

**Academic Diversity & Inclusion Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**November 8, 2022, 1:00 PM in Shawnee Room**

Present: Kelly Erby, Beth O'Neill, Danielle Dempsey-Swopes, Mary Sundal, Isaiah Collier, Dennis Etzel, Joey DeSota, Kelly McClendon, Valerie Mendoza, Leah Brown, Matthew Nyquist, Kara Kendall-Morwick, Sara Stepp, Chaz Havens, Izzy Wasserstein, Kristine Hart, Norma Juma

- I. A motion to approve the minutes from the September 13, 2022 committee meeting was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved.
- II. Old Business
  - a. 2022–2023 Goals & Subcommittee Assignments. Erby asked members to check the list for committee memberships. Committee work will begin soon, if it hasn't already.
  - b. Juneteenth as University Holiday. Etzel presented research he did regarding the possibility of Juneteenth becoming a University Holiday and how it could fit into the university's summer session calendar. It is currently a day off for Topeka and Shawnee County employees, but it isn't paid (would require a state statute change). Erby also shared information that she received from WU HR regarding creation of a new Holiday, and stated that there is a chance that it could become a holiday at KBOR schools. The committee decided to pursue making a formal request for WU to adopt Juneteenth as a University Holiday, and will discuss this at future meeting. Committee members shared that it would be great if WU could be at the forefront of this in Kansas higher education, and be the model for other schools to follow.
  - c. WUmester 2023 Brainstorming & Discussion. Planning has begun and information was shared about a possible speaker and workshop facilitator on Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome, Dr. Joy Angela DeGruy. If committee members have ideas for other WUmester events, let Erby know.
- III. Concerns, Questions from Committee Members
  - a. The committee discussed the recent incident regarding a employee's costume at an on-campus Halloween party. It is being reviewed as a personnel issue as well as a discrimination issue, and it is unlikely that the result will be shared with the public through a formal announcement due to the policies and procedures surrounding these types of investigations. Dempsey-Swopes shared Information regarding the review processes and reminded the committee that policy requires the investigation be completed based on what was actually observed. The following specific questions were posed and discussed:
    - i. How we can ensure that faculty/staff and students know that that the incident is being investigated and taken seriously, if details of the findings of the investigation won't be shared? Erby said that committee members can share that there is a two-pronged investigation taking place, and can share that policy prevents a formal announcement of the findings.

- ii. What can the role of this committee be in helping faculty to navigate the difficulties of discussing incidents with students in a proactive vs. reactive way? The committee discussed several ideas: Adopting a shared language regarding definitions of -isms and areas of activism (e.g., Black Lives Matter), holding town hall meetings, required DEI trainings for leadership, embedding trainings where faculty and administrators naturally have to appear (e.g., school/college/division meetings, Dean and Directors meetings), intent vs. impact trainings, review of content regarding diversity in WU101 to consider for needed revisions, DEI as a part of onboarding/NFO, workshops for faculty that include opportunities to practice skills, inclusion of well-thought out DEI questions for Presidential search interviews, and better-quality required non-discrimination/DEI training.
- iii. Are there rules of confidentiality if you have “facts” and aren’t part of the investigation? Dempsey-Swopes shared that you are not bound by confidentiality requirements if you aren’t part of the investigation, but urged members to remember that the “facts” may still not be entirely accurate and that discussing the incident may retraumatize some folks.
- b. A committee member shared that a student approached them asking about courses regarding Indigenous communities, and requested that an audit of courses be completed to identify if any such courses exist, and what they are. If this is a gap, can this committee do something to acknowledge the hole and work to fill it? A committee member also posed exploring if a diversity requirement could occur within the new general education framework at WU. More discussion will be held on these topics in the coming months.

#### IV. Announcements

- a. There will be sessions to discuss the academic bridge strategic plan. Please review the document that was sent with the general faculty agenda, and try to attend one of the sessions. Erby shared that at the Deans and Directors retreat, the decision was made to infuse DEI across the various areas, rather than creating a separate section. Erby encouraged members to review to assess whether infusion seems well-implemented.
- b. International Club is hosting Celebration of Cultures on 11/9 from 5-7 PM. There will be food and activities.

#### V. Meeting was adjourned at 1:57 PM.