

COMMITTEE FOR EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)**MEETING MINUTES****Monday, December 9, 2024****12:00PM – 1:30PM****ZOOM**

Pursuant to call, the Committee for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion met at 12:00pm on December 9, 2024. Chair Clarissa Nobile presiding.

I. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's Agenda
- B. [November 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes](#)

Action:

- The Consent Calendar was approved as presented.

II. Chair's Report – Clarissa Nobile

- A. Updates from the [Divisional Council](#) Meetings (November 18 and December 2)
Senate Chair Mitchell provided an update on various workgroups that have been tasked to study the following initiatives: Assessing the impact of transitioning all UC campuses with undergraduate programs to the semester system, reviewing systemwide policies on the Faculty Code of Conduct, fully online degrees, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). He also informed Divisional Council members that all UC campuses should be planning for a potential 5.7% reduction in the state budget next year.

At the October 23, 2024 Academic Council meeting, there was a consultation with the Director of Systemwide Community Safety. One of the topics discussed was the purchasing of military grade equipment, and how those purchases are moving forward.

UC campuses are having trouble with supporting the Mortgage Origination Program (MOP). The future of the program is unclear due to higher interest rates, the usage of these loans increasing, etc.

Notes from the Shared Governance Retreat were shared with Divisional Council members. Chair Mitchell encouraged committees to review the notes and identify two to three areas in which they may engage in this year.

EVC/Provost Dumont is conducting a study to determine the appropriate number of faculty for the campus. She plans to distribute a report on this soon.

The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) issued a report that contained critical comments about the idea of building a new UC campus when it may have been more effective to increase enrollment on the other campuses.

Action:

- Executive Director Paul shared the [LAO Report](#) and a [relevant article](#) in the Zoom chat.

CAP Chair Miriam Barlow summarized comments on the MAPP Revisions. She highlighted EDI's comments related to including EDI into the Bylaws. Divisional Council members decided that EDI commitments should only be recommended if all Schools were to implement them into their Bylaws.

Action:

- Members discussed incorporating EDI commitments into all School Bylaws and decided to add this item to a future EDI meeting for further discussion.

Divisional Council members discussed two new California bills, SB 791 and AB 810. VPAP Hansford asked Divisional Council members which committees should be consulted with regarding these bills, to which Divisional Council members recommended the P&T Chair.

FWAF Chair Beaster-Jones reported that some faculty are dismayed by the silence from the campus after the election, especially since other universities have issued statements. Divisional Council members supported issuing a statement of some kind and agreed to make a statement including a reaffirmation of community values in the Senate's Two Cents.

The Academic Senate Anti-Racism External Reviewer Assessment has begun. Dr. Fleming's collaborator, Cristine Khan, attended the Divisional Council meeting and summarized the initial plans for the process. Members noted concerns regarding the timing of the initial interviews as many of the Chairs were not available until after the winter break.

B. Reminder: December 16 Meeting of the Division

III. EDI Representatives/Liaisons

- A. [Periodic Review Oversight Committee \(PROC\)](#) – Marcus Lee
- Update on November 18 and December 9 Meetings

PROC engaged in a discussion regarding its broader role in FTE allocation, recognizing that many program reviews highlight concerns about available resources—or the lack thereof. Additionally, programs often outline a timeline for implementing recommended measures following their reviews, some of which may be contingent on FTE availability.

PROC discussed planning for the upcoming WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) accreditation at UC Merced, which may include an off-site

review. A significant part of the WSCUC accreditation process is that themes are used to identify what the institution wants to address through its accreditation. WSCUC then helps to retrieve data on those themes and focuses on making a plan towards each of them.

There has been a recent proposal to change the units of review for different programs. Some programs are headed by multiple departments rather than just one or some departments include several programs. PROC discussed the various pros and cons of each unit of review and is still determining which would be the most appropriate.

There has been an effort to provide programs with more data that they can use in their self-study. For example, retention rates, survey data, etc., presented in a format to be more readily available to use.

There is a work group being formed to discuss different processes for administrative reviews.

IV. Updates from Governance Retreat and Priorities

At the conclusion of the October 30 session, participants shared their top priorities and key takeaways, highlighting areas of focus for future action. In alignment with the request from Senate leadership, Senate Committees are encouraged to review these priorities and identify those they wish to address this academic year.

Members reviewed the list of priorities and selected the following priorities for EDI to address this year:

- Involve faculty in recruitment.
- Greater departmental involvement in student recruitment and retention, given how central departments are to student identity. Examples: departmental community building activities, department involvement in outreach, and in the first several years after undergraduates arrive. Administrative support for these activities.
- Understand and improve graduate students' retention especially Latinx anomaly in our graduate student retention data.

Actions:

- Members are to submit any additional priorities that they would like to address to Petra, Fatima, and Chair Nobile by 5:00pm, Friday, December 13.
- The EDI Analyst will notify the Senate Chair and Executive Director of the priorities that EDI intends to address.

V. Hate Speech and Bias in Student Evaluations

The Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom (FWAF) and the Undergraduate Council (UGC) reviewed [EDI's October 2, 2024 memo](#) regarding hate speech and bias in student evaluations.

FWAF and UGC's response memos are available [here](#).

