

Daniels Diversity & Equity Committee
Minutes – July 30, 2020

In Attendance

- Jane Wolff (Chair)
- Rob Wright
- John Shnier
- Nene Brode
- Fadi Masoud
- Nicole Tratnik
- Aidan Cowling
- Mary Lou Lobsinger
- Randa Omar
- Jenny Hill
- Danijela Puric- Mladenovic
- Janice Miyagi
- Mauricio Quiros Pacheco
- Mitchell Akiyama

Minute taker: Harold Tan

Convened at 5:00 pm

1. Introductions

Chair introduced Mitchell Akiyama. Mitchell takes over from Charles Stankieveh as faculty representative for Visual Studies.

2. Approval of Minutes

July 23 minutes. Some members requested clarification on process for making changes to the minutes, as there was confusion over whether changes could be made directly to the July 23 minutes posted in Teams. Chair acknowledged that as the Committee moves towards using Teams as the main platform for communication and document sharing, additional time will be provided to members to review the July 23 minutes and make any changes.

Going-forward. Minutes will be posted on the Diversity & Equity Committee Teams page no later than Thursday morning. Committee members are requested to review the

minutes and make any changes prior to the start of the meeting. Teams allow all members to make changes in real time.

When Chair begins meeting, members will be asked to approve minutes as posted on Teams.

Motion to approve: Chair moved that July 23 minutes be *provisionally* approved. *Final* approval of July 23 minutes will be conducted at July 30 meeting.

Moved: Robert Wright

Seconded: Danijela Puric- Mladenovic

Motion carried. Abstentions: Nicole Tratnik, Mitchell Akiyama

3. Notes from Chair – Questions

July 23 notes. Chair's notes contain progress report of actions and events from the previous week, and is posted on Teams page. Chair asked if members had any questions/comments. No questions/comments received.

Going-forward. Chair's notes will be posted on the Diversity & Equity Committee Teams page no later than Thursday morning. Committee members are requested to review the notes in advance of the meeting. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will invite questions/comments from members.

4. Curriculum Study – Presentation

Chair provided some historical context for members. When the Diversity & Equity Committee ("Committee") was struck, one of the key areas identified was curriculum. In 2018, the Committee sent a voluntary survey to faculty asking them how they approached issues around diversity in their curriculum. From the survey, the Committee distilled a set of themes and topics.

The 2018 themes and topics formed the framework for the online survey which was created in 2020 and sent out on June 11. The 2020 survey also provided room for qualitative comments, as the Committee recognized that relying upon quantitative data alone did not necessarily provide the level of nuanced analysis required. Committee also recognized that shifts in definition and understanding of topics evolve over time. Jen Hill, Danijela Puric-Mladenovic and Aiden Cowling were asked to review the survey and deliver a presentation to the Committee. Presenters were specifically asked to identify what shifts they saw in the results from 2018 to 2020.

Highlights from the presentations:

- 2018 and 2020 data derived from faculty who submitted responses. In 2018, the committee received reports for 59 / 158 of courses offered (37%)
- In 2020, number of courses available for survey increased due to inclusion of Forestry
- 2020 survey designed differently from 2018 survey, which made direct comparisons more challenging
- The 2018 survey asked faculty to describe diversity in their own words
- The Committee then analyzed the descriptions and organized the data according to themes and topics
- For the 2020 survey, topics were re-organized to create a shorter form. Experience has shown that shorter forms tend to result in more survey engagement
- Overall results:
 - No significant change from 2018 to 2020
 - Topically, see a rise in Ideology and Religion being discussed in courses
 - Part of challenge in analyzing results is that topics not necessarily discussed in isolation (eg; politics and race)
 - Increase in geographic regions (as defined as outside of Canada and U.S.) being discussed. This may be due to 2020 inclusion of Forestry courses in survey.
 - Faculty who responded acknowledged that more needs to be done in discussing topics such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic class and culture
 - Faculty acknowledged that content is Euro-centric
 - Themes tend to be treated as modules, and not continuous thread in curriculum
 - Exploration of themes such as critical race theory tend to be focused outside of Canada. There is not much analysis of the Canadian experience
 - Even the choice of buildings being discussed in courses becomes a socio-economic class issue. Buildings tend to be built for wealthier clients. Focusing on buildings designed for more vulnerable communities creates opportunities for discussions around diversity topics such accessibility and community consultation
 - Insider/outsider divide between tenured professors and sessional faculty greatly influences how and what is taught in class
 - Colonialism/slavery taught more broadly in courses. Discussions still tend to be around experiences outside of Canada
 - Visual Studies makes conscious efforts to highlight artists who speak directly about colonialism's impact in their art
 - Forestry links colonialism with indigenous knowledge and conservation
 - Gender/sexual orientation discussed in many undergraduate courses. Unfortunately no courses designed specifically to talk about the politics of space for the LGBT community, and little comment on intersectionality

