

## Minutes of Diversity & Equity Committee Meeting March 29, 2019

---

Jane Wolff (*Chair*)

Fadi Masoud, John Shnier, Mauricio Quiros Pacheco, Jessica Misak (GALDSU),  
Liat Margolis (guest)

Kate Nelischer (*Committee Secretary*)

Regrets: Aziza Chaouni, Kira James (AVSSU), Didier Pomerleau (ex-officio), Dean  
Sommer (ex-officio), Charles Stankievehc

---

### Call to Order

Jane Wolff called the meeting to order at 12:10pm.

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions (Jane Wolff)

Jane notes that a work study student has been hired to support committee work over the summer. This role will involve a continuation of the curricular study that the committee started in 2017, and research on what related work other faculties are undertaking. A meeting between the Diversity and Equity Committee and the Curriculum Committee has unfortunately not yet been scheduled.

Jane shares the University of Toronto's TRC report and the Faculty of Kinesiology's Task Force on Race and Indigeneity Report. It is our responsibility as a Faculty to act on the University's TRC calls to action, and this falls within the purview of this committee.

Jane proposes the following actions that the committee could ask the Faculty to take:

1. Add the traditional lands acknowledgement to the Daniels website in a prominent location
2. Request time in a fall Core Faculty meeting for cultural competency training so that everyone in the core faculty has exposure
3. Request that we hold one event every term (open to faculty, students, and staff) that relates to Indigenous cultural awareness and education. For example, the blanket ceremony Liat organized for her class earlier this

year. The goal is to have an ongoing commitment to regular programming around these issues.

Jane asks if the committee supports the actions above.

## 2. Discussion

John notes his support, but suggests that the frequency of events should be changed to “at least once a year.” He also suggests adding the lands acknowledgement in the landscape and in the building (via signage) in public areas. John notes that the location of the signage should be decided in consultation with Indigenous partners.

Liat notes that placemaking is a main theme in the University’s TRC report, and this signage proposal is an important part of that placemaking. Liat also notes that directly across the street from Daniels is First Nations House. Liat notes that the history of the Daniels building often begins in the 1800s in Knox College, which is disturbing. Knox College trained priests who were part of the residential school system. Disclosing the truth of this story is important and having a pre-colonial history is important. Additionally, the significance of Spadina should be considered.

Liat suggests that prior to competency training or other initiatives listed above that the committee invite Jonathan Hamilton, Director of Indigenous Initiatives at UofT, Michael White, and John Crutch, to a meeting. Liat also suggests that in Jane’s invitation she also ask if it is appropriate to invite one of the elders from UofT (there are two elders in residence at First Nations House, along with a Council of Elders). Liat suggests we need to take a “walking together” approach.

Liat notes that the TRC objectives is one of the only items that each Faculty is required to report on annually, to the Governing Council. Liat notes that we should reflect on the 6 calls in the TRC report and focus action around those.

Liat also suggests that the committee recommend to the Dean that a task force / advisory committee be formed. The question of the composition of this task force could be posed to Jonathan Hamilton for feedback. We could invite an elder and someone from the architectural community (who is Indigenous) to join the task force. Liat notes that there are many issues the task force could address, including protocols and procedures for how to approach field trips in various communities.

Fadi notes that the political rhetoric has shifted, which is also why it is so important to institutionalize these conversations so that they can withstand political changes. Jane notes that she supports this and reiterates the importance of governance, institutionalization, and accountability, which is why we should take action through these formal structures. Implementing very visual and prominent messages, such as the building signs, is also important given potential

political changes.

Liat notes that in fall 2017 she invited the CSLA Indigenous Issues task force to meet with the MLA faculty, along with the Director of Indigenous Studies (Susan Hill), OALA President (Doris Chee), and practitioners in Toronto. The OALA admitted that until that point they had done nothing to respond to TRC. Liat followed up by proposing a funding program to the OALA, which resulted in the OALA providing \$1,000 to both our MLA program and Guelph's to be dedicated to reconciliation work. Hopefully this is the beginning of an ongoing commitment.

Liat also mentions recruitment (of students, staff, and faculty). Indigenous practitioners and faculty are few and far between, and we have very few Indigenous students (a complicated pipeline problem that all Faculties across UofT need to address). The advancement office should have an agenda to fundraise for scholarships at the undergraduate and graduate students for Indigenous students.