This item was discussed at the December 2 Divisional Council meeting.

Members reviewed FWAF and UGC's response memos. Chair Nobile noted that both FWAF and UGC generally supported EDI's memo, however, with the difference in opinion that student evaluations should remain completely anonymous. When this item was discussed at the December 2 Divisional Council meeting, the same point was raised.

Members recognized the importance of maintaining the anonymity of student evaluations while also prioritizing faculty safety. If there is no imminent danger to the faculty, members supported the argument for preserving the anonymity of student evaluations. If, however, there are rare instances of imminent danger, members thought that administrators should have the capability of unblinding the evaluation to ensure the safety of the faculty member. However, if there is not a safety concern, members agreed that this is a broader campus climate issue that still needs to be addressed. The primary concern is to protect faculty from potentially harmful comments and to ensure such comments are not included in the data used for promotion and tenure assessments.

Members also continued to support the idea of flagging comments that contain hate speech and/or bias language, giving faculty the option to review such comments. Members believed that flagging hateful comments would help collect data on their frequency, severity, and the specific faculty groups targeted by such language.

Members discussed and agreed with the comment from UGC that it is time to re-examine the effectiveness and purpose of student evaluations as a whole, and whether these evaluations, as currently structured, are fulfilling their intended goals.

Action:

- EDI drafted a response memo based on the committee's comments in the meeting and transmitted the memo to the Senate Chair on December 13, 2024.

VI. Consultation with AVC Valdez

A. Support for Undocumented Students

AVC for EJIE Valdez has been approached regarding the need for specific guidance and support for undocumented students in light of the political environment. She noted it would be useful to identify the resources that are available to our 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.

Members were unaware of any such communication of resources provided to students who might be particularly vulnerable during this time. Because of the university's lack of response, students do not feel protected as the university has not acknowledged that this may be a difficult time for some. Some students feel anxious, unsafe, and uncertain regarding their future at UC Merced. Additionally, when approached by students with these concerns, faculty are not aware of what to say or where to direct students as no guidance has been provided by the university.

Actions:

- AVC Valdez will consult with VC/CDO Saenz regarding a post-election campus announcement.
- Executive Director Paul will check to see if the Undocumented Students Working Group has taken any recent action regarding this.
- EDI drafted a joint [memo](#) with AVC Valdez and submitted it to the Senate Chair on December 11, 2024.

VII. [Guidelines for DEI Statements in Promotion & Tenure Cases](#)

In AY 23-24, EDI began creating a set of guidelines for faculty to reference while drafting their DEI statements for promotion and tenure cases. A draft of EDI's work on this can be found [here](#).

The APM and MAPP sections related to the review of DEI statements in Promotion and Tenure cases can be found [here](#).

Action:

- This item will be added to a future EDI agenda.

VIII. Consultation with VPAP Tom Hansford**A. Step Plus Promotion System**

Chair Nobile informed VPAP Hansford that EDI reviewed the various promotion systems at other UC campuses and favored the Step Plus Promotion System used by UC Davis. She then explained that the system used by UC Davis allows for normal, One-Step Advancements as well as One-and-One-Half-Step Advancements. A larger-than-normal, 1.5-step advancement requires a strong record with outstanding achievement in at least one area of review across research or creative work, teaching, and service. Chair Nobile added that data from UC Davis from 1991 to 2013, prior to the implementation of their Step Plus Promotion Program, showed that men promoted to tenure 33% faster than women, and that, the slowest rates to tenure were for underrepresented minority women. This trend continued at the Associate to Full Professor level as well where men promoted 46% faster than women and unrepresented minority women promoted 41% slower than white faculty. Chair Nobile noted that her understanding was that the Step Plus Promotion System has helped close those promotion gaps, however data needs to be requested from UC Davis to confirm.

Members discussed the potential for a step plus system to allow for less frequent reviews, which would lower the administrative burden of reviewing cases. Also, under a step plus system, faculty would be eligible for the acceleration automatically, rather than having to request consideration for an acceleration upfront. Members believed that this would make the review process more equitable.

VPAP Hansford noted that he is very open minded about UC Merced using such a system, however he would like to gather more information about it in terms of

effectiveness, implementation, cost, etc. He added that it would take a considerable amount of time to figure out how the system would work and then additional time for implementation.

VPAP Hansford informed EDI members that over the past two years, he has conducted a rolling analyses of advancement data at UC Merced, particularly concerned with race and gender outcomes. He presented the data to EDI last academic year and offered to present an updated set of data to the committee this academic year. EDI members agreed that this information would be useful to have.

Members reviewed the [Summary of UC Step Plus Advancement Systems](#) with VPAP Hansford and discussed why the system used by UC Davis was the most attractive to EDI.

Actions:

- The EDI Analyst will request advancement data since the implementation of the UC Davis Step Plus Promotion System from the UC Davis CAP Analyst.
- VPAP Hansford will consult with his UC Davis counterpart regarding the Step Plus Promotion System implementation, effectiveness, etc.
- VPAP Hansford will attend an EDI meeting in the Spring to present data related to an analysis of faculty advancement and promotion data.

IX. Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30pm.

Attest: Clarissa Nobile, EDI Chair