

Standing Committee Annual Report

Name of Committee or Council:

Diversity Committee

Chair:

Dr. Erik Haroldson

Meeting Dates in Current Year:

Oct. 01, Nov. 05, Dec. 03, and Feb. 25

Major Actions or Accomplishments:

The diversity committee committed a significant portion of its budget to scholarships in an effort that has proven to significantly impact student success, primarily amongst black male students by conducting monthly sessions from the Black Male Roundtable Discussion group charged by President Michael Licari to develop some goals and potential solutions.

The diversity committee budget was also used to fund multiple campus speakers and other diversity equity and inclusion-related activities. The diversity committee funded the following for the 2021-2022 academic year:

- Supported the CoSTEM by providing five, \$100.00 gift certificates to randomly chosen student participants that completed the CoSTEM Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion survey.
- Co-sponsored lecturers Brendan Basham and Brandon Hobson-Native American Speakers on Monday, November 15th from 3-4 pm. Their topic of discussion was A Native Writer's Conversation. The diversity committee funded a portion of the speaker's fees and copies of the books, *Where the Dead Sit Talking*, and *The Removed*, for students who attended the lecture.
- Ten tickets for students to see the theatre production of the PROM-a Broadway production at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center in Nashville. The funding supported Honors students in the 2220 Dialogue on Diversity course.
- Supplied ten copies of the book, *Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide to Achieving Equity in Schools, 2nd Edition* to faculty members interested in a new initiative for the 2022-2023 academic years to help navigate difficult dialogue about race.
- Purchased posters for Women's Empowerment Week, featuring quotes from faculty, staff, and administrator at Austin People on women's issues. The artwork was designed by Professor Billy Renkl and proofread by Dr. Amy Wright and her graduate students.
- Funded Yanaraliz Barnes, Director of Latino Cultural Center, and Harold Wallace III, Director of WNDAAC, and four students of color (2 identified as Latinx, 2 identified as Black/African American) to attend the 34th Annual Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education in Portland, Oregon. This year's theme was to ENGAGE. ENERGIZE. INSPIRE. The conference featured several diverse keynote speakers which included, Rev. Dr. William Joseph Barber II, Matika Wilbur, Deborah A. Santiago, and Kip Fulbeck.

- Agreed to provide seed money for each of the Colleges Diversity Advisory Groups for diversity efforts in the amount of \$500.00 per semester.

Goals and the Future

A goal for the year was to help build collaborative partnerships amongst the various campus units engaged in diversity, equity, and inclusion work. The diversity committee met on Oct. 01, Nov. 05, Dec. 03, and Feb. 25. With the meetings mostly committed to allowing each member a chance to discuss recent and ongoing diversity equity and inclusion work going on in their respective campus unit. The diversity committee was able to learn how different departments on campus are promoting educational excellence by ensuring equal access. This is integral to furthering the mission of supporting efforts to create a diverse and welcoming campus community for all campus members in the future, which is also a part of the new strategic plan.

The diversity committee also had the opportunity to hear from faculty members represented on the committee about the work that was being conducted in each college across the campus community. Many of the faculty members shared new initiatives that only helped in attaining equitable practices for colleges but events and programs that brought awareness to students and faculty members for diversity, equity, and inclusion. This is the first time in the history of the diversity committee to have faculty engaged in such a macro-type way.

Next, the diversity committee would like to be more involved in the coordination of DEI events across the campus community and organize these events in a more streamlined process that makes knowing and attending these events easier for campus members. Further, the diversity committee will also work to ensure more informational sessions on issues that impact marginalized groups is better developed and more widely received by campus members (i.e., Safe Zone, DEI Informative Sessions, Cultural/Historical Month Celebrations).