

**UNIVERSITY OF DENVER
FACULTY SENATE**

Minutes

October 21, 2016

Room 510

Daniel Felix Ritchie School of Engineering & Computer Science

Senators (or proxies) present:

Anneliese Amschler Andrews, Lynn Baker, Jeff Bowen, Victor Castellani, Frédérique Chevillot, Kate Crowe, Jared Del Rosso, Ron DeLyser, Claude d'Estrée, James Gilroy, Jennifer Greenfield, Sarah Hart-Micke, Cynthia Hazel, John Hill, Deborah Howard, Barb Hurtt, Scott Johns, Arthur Jones, Megan Kelly, Cheyne Kirkpatrick, Paul Kosempel, Rick Leaman, Jing Li, Zulema Lopez, Eleanor McNees, Laleh Mehran, Julianne Mitchell, Ronnie Pavlov, Sarah Pessin, Amy Phillips, George Potts, Jason Roney, Dean Saitta, Nancy Sampson, Jonathan Sciarcon, Jamie Shapiro, Orna Shaughnessy, Derigan Silver, Dan Singer, Margareta Stefanovic, Kate Stoker, Billy J. Stratton, Matthew Taylor, Nicole Taylor, Ron Throupe, John Tiedemann, Greg Ungar, Robert Urquhart, Gwen Vogel Mitchell, Stephen von Merz, Kate Willink, Melanie Witt

Other members of the DU community present:

Bridget Arend, Mary Sue Brown, Chandler Carson, Carolyn Coles, Veronica Droser, Ontario Duley, Michael Fiorini, Steve Fisher, Karen Gross, Jessica Johnson, Makia Jones, Amy King, Kayanne Klipka, Debbie Mixon Mitchell, Christina Paguyo, Jasmine Pulce, Amy Wang, Susan Zvacek

Call to Order & Approval of Minutes

Kate Willink, Senate President, called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM.

A motion to approve the minutes from the September 30, 2016 meeting was seconded and approved.

Introduction of World Café

President Kate Willink began by introducing the World Café on inclusivity at the university. She invited faculty senators and other guests at the meeting to participate in the conversation to the extent that they feel comfortable.

President Willink then explained the format of the World Café. Our discussion would include five different questions. Each would be represented by two moderators (at different tables). President Willink asked participants to go to three different questions, based on their interests. She explained that there would be paper and markers at each table, and she invited participants to contribute to the discussion by writing as well as talking. At end of the discussion, each of the facilitators would present a synthesis of the three rounds of discussion at their tables.

President Willink then reviewed the questions and asked the moderators associated with each to stand.

- What impediments are there to faculty involvement in the Inclusive Learning Environment Initiative? How can we address these challenges?

Moderators: Former-Senate President Art Jones & Senator John Tiedemann

- What are all the ways we could integrate inclusive excellence and diversity into the undergraduate curriculum?

Moderators: Senator Sarah Pessin & Senator Billy J. Stratton

- Given no central curriculum amongst the diverse graduate programs, how can graduate programs collaborate around inclusive excellence and diversity?

Moderators: Senator Laleh Mehran & Senator Stephen von Merz

- How do we create meaningful channels between students and faculty such that students become more aware of what faculty are doing around inclusive excellence and diversity and faculty become more aware around how these issues play out in student experiences?

Moderators: Senator Jared Del Rosso & Senator Megan Kelly

- As a community of learners that value freedom of expression, what responsibilities do we have to one another?

Moderators: Senator Derigan Silver & Senator Scott Johns

World Café

President Willink then opened the Senate meeting for participation in the World Café discussion. Participants had fifteen minutes to discuss a question of their choosing, before moving on to a second table and then a third for two additional, fifteen minute discussions.

World Café Synthesis

Following the World Café discussion, President Willink asked each moderator to present a brief synthesis of his or her table's discussions to all participants. The following is a summary of each moderator's comments to participants.

