

Commission of LGBT People

Meeting Minutes

March 4, 2019

Attendance: Tyvi Small, Jordan Albright, Joel Anderson, Pamela Durban, Brandon Harris, Tammy Renalds, Lizeth Zepeda, Samuel Turley, Sharon Couch, Misty Anderson, Mary Lucal, Matthew Theriot, Ashley Blamey, Megan Steed, Christopher Mendoza, Nancy Thacker

- I. Welcome from co-chair Joel Anderson
- II. Approval of Minutes
- III. Ferlin McGaskey. The Innovative Teaching and Learning Conference will be held on April 8th from 8am-5pm in the Student Union. More information and a link to register can be found at <https://teaching.utk.edu/itlc2019/>.
- IV. Updates from Other Groups
 - a. Joel Anderson reported the equity and climate committee is constructing the climate survey. They met last week and reviewed items. They currently have 30 items, but adaptive questioning will be used. They intend for the survey to be ready for distribution in April.
 - b. Commission for Women. Nancy Thacker reported March is Women's History Month, and a series of events will occur to celebrate women throughout the month. More information can be found at <https://cfw.utk.edu/events/>
 - c. Commission for Blacks. Sharon Couch reported on the CFB's strategic plan. They recently adapted priorities towards their primary goal for policy change. The core principal driving their priorities is to promote mattering and belonging. The research committee, headed by Dr. Dawn Duke, within the CFB is benchmarking other SEC schools' offices of diversity and inclusion. They recently interviewed the office at Virginia Tech, and insight from that interview can be found in their meeting minutes. They are hoping to implement a climate survey that is comprehensive for students, primarily focused on highlighting issues related to retention. At the most recent CFB meeting, members shared the My Campus survey results and data from Drs. Jioni Lewis and Michelle Hunt (roughly half of students of color have experienced microaggressions; 62% experienced overt racism; 73% feel campus is informally segregated; themes from classroom experiences included being silenced and marginalized, unequal treatment, and racial stereotypes and slurs). Drs. Lewis and Christian are conducting a longitudinal study on student perceptions. The CFB is brainstorming ways to support scholars gathering this data.
 - d. Faculty Senate. Misty Anderson reported the group is meeting in the afternoon 3/4. Items for discussion include improving the general education curriculum. Two new categories are proposed: (1) engaged inquiries and (2) contemporary issues and solutions. There are efforts being made to adapt our computer system to tag special topics in courses that address these categories. Misty Anderson noted encouraging colleagues to dig into new curriculum as a method to address a

needed shift in our campus climate. The group is also brainstorming ways to create standing resources (e.g., modules on diversity and inclusion) to assist faculty to address current issues on our campus. In sum, there ongoing co-curricular efforts in the works, including Joe Miles's intergroup dialogue project.

V. Introductions from commissioners

VI. Conversation with Interim Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Engagement, Tyvi Small

- a. Tyvi Small shared his history of employment with UTK and expressed excitement in his new role. He noted the role of the Office for Diversity and Engagement is more than programming. Rather, he is focused on institutional structure; specifically, how to create an infrastructure that will enable long-term success for diversity and inclusion. The Office of Equity and Diversity now reports through this office, as do the Commissions and Council for Diversity and Inclusion. He noted all diversity offices do not report through his office because he believes it resolves other groups of responsibility to infuse diversity and inclusion in their offices (e.g., the Price Center is centered on student life, so it reports the Division of Student Life). He stated, however, their office will offer support across campus.
- b. Tyvi Small reviewed current priorities.
 - i. Accountability.
 1. Focus on reports with priority to add diversity metrics to performance evaluations. A goal is to hold our faculty/staff accountable for diversity and inclusion. They are implementing individual unit campus dash boards; this will allow units to understand where they are in terms of diversity and will provide insight into areas for progress; they also will help measure, track, and hold people accountable as a consistently used tool. Tyvi Small also noted desire to implement diversity plans – individual to each unit – that consistently track needs of specific units.
 - ii. Education.
 1. Tyvi Small reported the anti-defamation league is visiting campus to offer education for faculty/staff; sessions around students will be offered as well.
 2. The office is building a partnership with the Knoxville Community Building Institute, and Tyvi Small reported the state is going to put some money into supporting community building.
 3. The office is working with Joe Miles and his intergroup dialogue project as well. Tyvi Small reported there is institutional support for this project, as the Interim Chancellor has supported it. There will be a call for facilitators coming soon, and a small incentive for facilitators may be offered.
 4. The office is also looking into general education curriculum. Specifically, they are brainstorming how to implement diversity and inclusion education into FYS courses.

