

Committee on Diversity 2019-20 Annual Report
Submitted May 6, 2020 by Steven Zopfi, Committee Chair

Committee on Diversity Members 2019-20: *Faculty*: Tim Beyer, Joel Elliott, Lea Fortmann, John Lear (Spring only), Carrie Woods, Steven Zopfi (chair) *Ex-Officio*: Laura Behling (Ariela Tubert) Laura Behling (Kelly Brown) *Senate Liaison*: Alison Tracy Hale *Student*: Christina Mills

Standing Charges

Below are the standing charges from the Senate and our report on our work on these charges.

1. *To serve the university's goal of increasing social diversity on campus.*

This is the ultimate goal of all that we have done. As a faculty committee our efforts have focused primarily on faculty issues.

2. *To participate in the development of initiatives that enable the university to hire new faculty from historically under-represented populations and to support better retention and success of such faculty.*

One of our chief areas of focus this year was to investigate the ways in which we could help with the hiring of faculty from historically under-represented populations, and support better retention through the development of mentorship programs. After reviewing the data collected last year by the COD and consulting with Dean Christoph we found that there was already an ongoing effort to support faculty hiring from historically under-represented groups with materials provided by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Rather than re-invent those materials, we found our role to be more of a resource than in developing new materials or practices.

We spent a considerable amount of time investigating mentorship programs for underrepresented faculty. We heard from Jennifer Utrata about her efforts over the past few years with faculty mentoring programs and reviewed previous work by the COD regarding different models of mentorship including top-down, peer-to-peer, stand-alone programs for underrepresented faculty, and integrated programs that are a part of a larger institutional mentoring program for all faculty. We also looked at commercial off-site mentoring programs such as those offered by the National Center for Faculty. Dean Christoph also informed us of ongoing efforts to investigate mentoring programs through the NW5 and her research on off-site commercial programs.

As this is an ongoing area of investigation by the Dean's Office, it was felt that instead of developing and instituting our own program, it would be better to consult with the Dean in her work on this issue and **recommend that COD appoint a liaison to the Faculty Development Program Working Group to assist in their work in relationship to diversity and mentoring.**

3. *To work with the President, Vice Presidents, and Chief Diversity Officer concerning diversity initiatives that can benefit from faculty presence and leadership as needed.*

See our answer to standing charge #2 above. Additionally, we have consulted this year with Dean Christoph and Interim Diversity Officer Ariela Tubert (member of COD) about ongoing efforts on hiring faculty from underrepresented populations, mentoring, and cultural competency training. As noted above, part of the Faculty Development Program Working Group work is centered on developing a mentoring plan. Educational programs such as the January 2019 Inclusive Pedagogy Retreat and the upcoming inclusive pedagogy session at the faculty Bookends program in August 2020 are valuable single events but we acknowledge the need for a more comprehensive cultural competency training program for faculty. **We recommend the COD be charged with developing recommendations for such a program and we address this later in this report.**

4. *To establish liaisons with key university units including staff and student diversity groups to assess strategic plan needs and work collaboratively in diversity-related initiatives, as needed.*

Two members of the COD are members of the DAC and one COD member was a member of BHERT. Our DAC/COD members helped think about and administer the results from the Campus Climate Survey to the COD and other key constituent groups on campus. Our BHERT member reported that BHERT is working on defining its role but is waiting until the hiring of our new VP for Diversity. The continuing liaison work with other groups on campus has been limited, especially in the spring with the adjustment to virtual learning and social distancing necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the infrequent meetings of many of these groups. COD continues to value our relations with these groups and confirms our own distinct role as a faculty committee focused primarily on faculty engagement with diversity related initiatives.

