

FACULTY EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE
Annual Report 2020 – 2021

To: Faculty Senate, George Mason University

From: Betsy DeMulder and Ricardo F. Vivancos-Pérez, Co-Chairs, Faculty Equity and Inclusion Committee

Date: April 16, 2021

Subject: FEIC Annual Report to the Faculty Senate

1. Committee Members:

Betsy DeMulder (CEHD – 2021), Co-chair & Faculty Senator Representative

Ricardo F. Vivancos-Pérez (CHSS – 2021), Co-chair

Sherrice M. Mojgani (CVPA – 2022)

Xiaomei Cai (CHSS – 2021)

Kelly Knight (COS – 2021)

2. Committee Meeting Schedule:

Meetings were held virtually via Zoom on 9/18, 10/16 and 11/13 in 2020, and on 1/15, 2/19 and 4/16 in 2021.

3. Framework for the Year and Invited Guests:

During our first meeting of the year, and following our committee work during AY2019-2020, we decided to gather data and contact information for all current college-level equity and diversity leads as well as faculty/staff/administrators serving in equity-focused roles across the university. We invited them all to join us for our November, January and February FEIC meetings in order to create a safe, informal space for them to meet together and to share faculty equity and inclusion efforts and challenges. We offered a set of questions/prompts to frame the discussions, including:

- How did you decide to serve in an equity-focused role in your college or office?
- What equity goals, plans and/or actions, however preliminary, are in the works, in your setting?
- In what ways can we envision together collaborating across efforts at the college level, the FEIC Committee and the ARIE Task Force?
- What supports do you need from the University in order to be more effective in your equity/diversity efforts?

Many of the participating individuals, as well as three members of our FEIC, were invited to serve on different committees of the ARIE Task Force, which had been established last summer and which was tasked to create a set of initial recommendations during this academic year. For that reason, some of the conversations revolved around the ongoing efforts of the different committees within the Task Force. During the discussions, links to documents and websites were shared in the chatbox for all participants to access.

4. FEIC Meeting Participants: Lead equity officers – Mason administrators, faculty & staff – who attended at least one of our November, January and February committee meetings:

College	Equity Representative
CHHS	Cathy Tompkins
	Kim Holmes
	Jeanne Booth
	Jhumka Gupta
Volgenau	Chris Carr
Carter School	Charles L Chavis
CEHD	Shekila S Melchior
	Peggy E. King-Sears
	Abena A Aidoo
	Carmen Rioux-Bailey
	Yoo Sun Chung
	Grace Francis
Business	Cheryl Druehl
CHSS	Christy Pichichero
Visual & Performing Arts	Debra Sivigny
	Robert Yi
Schar	None
COS	Gerald Weatherspoon
	Lillian Virgil
Office of Faculty Diversity, Inclusion and Well-Being	Millie Rivera

5. Committee Work

The work of the committee included the following:

- Data gathering regarding lead equity officers across the university and within individual colleges
- Creating a set of questions that served as prompts for discussions with and among lead equity officers
- Discussion of Issues/Needs & Action Items. Examples:
 - Discussion of mission and tasks of this Committee. In our first two meetings as a committee, we agreed to have two goals this year: (1) to bring together diversity officers and liaisons from all around campus to provide a safe space in which to share initiatives and challenges; and (2) to serve as a bridge across

colleges and university-wide faculty equity and inclusion initiatives and to inform the Faculty Senate, asking participants to identify pressing issues on which the Faculty Senate could take action.

- **Recommendation:**
 - **Commit to an annual university-wide Equity Summit, broadcasting well in advance the opportunity to attend the summit to hear from each college, addressing “What are we doing? and “Is it working?”; make this committee instrumental in the planning and implementation of the Summit.**
- Discussion of concerns about transparency and arbitrariness in the process of selecting ARIE committee/group members and creating equity plans.
 - **Recommendations:**
 - **Make the process transparent for identifying people for committees across and within colleges, including task forces and ad hoc committees.**
 - **Make equity plans transparent and seek faculty input**
- Discussion on efforts to hire and retain more diverse faculty, and the need to establish new sets of procedures in hiring faculty in each college (e.g., CHSS is working on this aiming at a more inclusive process).
 - **Recommendations:**
 - **Provide direct resources and required trainings for search committees that detail how to go about ensuring diversity hiring.**
 - **Fully fund and support chief equity officers in each college focused on faculty equity and inclusion.**
- Discussion of the extra burden – cultural taxation, burnout and tokenism – on minority faculty members who are required to serve on multiple committees.
 - **Recommendation:**
 - **Create formalized guidelines for addressing equity, diversity and inclusion issues within colleges to prevent harm for global majority faculty and other marginalized groups.**
- Discussion of the necessity of integrating a diversity statement in each course syllabus.
 - **Recommendation:**
 - **Ensure follow through of ARIE Curriculum & Pedagogy Committee efforts by committing to a timeline (i.e., by next year).**
- Discussion of lack of opportunities for global majority faculty and other marginalized groups (and allies) to gather informally to learn from each other and to offer and receive support.
 - **Recommendation:**
 - **Support ongoing efforts with funding to create and maintain affinity groups**

Appendix

1. During the past calendar year has the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President (or their respective offices) announced initiatives or goals or acted upon issues that fall under the charge of your Committee? If so, was your Committee consulted by the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President in a timely manner before the announcement or action? If not, do you believe your Committee should have been consulted? Would it have been helpful to have had the input of your Committee from the outset?
 - Some FEIC committee members have been involved in the ARIE Task Force and other equity and inclusion efforts. We have gathered information from members of staff and other faculty that we invited to our FEIC meetings, but the Committee was never approached by the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President or their respective offices to consult on any of these efforts. We believe that the Committee should be consulted and our input would be helpful on initiatives, goals and actions related to faculty equity and inclusion.

2. Did your Committee seek information or input from the President, Provost, or Senior Vice President or members of their staffs? If so, did they respond adequately and in a timely manner?
 - We sought information and input from the following people, who responded helpfully and in a timely manner:
 - Milagros Rivera – Director of Faculty Diversity, Inclusion and Well Being
 - Christy Pichichero – CHSS Coordinator of College Diversity and Global Education; Faculty representative to BOV Academic Programs, Diversity, and University Community Committee; Faculty Fellow for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (2018-2019)
 - Chris Carr – Chief Diversity Officer of the Volgenau School of Engineering.

3. Please suggest how you believe the President, Provost, Senior Vice President and/or their staffs might more effectively interact with your Committee in the future, if necessary.
 - We believe that the Committee should be consulted – because our informed input would be helpful – on initiatives, goals and actions related to faculty equity and inclusion.

4. Please relate any additional information you may have regarding interactions between your Committee and the President, Provost, Senior Vice President, or their staff.
 - The invited members of staff were very helpful in providing information about what the university is doing to address serious concerns about faculty equity and inclusion and offering their perspectives on what still needs to be done.