

**COMMITTEE FOR EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)
ANNUAL REPORT
AY 2024-2025**

To the Merced Division of the Academic Senate:

In AY 2024-2025, EDI held a total of 7 regular meetings and conducted some business via email with respect to its duties as outlined in UC Merced's [Senate Bylaw II.III.7](#).

Areas of Focus

Hate Speech and Bias in Student Evaluations

EDI transmitted a memo to Divisional Council on October 2, 2024 regarding concerns with hate speech and bias in student evaluations. Divisional Council members discussed the memo and agreed that FWF and UGC should weigh in on the matter. FWF and UGC both provided feedback and generally supported EDI's memo. Following the receipt of FWF and UGC's feedback, Divisional Council members discussed the matter further and ultimately voted to endorse the memo and transmit it to EVC/Provost Dumont, VPDUE Bergerson, VCSAE Oseguera and the VPDGE Hratchian. VPDUE Bergerson has since replied noting a plan to assemble a Climate of Respect Task Force to examine issues related to disrespectful behaviors between students and instructors. EDI provided comments on the draft charge of the Task Force. VPDUE Bergerson and Dean of Students French also plan to implement some changes to student evaluations, such as including the preamble and open-ended question about climate.

Faculty Equity Advisors (FEA)

EDI transmitted a memo to Divisional Council on October 3, 2024 regarding concerns with the FEA Program. Over the past several years, EDI has experienced challenges acquiring a sufficient number of nominations for FEAs. Partially because the incentives, such as compensation, are not compelling enough to recruit faculty for these roles. EDI believed that seeking an alternative method for ensuring diversity in faculty recruitment was necessary and could make the program more positive and effective. With this objective in mind, EDI proposed dissolving the current FEA program and in its place providing Strength through Equity & Diversity (STEAD) Faculty Search Committee Workshops for all members of search committees. EDI believed that not only would this approach be more effective, but implementing such workshops would help broaden the knowledge base of how to employ best practices for recruitment. On October 21, 2024, Divisional Council endorsed EDI's proposal to dissolve the FEA Program and sent a request to the relevant administrative leads.

Support for Undocumented Students

At their December 9, 2024 meeting, members of EDI met with AVC for EJIE Zulema Valdez to discuss concerns regarding the perceived lack of support from the campus for undocumented students. Members discussed the need for specific guidance and support for undocumented students in light of the political environment and believed it would be useful to identify the resources that are available to students and ensure they are effectively communicated not only to the students, but to the individuals who engage with students such as faculty and staff. EDI then transmitted a memo to Divisional Council leadership on December 11, 2024 encouraging the campus leadership to provide a communication of support, guidance and resources to the student body, faculty, and staff.

Guidelines for DEI statements in Academic Personnel Cases

In AY 23-24 and 24-25, EDI began creating a set of guidelines for faculty to reference while drafting their DEI statements. The guidelines aim to clarify some of the questions faculty might have about the DEI self-statement and hope to provide guidance in composing this part of one's promotion materials. On June 11, 2025, EDI invited the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) and Vice Provost for Academic Personnel to review and provide comments on the proposed guidelines.

Senate Award for Contributions in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The EDI awards subcommittee reviewed the nominations for the annual Senate Award for Contributions to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and selected a recipient to receive the award.

Systemwide Committee Updates

University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity and Equity (UCAADE)

EDI Chair Clarissa Nobile was the UC Merced representative to UCAADE, and kept EDI members informed of the following major items of discussion this academic year:

- Academic Council Chair Steven Cheung informed UCAADE members that there was support from the administration regarding the incorporation and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the UC system.
- Chair Nobile reported on the topic of hate speech and bias in student evaluations to UCAADE members. UCAADE members did not note an uptick of occurrences at their own campuses, however they shared various processes on how hate speech and bias in student evaluations had been addressed.
- UCAADE members discussed the way each of their campuses were handling the directive from UCOP regarding expressive activities and assembly. Many members expressed concerns about policies being too restrictive.
- Cynthia Dávalos, Associate Vice President of Graduate, Undergraduate and Equity Affairs and Genie Kim, Director of Student Mental Health and Well Being met with UCAADE members regarding systemwide disability services and functions. According to the data presented, the number of students with disabilities is increasing. A systemwide work group has been developed in order to properly address accommodations for the increased number of students. The work group issued a report in 2024 which noted a decision for more campuses to hire additional case workers to accommodate the increase in students with disabilities. Additionally, the systemwide policy on equity and inclusion was upgraded to include language for the inclusion of students with disabilities.
- UCAADE is considering a name change and a revision to its charge.
- UCAADE members held a consultation with Vice President for Graduate and Undergraduate Affairs and Vice Provost for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Yvette Gullatt regarding the announcement on diversity statements not being required for UC faculty hiring. UCAADE members were concerned that there was little warning prior to the announcement. Applicants will not be required to submit a diversity statement but are free to discuss their contributions to diversity voluntarily.

Consultation

EDI consulted with the following campus constituents:

- AVPAP Anna Song
- AVC Zulema Valdez
- VC/CDO Delia Saenz
- VPAP Tom Hansford

Review Items

EDI reviewed and offered comments on the following systemwide review items:

- Proposed Revisions to APM 036, Employment
- Proposed Revisions to APM 500, Recruitment

EDI reviewed and offered comments on the following campus wide review items:

- Anthropology & Heritage Studies Graduate Program Proposal
- Proposed Revisions to MAPP Sections 2013, 2014, 2053 and 2054
- SSHA Reorganization Proposal
- UC Merced Interim Policy on Expressive Activities and Assembly: Protests, Demonstrations, Non-University Speakers and Signage on Campus and in University Facilities
- Proposal for a Dual Degree Program Leading to a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) Degree from UCM and Doctor of Medicine Degree from UCSF
- Accounting B.S. and Minor Proposal

Respectfully submitted,

EDI Members:

Clarissa Nobile, Chair, School of Natural Sciences, UCAADE representative
Whitney Pirtle, Vice Chair, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, UCMBA Representative (Fall 2024)

Dalia Magaña, Vice Chair, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, CCCAE Representative (Spring 2025)

Marcos García-Ojeda, Chair, School of Natural Sciences (Fall 2024)

Nigel Hatton, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (Spring 2025)

Hyeran Jeon, School of Engineering (Spring 2025)

Marcus Lee, School of Engineering, PROC representative

Ex officio, non-voting members:

Anna Song, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Personnel

Zulema Valdez, Associate Vice Chancellor for EJIE

Staff:

Fatima Paul, Executive Director

Petra Martins, Senate Analyst