

**President's Commission on Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity
General Meeting
October 18, 2017**

Attendance: Y. Al-Khudairi, L. Candal-Fernandez, K. Chipepo, J. Clark, M. Coleman Carter, M. Colon, C. Cottle, F. de Carvalho, M. Cascarano, J. Delate, A. Diaz, C. Drost, S. Gardner, A. Gomez, R. Judge, M. Kochi, M. Mann, B. Matthews, C. Meneghin, A. Mennuti, J. Liskoff, C. Molinari, M. Pagan, L. Petrozzello, D. Phillips-Clark, K. Ramirez, C. Reyes-Cuevas, D. Rogers, R. Swann-Jackson, D. Williams, J. Williams-Edmund

I. Welcome:

Meneghin called meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Meneghin congratulated nthyony Menutti on becoming a new Dad. Other good news updates were shared by members.

Approval of September 27, 2017 minutes: Motion by Turano to approve; seconded by Liskoff. Minutes approved.

II. New Business

a. Sponsorship

Cottle began by commenting on the excellent LASO and Latino/a Caucus event held last week.

Cottle updated on a new sponsorship request he received from the Black Student Organization. The request is to provide funding for MSU students to attend the Black Solidarity Conference at Yale University in February 2018. The student group is requesting \$675 from the Commission toward the registration fee for 15 students to attend. J. Delate agreed to sponsor \$300 from Residence Life. The motion was approved. Student member Briana Matthews thanked everyone for the support. She explained that the BSO budget does not have a conference budget line so the sponsorship is very helpful. Students will use this opportunity to connect with other students across the nation to share experiences. Meneghin suggested the group organize a post-conference presentation on campus to present what they learned at the conference.

b. SGA Accessibility Campus Review

Student Jason Liskoff updated that he along with two additional students accompanied VP of Facilities Connolly and Associate VP Zenko on a walking tour of the campus in response to a complaint received by the SGA from a student who uses a wheelchair and had issues navigating to classes. Liskoff explained that the group observed and/or discussed several additional issues including:

1. Sidewalks that do not have dips to get down
2. Dickson Hall – Visitors can get in but not out of the building due to a curb
3. Area behind Student Center has no dip
4. Issues with the ramp located by the service vehicle area behind Student Center to Lot 17- There are two red poles that block wheelchair users from access. It was updated that the poles will likely be removed and ramp paved.
5. General sidewalk repairs that need to be completed to allow easier access

Member Diaz suggested the use of more inclusive terms such as “student with a disability” or “individual who has a difference in ability” when discussing an individual with a disability. Meneghin added that we need to be aware of trigger words which may ok for some but offensive to others. Additionally, it was recommended that we share issues with the Facilities administrators.

c. Dr. Cole’s spring statement on EO/AA

There was a prior suggestion that the statement be sent out in both the fall and spring semesters. Williams-Edmund updated that she has already spoken to President Cole and it will be sent biannually.

d. Future speakers

Member Rogers has communicated with former NAACP President Cornell Brooks and he would welcome the opportunity speak at MSU. Rogers will work on scheduling. Meneghin proposed that he speak at the Affirmative Action Day event. Cottle added that he will talk to a representative of the Montclair chapter of the NAACP to find out if they could co-sponsor. Meneghin nominated Rogers to Chair the Affirmative Action Day committee.

III. Old Business

a. Difficult Dialogues

The “Difficult Dialogues” programming derived from member Cottle’s suggestion. There will be two sessions, on Monday, October 23rd from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm and Thursday, November 2nd from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm. Gardner explained the programming – the concept is that people are active participants but are actively listening as well. It’s about allowing someone the space to be heard and that others actively listen and hear what one person has to say. This will not be a back and forth debate- it is a dialogue. There will be standard ground rules in place (respect; confidentiality of people’s names outside the room). The ideas and information can be shared but no names used outside the dialogue. Gardner and Cottle will moderate the October 23rd dialogue, while Coleman-Carter will join Gardner as moderator on November 2nd. Set up will include chairs and wired microphones. There will be an optional swipe for students who want to swipe-in for credit. Meneghin mentioned that

there is a link to the news item and she will create a flyer. Gardner will create a hawk sync item to include in “In the Loop.” The membership was encouraged to ask people to come, and to share the event information.

IV. Discussion

Future topics for difficult dialogues – Members were asked to share information on possible future topics. Swann-Jackson mentioned an event regarding critical urban education featuring a Rutgers professor on the topic “We all Belong Here” scheduled for January 25th from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm. Meneghin suggested perhaps a follow up discussion after this event can be arranged.

V. Other

Student Yousef Alkhudairi mentioned that there are not enough gender neutral bathrooms on campus. A follow-up with administration was offered.

Molinari updated on the communication efforts with the University of Puerto Rico. After attempts, the email was received by the President’s office staff and was referred to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. MSU’s Provost Gingerich made contact with their VP of Academic Affairs and is awaiting information on how it will be handled. Meneghin thanked Molinari for all of her efforts to assist the students from Puerto Rico.

Motion to adjourn – Motion by Phillips Clark; Molinari second; meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by M. Colón