

Meeting Minutes Committee on Diversity, Equity, And Inclusion
01/31/2023 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

<https://facultysenate.ecu.edu/diversity-equity-inclusion/dei@ecu.edu>

Attendance:

Elijah Asagbra, Angela Lamson, Amanda Klein (Chair), Michael Daniels (Secretary), Jihoun An, Rachel Roper, Sambuddha Banerjee (Vice Chair), Saulo Geraldeli, Sarah Bryson, Tricia Wilson-Okamura,

Ex-officio: LaKesha Alston Forbes, Anne Ticknor, Sarah Bryson, Sheresa Blanchar

Format

- Virtually on Teams

-we meet as a full committee once per month on the following days at 4pm

- January 31, 2023 • February 28, 2023 • March 21, 2023 • April 18, 2023
- Will confirm meeting times for next semester to ensure no conflicts with members' schedule.
- subcommittee(s) will continue to meet as needed

I. Approve November Minutes: Minutes approved unanimously

II. Member Check In: Important segment of meeting in which Chairperson acknowledged challenges of advancing DEI initiatives and give space for members to discuss any personal concerns.

III. Presentation by Soph Myers-Kelley on Campus Accessibility for Students
 Soph Myers-Kelley, provided very informative presentation to committee related to accessibility challenges for students and highlighted strategies to improve instructional material. Full presentation and contact information attached to meeting minutes.
<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1sa68Qyxas5sYdEWGII3QVN6z6dtzVxSdll7uk1PKA/edit?usp=sharing>

IV. Updates on Linguistic Justice Letter/Pushback to DEI Initiatives

- a. **Although agenda item IV is composed of two separate components linguistic justice letter and pushback to DEI initiatives they both are interconnected demonstrating the challenge faced as the committee continue to advance DEI initiatives.**
- b. Chair of committee provided context related to the linguistic justice letter. This is a document in support of enhancing equity at ECU, it constructed vetted by several scholars across the campus posted on ECU Web page. The letter was viewed by outside group of dissenters who contacted the university and expressed their disdain of the content. In response the university removed the document without any conversation or discussion with the authors. Such actions bring to question,

will the work of DEI committees not be supported by the university each time someone oppose the efforts towards building an equitable community at ECU following the Mission of One ECU.

- c. Dr. Ann Ticknor provided the following excerpt related to the proposed university changes on the “Prohibition on Compelling Speech” Although it is unclear to the committee the impact this will have on future DEI initiatives at this time, the current language does not appear to support requiring faculty to indicate or acknowledge their commitment to equitable practice in the hiring process nor throughout their tenure as an employee.
- V. The first item is proposed revisions to add an amendment to UNC Policy 300.5.1 - Political Activities of Employees. This policy states that all UNC System employees Exempt from the State Personnel Act have the right to engage in, or refrain from, participating in political processes. The newly proposed amendment, which is planned to be voted on in the February meeting, adds a new section entitled Prohibition on Compelling Speech. This section includes 6 paragraphs that outline the parameters of compelled speech, which codifies that the university cannot force an individual to support a certain expression by soliciting or requiring employees, or potential employees, to affirm, opine, describe actions, or write statements in support of or in opposition to “beliefs, affiliations, ideals, or principles regarding matters of contemporary political debate or social action as a condition to admission, employment, or professional advancement”.
(<https://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/bog/doc.php?id=67156&code=bog>)
- VI. One of the concerns that has already been raised about the proposed amendment is that each campus has hiring and advancement processes already in place that might require potential or current employees to demonstrate actions, describe beliefs, or write statements that embody the mission and goals of the institution, the division, or the department (<https://ncpolicywatch.com/2023/01/19/unc-board-of-governors-courts-more-controversy-with-new-proposed-rule-on-hiring-and-enrollment/> & <https://www.newsobserver.com/news/state/north-carolina/article271337952.html>). Often this practice is in place during the search process to ascertain if the potential employee demonstrates actions that align or further these goals and is able to fulfill the requirements of the position. In our Faculty Manual and further codified in several of our unit codes, faculty have voted to embed similar expectations in their annual evaluation processes, promotion and tenure requirements, and advancement in title guidelines. Questions have been raised specifically about the impact this proposed amendment will have on DEI initiatives, how this amendment could limit our efforts towards building more inclusive and affirming policies and practices at ECU, especially those based on research. My question this morning in the University Council meeting when we discussed this policy and freedom of expression was, “Who determines the definition of ‘matters of contemporary political debate or social action’?” My concern is that the definition of these terms

will change, we will not have input into how they are operationalized at our university, and we will be exhausted by the constant chase to align with the expectations.

VII. Feedback from Admin on Messaging Around DEI Professional Development Requirement

There has been very good response to DEI trainings from OED. It was noted that OED does not approve if trainings will meet the requirement for annual evaluation for DEI but make every effort to ensure the content will be accepted in discuss on faculty chair.

VIII. Subcommittee Reports/Updates

IX. New Business? Will continue items not covered in this meeting.

Developing a Land Acknowledgment for Black citizens (much as we did for indigenous citizens)?

See a model below

<https://www.diverseeducation.com/demographics/african-american/article/15108677/on-labor-acknowledgements-and-honoring-the-sacrifice-of-black-americans>

5). Next Meeting February 28, 2023, 4:00pm

Submitted: Secretary Michael Daniels