

AEQUITAS TASK FORCE

#13 Meeting Minutes

Date: September 8, 2021

Time: 8:00am – 10:00am

In Attendance: STEERING COMMITTEE: Terry Nance, Kevin DePrinzio, Jennifer Derry, Steve Sheridan, Hibba Abugideiri, Darryl Ford, Crystal Lucky, James Trainer, Sherry Bowen, Ariella Robbins, Alex Iannucci, Alberta Parsons, Adele Lindenmeyr, Joyce Russell, Hedya Aryani, Tom DeMarco, Leon Washington, Raymond Duffy, Celina Alexander, Camile Burge, Michael O'Neill

OVERVIEW

Welcome and Opening Statement from Terry Nance and Fr. Kevin DePrinzio

Agenda: Updates from the 10 Goal Groups about work done over the Summer, Direction/Plans for the new year for committee, Students on the Task Force, upcoming webinar on October 19th, and best time for meetings for Fall semester.

General Discussion

Oral Updates, observations from Goals 1 – 8b facilitated by: Sherry Bowen, Hibba Abugideiri and Terry Nance

Campus Climate subcommittee # 4 – Camile Burgers

Upcoming activities:

- 1. Follow up on the recommendations identified in the focus groups from the Fall to ensure that they are being addressed.
- 2. Conduct focus groups of Student Athletes and Black student leaders
- 3. Provide a framework for Faculty & Staff focus groups, collaborating with Faculty Congress, University Staff Council, and Employee Resource Group.
- 4. Look at the data from previous surveys (e.g., the recent Health & Wellness, CATS, Senior Surveys, HERI Faculty Survey, all the work around COVID, etc.) to see if there is any relevant information that we can glean.
- 5. Since climate is connected to communication, look to ways of engaging the university community and its populations in spaces of conversation about data, information, and findings (e.g., perhaps resurrecting or revising a “data summit” from previous years, or **something along those lines.**

Student Relations subcommittee #6 – Tom DeMarco

Student relations did meet regularly over the summer. We decided to break our committee into subcommittee small groups.

- Alex Iannucci is working on the student portion to align the student aequitas task force with our subcommittee. Specifically, Alex is working on identifying space for a Cultural Center.

- Alberta Parsons has led the revision of our Civility Statement. We are now referring it to as Our Community of Respect Statement. That group has come up with a revised draft from the existing civility statement and it has been vetted by our subcommittee as a whole and will move on to the next level to get it approved so we can adopt it into our Student Handbook and use it as a guide for training students as they come into the University. We are looking to mirror the statement for staff and faculty as well. It will be adopted for the whole community with approval from the faculty counsel as well as Human Resources for staff.
- Tom DeMarco, the last committee, I have been chairing. We have been working on training tools for new student orientation to launch the Fall of 2022. The goal is to provide online training that's required for all incoming students to enhance our diversity education in conjunction with our diversity skit. So, most of the Summer we have been exploring some options from United Educator and from Everfi. We eliminated United Educator. I met with an Everfi representative to explore some customization options that may work for us. The nice thing about the Everfi options is that we can open it up to the community so that it would not be just for first year students.

We have been busy all summer meeting within our subcommittee and then at-large and these three areas.

Diverse Community: Faculty & Staff Subcommittee #3A – Jennifer Derry

3A, Diverse Community, has had a busy summer. Our working committee worked throughout the spring and early summer to finalize a Statement of Work to engage with consultants for external benchmarking, internal focus groups, and a final report of recommendations for the purpose of creating structures to ensure recruiting practices to attract, hire, enroll, and retain Black and otherwise minoritized candidates, particularly administrative professional staff, senior staff, and faculty, with a commitment to a more diverse community. We gathered recommendations from our working committee on a list of consultants who have expertise in DEI and higher education and sent the SOW to the 14 firms recommended to us. From that, we received positive responses from 9 firms interested in pursuing this project. Ray Duffy, Steve Sheridan, Rabbia Evans and I held exploratory conversations with all 9 of those firms throughout the summer and expect to bring up to 4 back to put before our working committee for a presentation of their proposal. We are now working on pulling a meeting together with our working committee in the very near future to bring everyone back together, discuss the results of those initial consultant interviews, and finalize a schedule for these second-round presentations with the team. Our goal is to select the right partner for this important project and begin the engagement with them by the end of the fall semester, in hopes of completing the work in time to make recommendations to Aequitas and University leadership ahead of the next budget cycle.

Diverse Community: Students Subcommittee #3B – Leon Washington

- As the School year ended, we all discovered that we had run out of steam. It was a rough, challenging year, and we were physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausted. Consequently, we did not meet as planned over the summer.
- Now that we are back in session, we are preparing to get back to work again in serious. As previously reported, there is already a rich body of data collected that can inform us about how we have done and how we are doing over time in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion in enrollment. Our plan is to return to the discussion and examination of these data to help us develop a comprehensive list of actionable ideas and policy amendments to be seriously vetted and discussed to determine what kinds of changes we can and should make moving forward to further enhance our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in the University's admission, enrollment, and retention processes.
- Front and center of our discussions will be the issue of Standardized Testing and the future of testing in our admission processes at the University. The pandemic has laid bare some of the potential inequities of testing for some of the student populations we

seek. However, we've already proven that we can admit and enroll an outstanding class in a "test optional" environment and can do it well. So, some exciting discussions lie in wait for us in this arena.

