

President's Commission on Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity
General Meeting
November 29, 2017

Attendance: Y. Al-Khudairi, M. Brown, L. Candal-Fernandez, M. Coleman Carter, M. Colon, C. Cottle, F. de Carvalho, J. Delate, A. Diaz, S. Gardner, A. Gomez, F. Hines, M. Mann, S. Marschall, B. Matthews, C. Meneghin, A. Mennuti, J. Liskoff, C. Molinari, L. Petrozzello, D. Phillips-Clark, K. Ramirez, M. Re, C. Reyes-Cuevas, T. Seaboch, J. Williams-Edmund

I. Welcome:

Meneghin called meeting at 12:25 pm

Approval of October 18, 2017 minutes: Motion by Molinari to approve; seconded by Cottle. October 2017 Minutes approved.

II. New Business

a. University Demonstration Policy and Procedures

Meneghin distributed the policy, mentioning that it is important because our work is related to it. She explained that everyone has the right to demonstrate but there are procedures that need to be followed. She asked that members share it with their respective constituency and work areas. MSU is an open campus but we need to be watchdogs to keep people as safe as possible. Procedures must be followed by outside people visiting the campus. Meneghin asked that we familiarize ourselves with the policy and to contact her with any questions. If someone is distributing something you can ask them if they have permission to do so. They should contact the Dean of Students (DOS) office for permission. If you are ignored, contact the DOS or University Police who will politely talk to the individual(s). Dean Coleman Carter clarified that there is a two week approval process for the DOS to review a request before individuals can distribute on campus. Member de Carvalho confirmed that MSU personnel decide the time, place and manner the event will be held. Meneghin emphasized that things others may say can upset us, however, there is an appropriate protocol that must be followed. Our job is to make sure that others have the right to express opinions, and that we discuss this policy. If there is an opportunity to have a dialogue, we can facilitate a dialogue on campus, however, we would not necessarily run the program.

III. Old Business

a. Follow up on Difficult Dialogues

Meneghin summarized that approximately 25 people attended the October 23rd program, while approximately 55 people attended the evening program on November 2nd program. She mentioned that the Commission itself is not a

programmatic board, recommending that we promote and support and other offices on campus rather than running these programs ourselves. Meneghin thanked Gardner for her efforts as well as C. Almonte from the Veteran and Military Resources office for the support.

A conversation was had regarding possible future topics for dialogues to discuss at the January meeting. Topics included:

- Sexual harassment and abuse especially important in today's media and political arenas
- Conversation about the recent Columbus statue and other symbols (How the culture 30 years ago was different regarding those who committed sexual assault; Those who received a "pass"
- CWA members who attended the "Difficult Dialogues" program expressing concerns about confidentiality and talking at these dialogues since they felt they may be retaliated against, and concerns about being recorded. [Gardner clarified that the programs were not recorded.] Members don't want what they said being out there outside the room. Fear of reprimand, consequences, criticism.
- "Safe Spaces" on campus, which really don't exist on a campus. One cannot guarantee confidentiality. It was stated that no one should face any repercussion for expressing their opinion, unless a threat is made. Williams-Edmund explained that it all depends on the context; dialogue space is different than saying something in your workspace, which can result in the employee being contacted. Members were told to provide encouragement to employees as well as the place and opportunity for their opinions with the understanding that it is the right place for that.

Meneghin offered a possible topic for the beginning of the spring semester on the best ways to have a difficult conversation. There was interest from the membership on this topic.

b. Sponsorship

Cottle updated that \$2,725 has been allocated in sponsorship, with an additional \$300 from Delate.

c. Affirmative Action Day

The Commission is waiting for vetting to be completed by University Advancement and University Counsel on the proposal to invite former NAACP President Cornell Brooks to campus.

IV. Discussion

a. Community Anxiety

Meneghin updated that students on campus are very anxious. The high anxiety level is being felt by students, faculty and staff. We all need to take care of each

other and ourselves, and need to acknowledge the stress and get through it. She asked students what we can help with, and to make sure that HR is contacted regarding staff and faculty with anxiety concerns. Petrozzello updated that Sprague Library staff are working on making the library a respite as well as a study area for students. Staff are working on relaxation room (not a study room) for finals, and asked if members have any resources to let her know. Meneghin updated that better signage is being worked on to make it easier for people to navigate around campus.

V. Other

Meneghin thanked John Delate for his support, attentiveness, and inspiration as he prepares to leave MSU. He was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Commission.

Menutti updated that new signs for the lactation rooms are ready for installation; and the Mallory and College Hall renovations will likely include lactation rooms.

Al-Khudairi brought up a concern regarding gender inclusive bathrooms. Students have expressed the need for more throughout campus. He was referred to Gardner for further input. Information will be updated on the websites.

There will be a map on the MSU website where commuter students can find lounges, microwaves, etc. It was suggested that perhaps create a similar map for the gender neutral bathrooms locations.

Mennuti requested that members let him know if there are rooms that may be able to be converted to neutral gender bathrooms.

Reyes-Cuevas suggested that a video be created on issues with walking around campus. Pedestrians are walking in front of vehicles with headphones on; and bicyclists on campus also need to be informed. Meneghin updated that there are two new videos in the works (One on pulling headphones out; and the second on keeping feet off the furniture). Others videos to follow. Re suggested a video on speeding in the Red Hawk Deck.

Matthews suggested a future discussion on microaggressions, perhaps in February for Black Heritage Month for the “I am Too Montclair” programming. She would like faculty members to participate by talking on this topic. She anticipates the calendar of events will be out by mid-January & will share it with Meneghin and Gardner for advertising.

Motion to adjourn – Motion by Cottle; seconded by Mennuti; meeting adjourned at 1:20 pm

Respectfully submitted by M. Colón