

President's Commission on Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity
General Meeting
October 26, 2016

Attendance: A. Alvarez, L. Candal Fernandez, M. Cascarano, M. Colon, F. de Carvalho, C. Cottle, J. Cutler, J. Delate, C. Drost, S. Gardner, D. Harris, F. Hines, R. Judge, D. Keiser, B. Lin, J. Mahmoud, S. Mahoney, A. Martinez, C. Meneghin, B. Milton, L. Petrozzello, C. Reyes-Cuevas, D. Rodak, T. Seaboch, D. Williams, J. Williams-Edmund, T. Zurlo

Meneghin called meeting at 12:10 p.m.

I. Minutes

Approve September 28, 2016 Minutes

Motion by Hines to approve minutes; seconded by Reyes-Cuevas. Minutes Approved.

II. New Business

a. Pull-Up Banner

Cottle is working on order the banner which will be used for all of the Commission activities. Meneghin suggested the MSU logo be added. Zurlo will assist with the design.

b. New Member on Executive Committee

Meneghin announced that Sidney Gardner has joined the Executive Committee and will provide guidance on equity and diversity programming.

c. Membership

Mr. Mahfuza Kochi was suggested as a representative for the Veterans group on the PCAEOD, and Lise Raven was recommended as the alternate rep. for the University Senate.

d. Student Rep Presentation – Latin American Student Organization (LASO)

Alondra Martinez (LASO Secretary) and Alex Alvarez (Treasurer) attended the meeting. They presented the following issues and suggestions:

- The need for more diverse professors on campus (impacts class work such as group settings)
- Funding for conferences, lectures and other programs for low income students
- As and HIS, funding should go towards scholarships, not just to STEM students
- Funding for more Latino speakers on campus

- In depth planning for programs – conversations in classroom should be more in-depth and based on the facts and a better understanding of Latino culture
- Other LASO members may have their own issues and have requested another meeting with PCAAEOD members
- Chartwell’s prices are too high and it does not appear that the company serves cultural dishes at the UN Conference Center
- “College Readiness” should include workshops for parents in English and Spanish, and materials in both languages because some are not aware of the requirements for loans and other requirements.
- As an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), the University should have posted Latin Pride Month on the homepage
- LASO’s E-Board members need support from staff and faculty since LASO is heavily relied on, which is appreciated but can be challenging due to the students’ schedules
- The PCAAEOD’s meeting location should be changed to the SC Ballrooms to promote visibility
- The PCAAEOD should communicate more often regarding upcoming meetings

Candal Fernandez clarified that there is information in Spanish available at the Financial Aid office, including online information).

Reyes-Cuevas responded that at MSU, the HSI status needs to be more than a title. It should be used to provide services, guidance and adequate information to students.

Zurlo suggested that PCAAEOD representatives attend LASO’s meeting and continue this dialogue.

Gardner suggested that students be more involved with the Multicultural Council to have their voices heard and to make suggestions to make things better on campus. She acknowledged that LASO member S. Paulino has been attending meetings.

Meneghin updated that additional student emails lists are being developed, including one for on-campus students, commuter students, and wellness.

It was suggested that the Greek Organizations be contacted since they have focused, educational events and can offer ideas.

III. Old Business

a. Affirmative Action Day

The Executive Committee's recent meeting revolving AA Day was summarized. The suggested topic - "Here and Beyond" was discussed. At MSU we have a safer space than the outside community, and suggestions of how we can empower others were made. Keiser asked that members provide examples of things they have done to increase awareness, how current issues are being discussed and handled. He suggested that the "Fishbowl" discussions may need to be rehearsed, otherwise, there could be "dead time." There would be no more than six individuals participating in the fishbowl at a given time. Rodak offered the idea of having a moderator monitor tweets that would be shared with the audience. Delate explained that students are not as engaged with face-to-face dialogue but that they do appreciate topics discussed that are interesting to them. Students are less willing to bring up issues sometimes.

Another suggestion was to have a panel who can share ideas regarding kindness, equity, and respect.

Keiser asked that members summarize their ideas and share with the group for feedback. The Executive Committee will discuss these ideas further at its next meeting.

b. Lactation Rooms

This discussion is tabled until the November meeting.

IV. Other

Gardner distributed flyers on a few of the Diversity Week activities including Spoken Word Artist Jeff Dess on November 1st and Black Lives Matter, Beyond the Hashtag panel and discussion on November 2nd.

Meneghin will be sending the Diversity Week email to all students and the campus list.

Cottle encouraged members to attend the ReelAbilities Film Festival activities from November 1st to November 3rd.

Reyes-Cuevas thanked the Commission for sponsoring the Latino/a Caucus.

Meneghin reminded members that they can send an email to the PCAAEOD membership by just replying to the group email.

Meeting Adjournment – Motion made by Reyes-Cuevas; Seconded by Mahoney; Meeting Adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by M. Colón