

COMMITTEE FOR DIVERSITY AND EQUITY (D&E)**Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 6, 2020**

Meeting was called to order at 9:34AM, via Zoom, with Chair Berhe presiding.

I. Chair's Report – Asmeret Asefaw Berhe

As Senate Chair Hansford suggested, Chair Berhe would like to avoid long meetings via Zoom, especially given that many faculty members have children at home, and asked members to think of possible ways to conduct business by email. The committee discussed the equity concerns related to teaching and research during COVID-19 pandemic, such as student access to internet and computers, the impact of the P/NP grading policy (which students may opt in, rather than being a blanket policy), and teaching expectations without access to campus facilities and a short lead time to prepare online courses.

It was decided that, while many statements have been made that have address some of the equity concerns, it would be helpful for faculty, for D&E to issue a memo to Department Chairs encouraging them to discuss equity concerns about evaluating faculty research and teaching, with links to the relevant announcements that have been made to date, to ease the anxieties of department members.

ACTION: Analyst to draft a memo and consult with Chair and Fatima Paul, the Interim Executive Director of the Senate, about the procedure to disseminate the memo.

II. Vice Chair's Report on UCAADE March 5, 2020 meeting—Irene Yen

At the time of the meeting, Santa Cruz strike was the main issue, and there was a highly engaged discussion. Attendees also discussed the Resolutions on DEI statements that were being voted on at UC Davis, the planned suspension of the SATs requirements for admissions, how best to distribute the \$2.5 million Basic Needs Grant, and the Cost of Living increase. It was pointed out at the meeting that, if graduate students receive the raise demanded by the strikers, unionized staff will be getting paid less than graduate students, and thus are likely to ask for a raise also. The University is financially unable to cover the cost of living increase for them both. Chair Berhe stated that a similar discussion took place in DivCo and will update members after further discussion at DivCo.

III. Consultation with AVPF Valdez and CDO Matos

D&E consulted with AVPF Valdez and CDO Matos about the Administration's response to COVID-19, with particular attention to the equity concerns about the grading policy (optional P/NP), pre-tenure faculty (especially in laboratory sciences), and their evaluation. All agreed that it would be helpful to send the recent documents issued by Senate Committees (CAP, UGC, GC) and the Administration to the department chairs, with a message about not stressing students and faculty, to address any anxiety. CDO Matos informed D&E of the Calm App, which her office has worked to provide to all at UC Merced (faculty, students, staff) for free. AVPF Valdez suggested that D&E memo address the lack of childcare as an equity issue, with concrete, individual stories. A D&E member agreed that it would be "relieving" to receive a message that does not focus on maintaining productivity but rather recognize the challenging situation. It was agreed that incorporating personal stories from faculty would make the memo more relatable, and that

these stories will be collected jointly by D&E, CDO's office, and VPF's office. Some will be incorporated in the memo to department chairs, others will be compiled with support from the VPF's Office staff. One of the D&E members was asked to write about her experience anonymously.

A discussion followed on how UC Merced may demonstrate its contributions to the State during COVID-19 emergency, which has been requested by the Governor's office. Donation of Personal Protection Equipment from labs, financially supporting undergraduate and graduate students as research assistants and interns, and research and testing that are related to COVID-19, were mentioned.

ACTION: Draft a memo to Department Chairs addressing equity issues and incorporating personal stories as discussed above. Circulate before transmission. Separately collaborate with the VPF's and CDO's offices to collect more stories, using the capacity of the VPF's office to send and collect data.

IV. Consent Calendar

- A. Today's agenda
- B. [March 2 agenda](#) and [Meeting Minutes](#)

The consent calendar was approved as presented.

V. PROC Report—Sora Kim

Members discussed the draft memo to PROC requesting that D&E issues be given time for discussion during external review team visits. The Chair re-read it, and all agreed that it could be sent as is, without further elaboration.

ACTION: Transmit the memo to PROC.

VI. Discussion Item: FEA program—Asmeret Asefaw Berhe

Chair Berhe reported that she and Vice Chair Yen attended meetings with the external review team for the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and discussed with the review team and Vice Chancellor/Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) Matos how the existing structure and policies are not conducive to improving the EDI conditions at UC Merced in general, and to accountability in the hiring process in particular. Chair Berhe has raised this issue with the Provost, and D&E has had many discussions, yet progress has not been made. Vice Chair Yen added that at the UCAADE meeting in March she learned that the Vice Chair of the Board of Regents is a strong advocate for increase in faculty diversity, and proposed to open a dialogue with her. Chair Berhe is supportive of the idea.

Chair Berhe proposed that a memo registering this concern be transmitted before the end of this school year. Members agreed, and suggested that the memo start with the endorsement of the UCAADE recommendations for FEAs, followed by the expression of concern that there is resistance among some departments to adopting policies that improve the EDI condition at UC Merced. The external review team's report should be incorporated, if made available in time.

ACTION: Draft a memo accordingly, to be discussed at the next D&E meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10AM. Att. by Asmeret Berhe, D&E Chair.

VII. Informational Item: [UC Davis's Resolutions on DEI Statements](#)