

Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action

Academic Year 2019- 2020 Final Report

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Committee Membership:

Chair: Christina Santana.

Secretary: Susan Mitroka

Committee Members: Leo DeCosta, Sonela Demirazi, Kirsh Donis, Karen Lavallee, Jessica Meany, Hilda Ramirez.

Ex-Officio: Maria Isabel Gariepy, Stacey Luster.

Over the past year, we, the Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Affirmative Action, have discussed ways that the university can meet its affirmative action goals by enabling search committee members to move past their biases and choose candidates from increasingly diverse and historically underrepresented/ underserved backgrounds. The committee has also extensively discussed ways to attract a variety of programming and training to be offered to the campus community within the structures / avenues already in place.

Recommendation #1: Diversity and Inclusion focused Tiered Training

We recommend that a tiered training is developed during the summer of 2020 to be piloted during the fall 2020-2021 academic year. In order to achieve this initiative, we recommend that a small cohort of committee members (3-5 total) from the different committees that work on Diversity and Inclusion initiatives/ issues on campus (CCC, BIRT, LGBTQ+ and AA/EO) develop such a program over the summer months.

The committee originally imagined the initiative as a summer working group project that would combine the efforts of multiple committees. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted budgets and changed plans; we recognize this is no longer possible as originally imagined.

Instead, we have worked collaboratively with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as they lead this effort through this time. The committee expects continued collaboration in the fall as soon as we return to normal operations.

The sessions the committee supports and recommends are implemented as part of the tiered training may be available individually or as part of a comprehensive Certificate program.

Examples include:

- 2- hour workshops that further the WSU's Five Point Plan of Action with specific key learning outcomes.
 - Diversity & Inclusion: Necessary Skills for a Welcoming Environment
 - Power & Privilege: How We Use Them and Their Impact at WSU
 - Who Gets Hired: The Impact of Bias in Hiring and Retention
- One-week (5 full days) programs of instruction/ training time and can be offered both in-person or online, in a time-customized manner.
 - Mindfulness as a Catalyst for Equity & Social Justice
- 2-hour (faculty led) workshops under a "train the trainer" program.
 - Principles and Practices of Inclusive Pedagogy

Recommendation #2: Diversity Advocates Initiative

An increasing number of higher education institutions, both private and public, have adopted a Diversity Advocate model within search committees. This model works more effectively when part of a comprehensive set of strategies all taking place at a given time on a given campus, not done in isolation. Some models and examples are detailed and can be explored here:

<https://facultyaffairs.gwu.edu/diversity-advocate>

<https://searchadvocate.oregonstate.edu/about>

<https://oae.illinois.edu/NewSearchManual/Search%20Committee%20Member%20On-Line%20Training.pdf>

<https://diverseeducation.com/article/149878/>

Overall, the concept involves the use of Diversity Representatives or Advocates that typically and predominantly function as consultants to the search committee process from an AA/EO perspective. Most Diversity Advocates undergo extensive training and have the capacity to train other individuals in these topics, including in a train the trainer model. Diversity Advocates educate themselves and others on issues of discrimination, privilege, other social justice issues, as well as matters related to the context of search committees, with an AA/EO lens.

We recommend that university faculty, staff, and administrators be provided with advanced non-discriminatory training which would allow them to act as Diversity Advocates. In particular, we imagine that within search committees, Diversity Advocates would be able to advocate for

candidates from traditionally underrepresented and underserved groups and have a more in-depth knowledge of best practices, unconscious bias, and other aspects of successful search committees.

Faculty, staff, and administrators interested in becoming Diversity Advocates would take a series of trainings designed to enhance and expand basic training. Current training such as Title IX, anti-discrimination / harassment, search committee orientation, as well as other HR- based training modules would be considered a pre-requisite. More specialized opportunities including Safe Spaces, Bias Impact in Hiring and retention, Power & Privilege, etc. could be drawn upon from the organized series of tiered training (see Recommendation # 1). Furthermore, specialized/ tailored options would be specifically designed with search committee dynamics and Diversity Advocates in mind and can include Job competency-based interview questions, Social Justice focused hiring practices, amongst others.

