

Diversity Council Minutes December 10, 2018

In attendance: Brent Burns, Lisa Cunard, Jerry Jondreau, Beth Lunde-Stockero, Audrey Mayer, Logan McMillan, Harley Merhaj, Mike Meyer, Allison Mills, Adrienne Minerick, Faith Morrison, Kellie Raffaelli, Carrie Richards, Diane Shoos

One item: identify our priorities for Spring 2019 semester. Potential areas of work include:

1. Teaching evaluation (student, peer) biases: A University Senate subcommittee is working on the use of end-of-semester student evaluations in teaching assessments, particularly with respect to bias and inequity. We could offer our help.

2. Cultural competence on campus: In the process of discussing the “priorities and recommendations” from the climate survey, we have brought up the utility of more robust and widely available programming for cultural competency. We could review what is already available, and identify gaps; we could also identify programs elsewhere that we could adapt for use at Michigan Tech. We could do this in anticipation that the President’s Council will ask us to do this in response to our Priority #3.

There was support for focusing on this area, with some particular areas:

Religious exemption for tobacco policy: We discussed where this policy was stalled, and whether placing it on the agenda of the Board of Trustees this week would be feasible and appropriate. [After the meeting, the Council was sent an email from Theresa Coleman-Kaiser with a blanket exemption to the University policy issued on 10 December 2018 by Vice President David Reed, however there is some confusion over whether this is sufficient, or whether the policy needs to also change at the Board level.]

Along these lines, we concluded that we need to emphasize that these exemptions should not be construed as creating “normal” behavior and “other” (exempted) behavior.

Mayer raised the issue of whether and how we need to collect more information from demographic groups who were underrepresented in the most recent climate survey.

We had some discussion regarding the change in focus of the King-Chavez-Parks programs funded by the state of Michigan. The state is now enforcing that KCP programs must focus on “academically and economically disadvantaged” students and populations. We discussed the strengths and weaknesses of this program and the benefits in particular to students, especially when some programs (such as the Future Faculty program) have significant limitations and penalties for students receiving KCP funds if they do not strictly adhere to the program requirements (which, in some cases, has proven to be impossible). We discussed whether it was fair to put students who qualify for KCP funding in that position.

3. Other ideas?

The Council needs to continually monitor the progress of the “Children in the Workplace” policy and ensure that the policy is implemented.

Mayer will ensure that our advice for diversity in panels and speakers is disseminated widely on campus.