John notes that his wife could offer information regarding encouraging additional Indigenous student applications. John suggests making a recommendation to the CACB to add Indigenous issues to the SPC criteria, as accreditation can play a role in entrenching these issues into the core curriculum of professional programs. Could we consider a semester exchange with Laurentian at the Option Studio level and/or SuperStudio? If the façade of this building on Spadina represents colonialism at its height, it could be interesting to look at additions or changes that can be made to the landscape to recognize this history. It would also be helpful to get an update on diversity in faculty hires, given the ongoing searches.

Liat notes there are a lot of allies who have valuable expertise that we can look towards. It is also important to advocate for a budget for honorariums for elders and knowledge keepers. To integrate Indigenous content might require new models, including field trips and exchanges.

John notes that curriculum content is also important to address. Liat notes that the LAAC in accrediting LA programs does not have any questions around Indigeneity. It was the MLA program's decision to integrate that into the program's strategic plan to stress that it is an important subject. The CSLA congress this May is dedicated to reconciliation, and Liat has been invited to report on Bolton Camp. But both the CSLA and OALA have responsibilities to engage in this work.

Fadi notes that we have to be cognizant that we have an international student body, some of whom may not have a background in these issues. It requires students to be educated on the histories and issues, and also on how to engage in reconciliation work.

Jane notes that during her naturalization ceremony, the presiding judge spoke about a national culture that valued kindness and decency. This message was

inclusive, and difficult to argue with. The correct way to raise consciousness is to say that as a nation, whether we were born here or have come here, we have a responsibility to justice. Hesitation about saying or doing the wrong thing is real, and we know we will make mistakes (individually and collectively), but we have to also find ways to move forward. If we can only teach from our own experiences, we have nothing to say to one another. It is a constant learning process.

Liat notes that when Chris Grosset gave his talk, he noted awareness, sensitivity, and competency as vital components of reconciliation. We need to look at it in these stages. Senator Murray Sinclair notes that Indigenous people have built a mountain, and it is now the job of non-Indigenous people to climb it. It is up to all of us to do the homework. One of the greatest opportunities is that we are in an academic institution with a network of partners and a larger community of Indigenous and settler allies who are working on these issues.

Jess asks if we don't have a diverse faculty, what does it mean to have students exploring research topics that faculty do not necessarily have experience with? Students can reach out to other faculty across campus, but it would be helpful to create a list of outside secondary partners/faculty/advisors who can be called upon to speak to specific topics that we do not have expertise on in-house. Jane notes this could be complementary to suggested reading lists, which the committee is hoping to create. The committee's summer work study student could help with this work. Mauricio notes this is a very important project, as the constitution of a faculty will never cover every aspect of life, society, culture, etc. Liat notes that as program director one of her efforts has been to streamline additional inputs that are necessary. In order avoid an ad-hoc approach, Liat reaches out to MLA faculty each term to ask who they want to bring in and what their budgets are, and she consolidates this budget request and sends it to the Dean's Office for approval.

Mauricio suggests that the committee needs to specify the kinds of events we are requesting each term. It will also be important to make these events enticing. They should be curated so that it is interesting and does not become a burden.

Jane suggests that for the upcoming Council report that the committee outlines that it has discussed the TRC calls to action and activities happening within our Faculty and others, and that the committee will request efforts from the administration on placemaking and programming. Additionally, the report will note that the committee plans to consult University representatives before bringing specific recommendations to the Dean's Office.

The committee agrees with this proposed report structure. Fadi suggests that we should also find another mechanism that can institutionalize these efforts long-term. Liat suggests that with respect to programming, we should specify that training should be internal (vs. public programming). Faculty and staff first, then students (separately). Jane notes that the programming we're proposing should



occur during meetings that faculty are expected to attend, such as Core Faculty meetings. Mauricio notes it is a great idea to have an honorary chair or in-residence position, which the committee could explore.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40pm.

*These notes are considered to be an accurate account of the meeting. Please note that attendance is recorded as per the sign-in sheet. If any discrepancies or omissions are noted, please contact the undersigned; otherwise these shall be deemed acceptable to all.*

Kate Nelischer (*Committee Secretary*)