

Commission for LGBT People

Meeting Minutes

October 1, 2018

Attendance: Joel Anderson, Mitsu Misawa, Bonnie Benson-Palmgren, Allison Heming, Jennifer Jabson, Chloe Lane, Stephanie Langley, Joanne Patterson, James Perlow, Tammy Renalds, Lizeth Zepeda, Misty Anderson, Mary Lucal, Danny Glassmann, Matthew Theriot, Megan Haselschwerdt, Megan Steed, Ashley Blamey, Nancy Thacker

- I. Welcome and Introductions

- II. Committee Updates
 - a. Equity and Climate. Allison Heming reported the committee met last week to discuss goals and three main focal points. They are strategizing to create and implement a climate and needs survey for students that assesses experiences on and off campus; they are exploring quantitative and qualitative components and considering feasibility of offering incentive to participate in the survey. The committee also intends to support and build from the SafeZone program rather than reinventing a new educational platform. The committee also will work to move forward with recommendations for gender neutral restrooms, including increasing visibility of the campus map; they also hope to improve the marketing campaign to promote use and public display of pronouns; they may collaborate with groups who are already promoting and advertising pronouns.
 - b. Transgender and non-binary committee. Chloe Lane reported the committee will meet on Wednesday, October 10th, from 5-6pm at Golden Roast on campus. They have discussed potential to open a clothing closet to be housed in the Pride Center. Bonnie Benson-Palmgren reported they have submitted the restroom report to leadership and are awaiting feedback.
 - c. Membership and Awards. Stephanie Langley reported they have discussed increasing award nominations and diverse membership. They compared ratios of faculty/staff/student representation on the Commission with general campus population and found disproportionate representation for students. Thus, they are focused on increasing student membership and award nominations in particular.
 - d. Communications and alumni. No new reports.

- III. Approval of Minutes

- IV. Updates from other groups
 - a. Commission for Women. Joel Anderson reported the CFW is reviewing family leave policies as a main priority, and they will be looking to the CFLGBT to provide input. The CFLGBT's restroom report was also shared with the CFW.
 - b. Council for Diversity and Interculturalism. Mitsu Misawa reported the CDI discussed UTK's Princeton review ranking during their last meeting. Mitsu also shared the CDI's diversity calendar of events with commissioners.
 - c. Title IX Office. Ashley Blamey provided materials about the office and their services to be distribute throughout units.

- V. Discussion about the Princeton review report and campus pride index.
- a. Danny Glassmann discussed the campus pride index. He noted we may look to see if it has been updated, as it may inform our climate and needs survey for students as well.
 - i. Allison Heming reported Donna Braquet had been updating our campus pride index in previous years. Our current ranking is 2 out of 5 stars (more information found here: <https://www.campusprideindex.org/campuses/details/197?campus=university-of-tennessee>) Allison Heming noted there is potential to improve our rating, as we have gained some structures even though we have lost others. She noted realistically we may improve half a star with the structures we do have in place.
 1. James Perlow reported the index looks at institutional structures (number of initiatives, trainings, policies, etc.), but it does not consider social climate as much, which the Princeton review does consider.
 2. Misty Anderson asked Allison Heming to share her perspective on how we may improve our rating with the structures we do have in place? Allison responded we can train more people through SafeZone and encourage faculty/staff/students to use pronouns; these are two areas that can be improved organically without changing any institutional structures.
 - b. Stephanie Langley: what is the Princeton review is based on? Allison Heming responded the campus index is based on how UTK members fill out the campus climate index forms. Whereas the Princeton review is largely based off of surveys that students respond to, with some input from news reports as well.
 - c. Mistu Misawa reported he discussed the Princeton review rating with the Provost. The Provost noted that there is a methodological issue in part, and we need to triangulate data.
 - i. Allison Heming responded there may be methodological concerns, but the reports themselves are widely seen and felt across groups. People look to the reports as they are given even if there are issues with how data is gathered. We must act on those organic responses.
 - ii. Joel Anderson reported the faculty senate has recently discussed the Princeton review and legislation impacting the Pride Center as well; it is a priority issue for them, so we may collaborate with their group.
 1. Misty Anderson reported there is a lot of passion among faculty. She wants to unite forces without making things seem better than they are, and she noted believing faculty can be very helpful in longevity of progress.
 - d. Megan Haselschwerdt discussed possibility of creating and advertising a statement about how to promote pronouns in emails and syllabi, and discuss them with students in class.

- e. Jennifer Jabson discussed her concern with safety of students with increasing these efforts without training or true allyship. She reported some faculty in her department have been hesitant to include pronouns in emails because they are unsure how to discuss it in person should someone ask what they mean. She also noted some office may put up LGBTQ+ flags without everyone in that office being on board as allies and informed of LGBTQ+ issues/needs. She voiced concern that some students may approach those faculty/staff or spaces assuming safety but may be met with unanticipated challenges. Jennifer also noted the Princeton review survey is around four questions that ask about climate.
 - i. Danny Glassmann provided further context into the makeup of Princeton review from their website.
 - ii. James Perlow noted people can put a lot of effort into the initiative around pronouns because it is simple and does not cost anything. In response to Jennifer Jabson, James stated that when their professors include pronouns, it does not signal they are a safe individual to talk to, but it does indicate they can discuss their own pronouns and name change.
- f. Lizeth Zepeda suggested we may encourage including a link to <https://www.mypronouns.org/> along with pronouns in emails to inform community of what pronouns are and why and how they matter.
- g. James Perlow discussed UTK's current name change policy. Preferred names can be updated within Canvas, but not in the official Registrar.

VI. Discussion of questions or topics of discussion with Provost Manderscheid in November and Interim Chancellor Davis in December.

- a. Provost Manderscheid will join the Commission on November 5th, and Interim Chancellor Davis has rescheduled to join the December 3rd meeting.
- b. For Interim Chancellor question list, multiple commissioners suggested editing the existing questions to active voice. Danny Glassmann suggested opening the question regarding Pride Center funding to inquire about how Interim Chancellor Davis plans to fund the Pride Center for the next academic year and beyond.
- c. Misty Anderson asked Matthew Theriot if he is the point person for the Diversity Champions report. Matthew Theriot responded, yes he is, as it is specifically focused on faculty. He noted multiple individuals are seeing the Vol Vision report to implementation.
 - i. Misty Anderson requested to ask the Provost: What are the first three things you would like to do under your priority for diversity?
- d. Allison Heming: What do the words diversity and inclusion mean to the Provost?
- e. Nancy Thacker will create a google document to share with commissioners to add further questions.

VII. Adjourn