- Chair commented that the one-third who completed the survey are already motivated to self-reflect and identify areas for improvement
- One of the challenges lie in how to reach out the two-thirds who did not complete the survey and persuade them that taking action is important
- Student representatives identified that asking students about whether faculty discussed diversity issues (and how effective faculty were in doing so) in their classes would be an important complement to the faculty surveys
- This would likely be a joint initiative between the Committee and the Student Equity Alliance with possible roll-out for end of Fall term
- Province is requiring all universities to map out their curriculum. This provides an opportunity to comprehensively and systemically identify what courses address diversity and identify gaps
- Diversity topics tend to be covered in electives and not core courses. This means that not all students are exposed to diversity content
- Lack of detailed information in syllabi also makes it difficult for students to choose courses that cover diversity topics
- Only core courses are taken into account when it comes to accreditation. Because diversity topics tend to be discussed more often in electives, there is a structural barrier to how seriously the profession takes diversity.
- Additional structural barrier is that graduate students have limited room in their schedule to take electives. There are opportunities for students to introduce diversity topics in studios, but this is largely at the initiative of the students themselves
- Chair acknowledged link between curriculum and the need for more diverse student recruitment if long-term change is to happen
- Capturing student feedback around diversity at the end of the course doesn't benefit the student who just completed the course
- Opportunity to capture student feedback earlier in the timeline through use of "Start, Stop, Continue" survey. Added advantage is that this type of survey can be immediately implemented with minimal effort
- There are challenges in creating formal requirements for diversity issues to be included in curriculum. Challenges include academic freedom and deciding on what (and how) diversity topics are covered
- There is greater value in creating conditions for culture change which persuade faculty on the importance and value of addressing diversity in whatever course they teach
- Focusing on culture change also permits flexibility on how topics are discussed as social values evolve. Example: Ecology in the past was treated as a discrete topic in the MLA program. It now is embedded in all courses.
- Committee Team page will have a link to Diversity resources spreadsheet which all members can access and contribute. There is value in having one location for information for members to access for themselves and to share with others

- Making changes to course outlines for Fall semester not possible due to deadlines, especially as all outlines are going digital
- Chair is also having ongoing discussions with a Black faculty member over his suggestions as to how studio briefs can be modified to more explicitly address diversity topics
- Together, in the short term, they are making appointments with academic program directors to explore how faculty teaching in their areas can make immediate changes to courses while longer-term initiatives (such as curriculum mapping) are underway
- Students have taken the initiative to contact their faculty and pro-actively address issues of how their faculty intend to include diversity topics in their courses. Along with the student survey, this is another opportunity for the Committee and the Student Equity Alliance to collaborate

5. Upcoming Meeting Topics – Discussion

August meeting topics somewhat fluid as Committee asked whether our Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office would be available to make a presentation on August 6.

We need additional volunteers to assist Mary Lou re: defining diversity and equity in our faculty/staff.

No specific topics have been scheduled for September meetings. If anyone has suggestions, there is room for discussion.

6. Motion to adjourn

Moved: Mauricio Quiros Pacheco

Seconded: Fadi Masoud

Motion carried. No abstentions or opposed.

Meeting end: 6:41 pm