What impediments are there to faculty involvement in the Inclusive Learning Environment Initiative? How can we address these challenges?

Senator John Tiedemann: In addition to the usual impediments – time constraints, work demands, and other contingencies out of our control – one theme that came up is that for faculty to make an impact, the Initiative must become property of faculty. The rate of change is long and slow; we won't resolve these issues [of inclusivity in our teaching] by the end of the spring quarter this year. We need people to be invested in the long haul; in order to have this, we need to have an ownership stake.

Former-Senate President Art Jones: My table asked: What about incentives, awards, and recognition for participation in the development opportunities related to inclusivity in our teaching? But the main theme was comfort. Yes, this is training, but will this address the sense that many faculty are worried about feeling uncomfortable in such trainings. They are concerned about feelings of being judged if they stumble. And does this lead to non-participation? Maybe we need to develop a critical mass in units so there's a sense of support available to faculty. And we might need ground rules, so people know they won't be judged. There was also concern for the lack of diversity in the student body. If you teach virtually all white students, how do you develop around this? One response to this is that we need more focus on white identity. And we need more peer monitoring.

What are all the ways we could integrate inclusive excellence and diversity into the undergraduate curriculum?

Senator Sarah Pessin: During our discussion, we received and reviewed the Black Student Alliance's set of demands for the Faculty Senate (see Appendix at end of minutes). We also had conversations around curriculum. Should there be a diversity requirement? What does that look like? We discussed the possibility that the university could introduce new faculty lines, and the hope was that hiring would occur within departments rather than outside for positions to only teach diversity. We heard creative ideas about theater, social psychology, & STEM. And we acknowledged that curricular reform is not enough, additional opportunities to broaden student experience across DU are needed.

Senator Billy J. Stratton: We discussed the challenges around risk and fear associated with integrating inclusive excellence in the classroom. How do we get over these? We're responsible to have conversations about inclusivity with our students. To understand inclusive excellence and diversity, we need to move beyond the binaries of black versus white and start talking, too, about how we use language to promote (or not, as the case may be) inclusivity. We acknowledged that we can be wrong in the classroom. Our mistakes can be good sites of conversation and allow us to break down status differences and hierarchy. We also discussed accountability. How do questions about inclusive excellence relate to our departments—all of our departments? Diversity and inclusivity are questions for all disciplines. They're not just about a discipline and its object of study. They're also about *practice*. What's going on at our university? Finally, we discussed globalization, recognizing that we are in a globalized world.

Given no central curriculum amongst the diverse graduate programs, how can graduate programs collaborate around inclusive excellence and diversity?

Senator Laleh Mehran: Some graduate programs have the space to add these sorts of classes to curriculum. But all programs need to have an honest self-assessment. Some obvious things come out of our discussion of that. We need a more diverse faculty. Our biases are passed on and brought into the world by our students. This can be really harmful. But this doesn't necessarily mean we need to add to the existing curriculum. We need a space for synthesis and meeting—a physical space, but an informal one. It should be a living space that gestates and grows. It should have an online companion space, because some students learn this way. And we need additional opportunities to bring in outside speakers.

Senator Stephen von Merz: Participants at my table asked, what are the structural road blocks to inter-disciplinary efforts, what is needed, what already exists (and how can we use these)?

There are several structural road blocks: time (as we're asking more of all through training), funding, and cultural gaps among generations of faculty.

What is needed? Mandatory orientation for students and faculty, using competencies of student organizations, and funding for colloquium.

And what do we already have? Our new hire in the Office of Teaching and Learning for the Assistant Director of Inclusive Teaching Practices position; we also need to work on recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and in diverse thinking.

How do we create meaningful channels between students and faculty such that students become more aware of what faculty are doing around inclusive excellence and diversity and faculty become more aware around how these issues play out in student experiences?