5. Tyvi Small reported collaborating with a professor of an English 295, writing course. Students in the course are creating a mission/vision statement for the Office of Diversity and Engagement. Their project will include examining peer institutions' diversity offices as reference and crafting proposals to present to Tyvi Small in the coming weeks. He noted he will visit with students in their course and select a final statement with them.
 6. The office also is partnering with the Provost's Office to support the Inclusive Teaching certificate; they will offer resources to support the certificate. They hope to offer methods of incentivizing faculty and supporting their progress through the certificate.
 7. The office is also considering a diversity credential for staff and working with Human Resources.
 8. Tyvi Small noted working to develop faculty, staff, and student advisory boards to establish thought leadership around diversity and inclusion. They will collaborate with the faculty senate for faculty group, SGA for student group, HR for staff group. They want to create a directory of faculty doing diversity and inclusion work. Tyvi Small noted we have amazing faculty at UT doing excellent work for diversity and inclusion. Accessing and supporting our home resources is something want to do.
- iii. Tyvi Small noted the goal throughout their priorities is to have UT community members bring their authentic self across all offices and units at UT.
 - iv. Tyvi Small reported he and the Interim Chancellor are supporting the Pride Center. He noted the Interim Chancellor is working to create a sustainable center and is about 50% through planned efforts. Tyvi Small noted they are facing political issues, and currently strategizing how to do what needs to be done while navigating those issues. He shared details about their recent meeting in Nashville, where discussions around SEAT and free speech took place. Tyvi Small noted the Interim Chancellor is working to do the right thing, working the avenues he needs to work to establish sustainable support. he also noted the Interim Chancellor is taking the main role in working for the Pride Center to ensure the office is not defunded again. He noted the importance of being strategic in what we do, because it can become ugly and challenging quickly.
- c. Questions from commissioners
- i. Mary Lucal: Do you get a sense that legislators and stakeholders continue to watch and observe us on our Pride Center movements?
 1. Tyvi Small responded yes. He noted getting weekly emails about various LGBTQ+ related issues and events, from individuals within and outside of the University. He stated not everyone values diversity and inclusion similarly across our campus, even though we hope they do. He noted using our community contacts to navigate these issues is important and has been helpful. He has been in touch with state representatives to keep them abreast of

campus issues to make sure our needs and efforts are being accurately transmitted.

2. Mary Lucal noted implementing similar strategic movements in her work in Human Resources, particularly in how to label and market issues and events.
- ii. Commissioner asked if the Office of Diversity and Engagement intends to partner with groups to implement diversity and inclusion education in student orientation?
 1. Tyvi Small responded, yes, it is on the list. They are looking at how to create intentional opportunities for students. FYS courses and orientations are starting points, but they also want to create ongoing opportunities. He discussed the importance of language choice; how we consistently express commitment to diversity and inclusion across our websites and media.
- iii. Sam Turley noted, from experience in FYS, there is definitely room to put in a module on diversity and inclusion.
- iv. Lizeth Zepeda asked if the Office of Diversity and Engagement has done anything related to undocumented students at UT?
 1. Tyvi Small responded he has talked to enrollment management, but he does not have an answer at this time on specific efforts. There is work happening on this issue. There were some efforts to offer undocumented students in-state tuition last year, but it did not advance. He noted also working with Latinx groups across the region, actively trying to incorporate support for these groups.
- v. Tyvi Small noted we do a lot of work on recruitment, but we have to focus on retention as well. From his experience in Haslam, he discussed recruitment strategies that start with the composition of search committees and language in announcements for position. How we highlight components of our University and community can be huge in attracting diverse individuals. He also discussed a course for students from marginalized backgrounds that has been offered for two years as an opportunity to break down barriers and offer support in transition for our community.

VII. Other updates

- a. Lizeth Zepeda reported the Trans and non-binary committee is hosting a Trans Rights and Resources and Teach-In event on March 26th from 6-8pm in Hodges Library. They need volunteers for the teach-in from 5-9pm. The event will take place on the first floor of the library and some sessions will be held in classrooms. They also will be asking volunteers to bring food donations. The Qloset will also host a pop-up at the event
 - i. The Qloset needs hanger donations. Hangers can be dropped at the Pride Center during any open hours.
- b. Joel Anderson noted Vice Chancellor for Communication, Tisha Benton, will visit the CFLGBT next month.

VIII. Adjourn