

## Minutes of Diversity & Equity Committee Meeting November 1, 2018

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Jane Wolff (*Chair*)

Jessica Misak (GALDSU), Kira James (AVSSU), Mauricio Quiros Pacheco, Robert Wright, Fadi Masoud, Charles Stankieveh, Richard Sommer (ex-officio), Didier Pomerleau (ex-officio)

Guests: Alicia Bennett, Christopher Henion

Kate Nelischer (*Committee Secretary*)

Regrets: Aziza Chaouni, John Shnier

### Call to Order

Jane Wolff called the meeting to order at 1pm.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Updates from the Chair**

Jane provides an overview of recent Committee activity, including supporting the Dean's Office in pursuing online course evaluation (which will involve about a year of consultation with faculty), supporting the Dean's Office in implementing best practices for search committees, and revising the Committee's study of diversity and equity content in existing curricula (a draft has been circulated for the Committee's review). Additionally, Jane has represented the Faculty on the Interdepartmental Equity, Diversity, and Anti-Racism Working Group (led by Deb Cowan from the Department of Geography & Planning) that is organizing a Dean's Roundtable on diversity and equity issues (likely to be held in early 2019).

3. **Dean's Report on Searches and General Representation**

The Dean gives a presentation on the gender and racial makeup of faculty, the university-wide faculty complement, staff, student body, and recent searches.

Jess requests the Dean make this presentation to students, which the Dean agrees to. Jess notes that GALDSU is developing its own survey and would appreciate this work as part of that effort. Jess notes that the recent faculty searches reduced the diversity of the faculty complement, and suggests the most pertinent question to ask is why we aren't we getting more qualified applicants from more diverse

candidates.

Jane agrees that the diversity of the candidate pool is critically important, as this will increase the statistical probability that a chosen candidate will not be a white man. Another important piece is for all search committee members to go through unconscious bias training. Thirdly, at UofT hires are made with confidence that candidates are “tenure-able,” which makes search committees more conservative in their decision making. This begs the question of how tenure standards will evolve to recognize a broader diversity of work and qualifications, and involves questions of University culture.

Didier notes that recent hires have been more diverse than the retiring faculty they are replacing. Fadi also notes that the generational shift is important, as student bodies and young professionals in our fields are more diverse, so that will eventually be reflected in faculties. The Dean notes that he has advocated for scaling back the requirements for Assistant Professorial positions to allow for younger candidates to be considered, and can help to address issues of classism.

Jane notes that Bryan Gaensler and Virginia MacLaren in their winter 2018 Unconscious Bias presentation to the Faculty stressed the importance of recruitment. Jess asks if the culture of the school is inviting to candidates from diverse backgrounds? Do these people feel welcome to apply?

Jane notes it is also important to think of the other ways we can diversify representation within the Faculty, such as through public programming and reviews. Jane notes we need to have short-, medium-, and long-term plans of action. In the medium- and short-term, we can focus on sessional hires, public programming, and transforming curriculum. The Committee tries to support the administration is all of these endeavors. Jess references Columbia, which is diversifying crit panels, public programming, and studio subjects themselves (for example, an entire studio on feminist architecture). It is important to expand the canon of what we’re teaching.

Fadi notes the importance of our location in Toronto and Canada at this time, which is attractive to candidates because of the diversity, openness, and tolerance here.

Kira asks if more equity-based content can be integrated into courses in the undergraduate program, and suspects this would be of great interest to the student body. The Dean notes this is possible and should be discussed with the Program Director. The Dean also notes that students are able to draw on University-wide resources to take some of these courses as electives outside of the Faculty.

Jess notes it would be valuable for the student body to have greater transparency around searches and hiring. The Dean notes he is happy to discuss these topics in a live forum.

Kira suggests faculty (especially sessionals) go through unconscious bias training. The Dean notes that many sessionals are practitioners and not always familiar with the university setting and how to engage with students around these issues and can sometimes be unintentionally offensive.

#### **4. Curriculum Study**

Another meeting will be scheduled to discuss the draft study.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

*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*)