Senator Jared Del Rosso: We spoke about a number of concrete steps faculty could take to maintain these channels of community. We discussed the need for a single line of communication (e.g. a list-serve) to publicize important events and professional development opportunities around inclusive excellence to all faculty. We heard a good idea from Senator Greg Ungar; Greg asks students to share announcements at the start of class. Greg, too, shares his own announcements, making it clear to students what he and his colleagues are working on outside of the classroom. More generally, the overarching theme was the sharing of stories. We had undergraduate and graduate models. At the undergraduate level, we discussed the FSEM's incorporation of a writing prompt this summer and the recent sharing at a joint FSEM / Writing Center event of stories of encounters with the unfamiliar. At the graduate level, we heard that the Graduate School of Professional Psychology has a faculty-student comedy troupe that presents on issues related to inclusive excellence; this forms the basis for a discussion the week after the performance.

Senator Megan Kelly: We also discussed the list of demands presented to Faculty Senate by the Black Students Alliance. We discussed the fact that there will be a workshop after winter break

and, so, we have existing opportunities for professional development. But it seems to be the same people over and over again. How do we break through this stasis? We also spoke about responsibility, accountability, and respect...and how do we call each other out for not following through on these practices?

As a community of learners that value freedom of expression, what responsibilities do we have to one another?

Senator Derigan Silver: My table reached no conclusions whatsoever. Thank you to everyone who came out to speak with us, especially the undergraduate students.

So what is the function of free speech in the *educational system*? That is the context of our thinking about free speech. We need to balance rights and responsibilities. Importantly, we discussed how the problems related to freedom of expression (especially on the Freedom of Expression Wall) had to do with silencing; the problem wasn't really the content of ideas, but those messages were about silencing others.

We need faculty training. But there's a difference between these issues coming up in the classroom versus on campus more generally. We discussed the difference between offensive speech and unsafe speech, as well as the differences between offensive speech and racist speech. We need more training to see these differences. And there should be more responsibility to follow the Honor Code; everyone needs to feel safe, while still honoring diversity.

Senator Scott Johns: We live in a hierarchical university, but we talk about being equal. We need to recognize that. We have a responsibility to hear and be heard; and we need to respect the silent voices. Faculty hold ourselves out as experts, but we're not experts. We need to stop pretending that we know what we're doing. Being a community of learners is really messy...but we have a responsibility to speak for ourselves and also listen to and respect other voices.

World Café Outro

Following the World Café synthesis, President Willink reminded senators that they each represent ten faculty. "If you've heard one good idea," she continued, "tell ten people." President Willink then thanked the students and staff for having the courage and willingness to be part of the conversation.

Adjourn

President Willink adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Prepared and submitted by

Jared Del Rosso
Faculty Senate Secretary

Appendix. The Black Student Alliance's List of Demands for the University of Denver Faculty Senate.

October 21, 2016

Dear University of Denver Faculty Senate,

It is not news that classrooms at the University of Denver do not provide the proper environments that foster well-rounded learning experiences for underrepresented students. Repeatedly, students of color in every department are being used as the one and only source of information regarding communities outside of the white majority. While it should be encouraged in higher education to push ourselves as scholars to learn about cultures and backgrounds other than our own, it is problematic to create a culture where one student speaks for everybody or feels the burden of having to explain certain aspects of their culture. By forcing marginalized students to speak on the behalf of entire communities, we are reducing numerous narratives into just one experience. These discussions strip students of color of their individuality by putting them on display as the token Black/ Hispanic/ Queer/ Muslim student. These discussions also (re)trigger historical trauma that marginalized communities have faced. For example, several students have felt forced to explain the significance of the "BlackLivesMatter movement in regards to police brutality as it relates to the free speech wall in classroom settings which inherently retraumatizes the student.

We encourage the Faculty Senate to re-examine their purpose as educators at the University of Denver. It is the mission of the university to, "... promote learning by engaging with students in advancing scholarly inquiry, cultivating critical and creative thought, and generating knowledge." If DU is to truly flourish as an environment that seeks to bestow *all* students with such cultivating and creative thought, then we as a community must consider who is represented in the classroom. It is not the responsibility of the students to educate their peers, but to broaden their perspective by inputting their ideas and individual experiences. It is important for our faculty to be provided the support and training necessary to educate students on racial, cultural, and other sociopolitical matters. We appreciate your willingness to hear us out and in conclusion, we have prepared the following list of demands, some of which were also presented to the DU administration.

