randa: yes, for sure we would like help, as we've outlined in the presentation.

Rob: Thanks for the presentation. I can connect us to Simcoe Hall. We'll be hiring Diversity and Equity Officer. Anonymity, access to support mechanisms. We need to determine clear paths for students (and all community) to access resources within the faculty and outside of the faculty.

Disfranchisement from both students and faculty. Art project and funding. Mason - public programming and events. Lecture series.

It's going to take us a little while, but we're on it. We can do a hell of a lot, we just need to all keep in touch, so that everyone knows what's going on.

MaryLou: Event "Space, Race and Justice". Do students want to work on this with her?  
Acceptance from all students.

Nene: Thank you for creating safe space, as we (staff and faculty) can't do that. Mason - Alumni lecture series + Pan-Canada lecture series.  
Also offered to help with finding funding for initiatives.

Fadi: What are the student's attitudes towards metrics? (question for further discussion another day)  
e.g. The threshold for numbers of faculty? Are your ambitions quantifiable? Metrics dismiss many nuances. Why is it important to gather numbers and data? What if we're missing the details about peoples lived experiences? What really indicates how we are doing?

Randa: We've found it difficult to set metrics targets. We only picked a number because it was the clearest way to create an accountable target. A better way to measure diversity might be to measure people's perceptions of the community and environment. Do students, professors and staff feel well represented, and that the environment allows them to reach their full potential and be successful?

John: A lot of questions are rhetorical. Some statements have implied questions. Maybe not looking for answers, but certainly consideration.

Canada reads is a CBC sponsored debate. This year's theme is about Canadians across the country, and highlights issues that we should focus on. This years panel included an Immigrant queer Muslim and indigenous person. The question of whose book reaches the broadest audience was raised and the panelist responded that their book was not written for those who share their identity but for those who do not. What is the applicability of texts?

Are the issues of diversity the ones that should be taught? And taught to whom?

Randa: We should make sure that we're working towards inclusivity and diversity, so that everyone who is here feels welcome.

Jane: Next week 30th July we'll talk about the data from the 2018 and the 2020 surveys.

**ACTION (30th July):** Aidan will read the 2018 and 2020 studies to comment on trends and themes between the two.

Jane: Following week 7th Aug, we'll talk about our faculty complement. Who can help with gathering this data? MaryLou would like to contribute to this.

**ACTION (7th August):** MaryLou to produce a list of questions.

Rob: We must give voice to people with diverse lived experiences. We can do this with lectures, talks and curriculum much more quickly than make academic hires. Let's do that whilst hiring progress is also occurring.

Equity and Diversity Office position is drafted but not posted yet, could take 1-2 months. He will let the committee know when the job is posted.

Jane: Advises the committee that she and Nene have applied for 8 Work-Study students.

Danijela: Let us celebrate that which brings us together as well as the ways in which we are different. I understand the experience of Black students because I am from Serbia and we are the black sheep of Europe.

Markus: People who have lived experiences often have a fear from those very same experiences that prevent them from speaking out. Anonymous surveying is a great way to find out how people are affected. We must start by creating and providing a platform where people with lived experience feel safe to use their voice.

**ACTION (30th July):** Committee members (staff and faculty access link) to review the GALDSU survey with the Health and Wellness components.

<https://utoronto.sharepoint.com/sites/Daniels-OnlineCommunity/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FDaniels%2DOnlineCommunity%2FShared%20Documents%2FSurveys%2FData%20from%20GALDSU%27s%20Covid%2D19%20Survey%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FDaniels%2DOnlineCommunity%2FShared%20Documents%2FSurveys>

### **Motion to adjourn 6:35 pm**

Motion brought by: MaryLou

Seconded by: John Shnier

Vote: Carried unanimously.

Minutes by Jenny Hill