5. *To work with colleagues to maintain an educational environment that welcomes and supports diversity even as it protects and assures the rights of academic freedom outlined in the Faculty Code.*

We were made aware of a number of student-led instruments, including efforts by Simone Moore and Priyanki Vora to lead departmental cultural competency training sessions for faculty based on Posse models and the “Survey for Mandatory Faculty Diversity Training,” that was distributed by Christina Mills and Erin Valoroso to students. Both show a clear desire by students for robust cultural competency training for faculty. After repeated discussions, we note the difficulty of designing and implementing comprehensive faculty cultural competency training but acknowledge that this should be a long-term goal. **In the meantime, we recommend designing and starting a smaller-scale program that could be expanded over time so that we at least start work on this very important topic. We expect this will be part of the COD’s work next year.**

We also became aware of student concerns related to mechanisms and transparency of student complaints regarding faculty issues related to diversity and cultural sensitivity in and out of the classroom. After consulting with the Interim Diversity Officer and Title IX Coordinator, and with the knowledge that the University is in the process of hiring a

new VP of Diversity, **we recommend that the COD continue to be engaged with the Interim Diversity Officer, Title IX Coordinator, and the new VP to develop more transparent guidelines for these matters.**

6. *To activate annually a group of faculty, staff, and students that will review aggregate data about patterns of bias and hate in our campus community with the purpose of creating educational opportunities for reflection and dialogue.*

This has traditionally been the role of BHERT and, technically, COD “activates” BHERT. BHERT shared with us the results of the campus climate survey and we discussed the findings and ways in which we can serve our ultimate goal of increasing social diversity on campus. **As BHERT is being reorganized and we are in the process of hiring a new VP of Diversity, we wonder if this charge should be moved to BHERT or to the Head Diversity Officer’s charges and our charge be amended to consult with these offices about their findings.**

7. *To report annually to the Faculty Senate on the committee’s work related to diversity goals 1-6.*

This document serves as that report.

8. Such other duties as may be assigned to it by Faculty Senate.
See below.

Additional Charges for 2019-20:

1. *Recommend to the Senate one or more mechanisms by which all departments, schools, and programs regularly and meaningfully evaluate and enrich their engagement with diversity in regard to hiring and retention practices and departmental/school/programmatic culture.*

This year we primarily focused on retention practices. See response to standing charge #2.

2. *Continue to encourage and participate in ongoing conversations and initiatives to help support and retain underrepresented faculty, including mentorship. Such efforts could include sending members to participate in the campus-wide development of a mentoring model, or modeling and proposing related developmental work to the rest of the campus.*

See answer for Standing Charges #2 and #3.

3. *Continue to engage with the development and implementation of the university’s Strategic Plan and CTF initiatives as they relate to diversity, and communicate with faculty (through the Senate, in Faculty Meetings, via the faculty governance listserv, etc.) about important issues as they arise.*

The University's Strategic Plan and the DSP are the guiding documents for all of the work of the COD. We encourage next year's COD to work with the CTF to ensure that the principles of the DSP are successfully integrated.

4. *Propose and/or collaborate with the ODI and campus groups to develop opportunities for broader discussions of diversity and inclusion across campus (whether in workshops, chairs meetings, or focused retreats like the one held in January 2019). Such efforts might focus on mentoring and retention of underrepresented faculty.*
See answers for Standing Charges #2, #3, #5, and #6.

Next Year, AY 20-21 For next year the COD would like to recommend the following charges:

1. Propose and/or collaborate with the ODI and campus groups to develop opportunities for a broader discussion of diversity and inclusion across campus especially as related to cultural competency training. The goal should be to recommend to the senate an initial plan for cultural competency training for faculty members with the understanding that this plan be expanded and developed as needed.
2. Continue to encourage and participate in ongoing conversations and initiatives to help support and retain underrepresented faculty, including mentorship. Efforts could include appointing a liaison to work with the Faculty Development Program Working Group and the ODI.
3. Engage with the Chief Diversity Officer and Title IX coordinator, and the new VP of Diversity (when hired) in developing guidelines for student concerns related to faculty-student interactions about diversity and cultural climate in and out of the classroom. especially those that do not rise to the level of a policy violation.