List of Demands for The University of Denver Faculty Senate

We demand...

1. **An Ethnic Studies major and minor program available to students**
 - a. Courses in Ethnic Studies address that traditionally, the role of Asian Americans, Blacks, Mexicans, Latinos and Native Americans in American history are undervalued and ignored because of Euro-centric bias and hegemonic racial and ethnic prejudice. Ethnic Studies courses also often encompass issues of intersectionality, where gender, class, and sexuality also come into play. Taking into account the racial climate of DU, curriculum like this, be it optional or mandatory is necessary. We would like to see this implemented by the end of the 2018-2019 academic year.

2. **Mandate cultural competency training, to be completed by all new and existing faculty.**
 - a. The purpose of regular cultural competency trainings (I.e. IE training, Microaggressions training) would be to inform faculty on the reality of DU's current campus climate, best practices to make the classrooms inclusive, and to prepare them to engage in conversations and initiatives surrounding inclusive excellence.
 - b. Require all new faculty to attend trainings within their first quarter, to be in effect by the start of the 2017-2018 academic year.
 - c. Require all existing faculty who have not attended trainings to attend trainings by the end of the 2017-2018 academic year.
 - d. Require all departments to consult with Thomas Walker at least once a quarter on new education/professional development initiatives, to be in effect by the start of the 2017-2018 academic year.

3. **Prevent faculty from scheduling tests on religious holidays. All faculty should have to provide religious accommodations if we are truly #ONEDU.**
 - a. For example, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are falling on final exam dates (for some students) and everyone is not being accommodated.
 - b. Notice of accommodations should be present in all syllabi released during the 2017 fall quarter.

4. **Assurance that faculty and staff will not face repercussions for standing in solidarity with students engaging in activism on campus.**
 - a. It has been brought to our attention that there are some faculty members who want to support students during these times but fear repercussions.
 - b. The provost should release a public statement to faculty ensuring them that they have his support shall they choose to support or engage in activism with students on campus.
 - c. The statement should be released before the end of the 2016 fall quarter.

5. **Hire new faculty and support existing faculty willing to implement and facilitate Race, Inequality & Social Change (RISC) curriculum.**
 - a. Create a structure in which RISC curriculum is mandated as a degree requirement by the end of the 2018-2019 academic year.
 - b. Hire more faculty capable of teaching RISC courses. An increase in faculty is expected by the end of the 2017-2018 academic year.

6. **Increase faculty diversity to be more representative of the student body.**
 - a. Only 14% of faculty are people of color (not including international faculty) while we have 21% undergraduate students of color and 19% graduate students of color.
 - b. In addition to a revised faculty hiring guide, what initiatives is the university taking to increase the diversity of faculty? What trainings are the search committees subject to? How are we acknowledging implicit bias in the hiring process? How are we integrating student input? How are potential candidates demonstrating their commitment to inclusive excellence?
 - c. We demand more transparency on these matters and expect to see in an increase in faculty of color by the 2018-2019 academic year.

7. **Require all potential faculty new hires to demonstrate commitment to/understanding of inclusive excellence during the application and interview process.**
 - a. Students are experiencing micro and macro aggressions in the classrooms due to a lack of commitment to inclusive excellence. The DU values, IMPACT 2025 initiatives, and all things inclusive excellence should be clear to candidates before they are even offered a position. IE questions should be present on all new position postings by the end of the 2016-2017 academic year.

In solidarity,

Ontario Duley, Co-President of the Native Student Alliance, Member of the Black Student Alliance

Makia Jones, President of the Black Student Alliance

Tashan Montgomery, Vice President of the Black Student Alliance