Once a tiered diversity and inclusion training program is in place, individuals who aspire to serve as Diversity Advocates would be required to complete the most advanced level of training. Ideally, a significant percentage of WSU faculty, staff, and administrators could be diversity advocates. We envision no less than 10% of the full-time employee population, in order to ensure participation of Diversity Advocates across all searches taking place on campus.

Recommendation #3: Mini-Grant Update

The Committee identified low usage of a Diversity mini-grant (each one offers \$300) meant to promote events, projects, speakers and others that can increase equity, diversity and inclusion on campus. In response, we have discussed ways to attract more applicants to the mini-grant since the efforts have stalled for some time. These approaches include reimagining the flyer, providing essential information, and exploring the possibility of increasing the funding amount.

- We requested for the Marketing/ Printing & Publishing team to provide some input, including redesigning the overall design/ concept, etc. to communicate more information about the process, as well as updates that will serve to attract more applicants.
 - Creatively highlight potential use of mini-grant funds, prior projects, etc.
 - Promote / highlight student led projects
- The mini-grant application has been updated to include language highlighting the need to submit timely documentation to Procurement to ensure distribution of the mini-grant funds.
- To better facilitate the use of these funds, the committee recommended increasing the mini-grant maximum award from \$300 to \$500. Increasing the funds will broaden the pool of potential speakers and events that may fall into the \$300-\$500 range, and could possibly allow for a speaker to be available for multiple events within the same department.

The current COVID-19 global pandemic and the subsequent spending freeze at WSU do not allow for this recommendation to be implemented in the near future. However, the committee would like to keep it as part of the formal set of recommendations so the increase is implemented as soon as it is fiscally possible.

Recommendation #4: Diversity Speaker List

In the spirit of collaboration, the Advisory Committee for EO, Diversity and AA has been discussing ways to increase the diversity focused offerings for Staff and Faculty on campus. To this extent, we recognize we already have valuable internal and community-based resources that we can draw from, as needed. As such, the committee is proposing an internal repository type of document to be kept by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion for reference by all campus. The creation of this document would be led by this committee and shared with different committees and Staff/ Faculty. We envision it as an active list that will reflect campus wide collaboration and would be available through the WSU internal website.

This project does not require extra resources or funding. The committee looks forward to developing it in the fall 2020 semester by deploying a survey to send to internal employees before expanding the list to include individuals from outside WSU.

Recommendation #5: Increase Student Awareness and Membership

Given the recent RASE plan efforts, the new LASC proposal recommends that the DAC course designation be retired as a category and that “Diversity” is promoted to a content area. The proposal was approved with modifications by UCC and was set to be discussed by AUC at its May 5th meeting. At the May 5th meeting, AUC chose to table the Diversity Content Area pending its review by APC. The earliest the Diversity Content Area could be reviewed is October or November, depending on the ongoing COVID-19 situation. Anticipating that this proposal moves forward, professors will need to apply for the brand new, substantive course designation.

As a committee, we see this shift as an opportunity to increase student awareness about our initiatives and committee membership, in the following ways:

- Newly designated Diversity course professors can be contacted to allow the committee short blocks of time to explain the committee purpose and the value of student participation.
- Outreach to SGA.
- Table setups during student events, such as job fairs, opening day, congratulations day, etc. as an opportunity to discuss the committee’s mission and importance on campus.

Other Committee Activity

- The Hate Has No Home Here campaign was re-launched at WSU in early spring 2020 by placing posters around campus as well as distributing magnets to be placed at the top left of each classroom whiteboard. 100 magnets were distributed around campus. This initiative was signed off by all Diversity & Inclusion committees on campus, including this committee, and communicated to the campus community by WSU Provost.
- Most Committee members (90%) attended the Search Committee Orientation in fall 2019, in part to help inform the Diversity Advocate recommendation.