Group 3-B is looking ahead to an active and productive fall semester

Academic Antiracist Evaluation Subcommittee #1 – Adele Lindenmeyr

We finalized in May a checklist of various measures that colleges and departments can undertake as part of the anti-racist academic evaluation. Each of the six colleges are very different both in disciplines and in its structures. The next step is a Dean-to-Dean consultation to talk about how this antiracist evaluation might work in their particular college. We envision a decentralized process using college or department DEI committees. This is underway in CLAS. We are looking at how the academic antiracist evaluation looks in business, engineering, astrophysics, history, the college of professional studies and law. Our subcommittee will meet with each of the Deans. Our task is to implement this antiracist evaluation in a way that fits their disciplinary structural needs of each college. The checklist we created is in the appendix of the report. Each college is looking at what success looks like within their structure.

Faculty Professional Development Subcommittee #8B – Crystal Lucky

What we want is engagement. I often think about some of the images used to depict Equality and Equity. In one of the images folks are watching the baseball game and on the equity side everyone has their hands up and they are really into the game. I think that's what all of us want to see an engaged group of people Whether faculty, staff or students.

Before the end of last semester, I got an opportunity to address faculty congress what we are proposing to do and the faculty representative were very receptive to the work we are proposing, and I got feedback that there are some faculty who are interested in working with us.

In our subcommittee we are going to focus on two things

1. Centralizing resources- finding a way to pull all these resources that already exists on campus. IN our conversations we realized there is a lot of trainings that departments or colleges are already doing work, we want to make sure faculty has access to the material.
2. Identify inventory all that's going on in the various colleges and departments, so we are not reinventing the wheel.
3. Find away to put all this information under a branded website or venue to give access. We are working with the Staff Professional Development subcommittee to make this information easy to access for faculty and staff.

Staff Professional Development subcommittee # 8A - Jennifer Derry/ Ariella Robbins

We worked over the summer to design a 4-course foundational learning program utilizing content from LinkedIn. Learning core topics like dealing with microaggressions, unconscious bias, how to be more inclusive, and communicating about culturally sensitive issues. Our team felt this was foundational learning on some of the more basics of DEI, on which staff can build towards anti-racism literacy. Staff will be invited to complete the four courses online, followed by a live facilitated conversation over Fall break to process their learning and move toward action. This will include a reflection guide for staff to process their learning and prep for the live session.

We are now working with University Communication and Marketing to create a badge or tech sticker that staff will receive upon completing this program, with the idea that future programs will each have their own badge or sticker that staff can build on. Our main question on the table is around communication. Because this is an Aequitas program and initiative, we are wondering how best to announce the program and invite staff to participate.

Resolved: aequitas@villanova.edu. Will work with UCM to design the announcement and launch to staff shortly.

Race and Justice Course and IGR Subcommittee #2 - Hibba Abugideiri, Sherry Bowen

We have been working all Summer basically building the scaffolding for this course. We worked with faculty to come up with an outcome document, talked about rubrics and evaluation and assessment. This led to development of the discipline content. We now have a syllabus that's being used in the pilot course this Fall. The ten module videos are currently being produced. These are the asynchronous that will give the fundamentals of races starting with the origin

story of Villanova then moving to the various other ten modules. But we do have those faculty experts coming in to do class presentations.

There's an extraordinary group of students who self-selected into the course. When this is required, we understand that a different set of students will be encountering this material. For what we have, it has been great to see how the design is unfolding in ways that we intended and watching the many ah-ha moments students are experiencing. The innovative ways in which to have integrated dialogue. We are three weeks into this pilot course, but it is coming together in this incredible way. We continue to evaluate and survey students to get their and their perspective.

It was exhilarating to see all six colleges represented at the Race, Justice and Dialogue Institute (RJDI) and to see people digging in to understand how to make their course content work in an antiracist way.

There are 20 students in the pilot course. We expect full rollout by 2025 with a scale up in 2022- 23, then 2023- 24 and hopefully go full scale in the Fall of 2025 after approval. It will take time to get each of the colleges, facilitators, and training cohorts up to speed.

Communication Subcommittee #7 – Terry Nance

We will be interviewing two communication firms out of the seven proposals received. The committee will meet at the end of September to decide. The Firm will be helping us with our DEI and Antiracist messaging work. They will also be a part of the long-term process as issues come up.

Race and Policing Subcommittee #5 – Ariella Robbins

Prior to the Summer break Public Safety received training from DeVon Jackson on race. We will follow-up to discuss that training to see how that may impact how we move forward.

Over the Summer we began work on drafting our focus group questions, based on the data we requested on their polices and processes, detainment, and issues of weapons. We are looking to move forward with our focus groups and plan to start with public safety to get their perspective.

We have also been looking at research from other institution to see what has been happening on their campus

Student Aequitas Task Force – Ariella Robbins

Conversation has been about short-term and long-term need for space. Looking at what that means short term where we can do inventory across campus for space and in the long-term conversation has been around utilizing a consultant to get a full understanding for what that looks like to have a multi-cultural center or a space to be utilized by multiple student groups. Our next meeting will take place before the end of this month. The Student Aequitas Task Force are students who have volunteered to be a part of their own Aequitas Student group.

General Discussion

Other Topics: Upcoming Aequitas Webinar – Terry Nance

Our next webinar has been scheduled to take place on Tuesday, October 19th at 3pm.

The steering committee members suggested the Panelist be made up of students who will lead discussion and students should be a part of the webinar committee planning.

One of the main reasons for the webinar will be to provide an update of what we are doing and how the community will be engaged or involved in the work we are doing. Attendees will need to register ahead of time to join the meeting. Keep checking Campus Current for more details and to register.

Upcoming Aequitas Meetings - Timeline

Overview of Upcoming Meetings: Terry Nance

Webinar: Aequitas Task Force

October 19th from 3:00pm

TBD

Must register to attend

Meeting #14

October 26th at 9:00am

TBD Meeting

Steering Committee

Meeting #15

November 12 at 9:00am

TBD

Meeting #16

December 7th at 9:00am

TBD