

Diversity Council End of the Year Report (2016-2017)

Report written and submitted by Kari Lerum, Interim Diversity Council Chair.

SUMMARY

With the 2016 US presidential election, the political climate during the 2016-2017 academic year was a particularly intense for diversity workers at UW Bothell. From the first day of Fall quarter, UWB witnessed an escalation of political and social threats against minoritized students, staff, and faculty on and off campus. These threats (e.g. racist stickers on campus; hate crimes against Muslim students; extreme anxiety over a proposed Muslim travel ban and mass deportations, threats to end Title IX protections for transgender individuals) required diversity leaders on campus to be nimble and constantly poised for the next crisis. Due to constraints of the Diversity Council structure – including the fact that it is currently staffed by volunteers (doing this service on top of their duties as faculty, staff and students) -- it was difficult to keep up with the constantly shifting set of fears and threats, on top of simultaneously completed our previously agreed upon agenda items.

This summary document is organized into two parts. Part I briefly highlights the work of the 2016-2017 Diversity Council, including both successes and challenges. Part II includes a list of initial and revised recommendations for strengthening the Diversity Council and Diversity work in general at UW Bothell.

PART I: YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

Fall Retreat. In mid-September, Kari led (with support by Terry) the Diversity Council in a $\frac{3}{4}$ day retreat. The retreat was focused on community building as well as agenda setting for the coming 9 months. Prior to the retreat Kari created a survey for council members to identify their primary areas of interest (based on items identified in the Diversity Action Plan, as well as the call for joint DC/Community Engagement work). Based on survey data, Diversity Council members narrowed our agenda items into 5 broad areas, which then became subcommittees.

The formation of 5 subcommittees. Kari charged all members to commit to at least one subcommittee; each subcommittee identified a point person to coordinate agendas and meeting times. The 5 subcommittees and members are/were:

- Diversity Trainings (Terry Ross, Rosa Lundborg, Dana Brolley)
- Sexual Harassment & Interpersonal Violence (Kari Lerum, Asaya Plumly, Gina Christian, Tami Gerrard)
- Recognizing, Rewarding, & Setting expectations (Butch de Castro, Casey Mann, Min Chen, Devi Shandhu)
- Visibility & Community Building (Terry Ross, Kira Newman, Raissa DeSmet, Aretha Basu)
- Diversity related Community Engagement (Scott Kurashige, Lisa Hall, Ceri Nishihara)

Canvas site. As a way to host all DC documents in one place, as well as to coordinate communication with subcommittees, Kari created a Canvas site. This is still live and may be useful for continuing with new DC members.

Campus forum on Free speech vs. hate speech. Shortly after the November election, the DC (led by Kari, Terryl, with help from Dan in NSH and others in Student Affairs) hosted a very well attended event which also got coverage from King 5 News. We covered relevant policies (student conduct code; faculty free speech protection) as well as UWB's principles of diversity and inclusion. Much time was reserved for facilitating small group discussions around thinking through how to evaluate and respond to speech which may be controversial vs hateful and threatening. Audience members overwhelmingly left with calls for more such conversations and better guidance on how to navigate these issues.

Bias response system. This debuted in November at the Hate Speech Vs. Free Speech forum. The response system is now fully up and running (with approximately 5 members receiving the reports); the bias ~~response~~ **support** team has steadily improved its process and has effectively addressed several reports filed this year.

Sanctuary Campus Conversations. In Autumn 2016/Winter 2017 conversations about sanctuary campuses were happening with great urgency around the nation. While at UWB many felt that administrative commitment to sanctuary resolutions were too slow and not enough, there was steady progress in formulating principles and assessing institutional capacity for various proposed actions. This included:

- An online petition co-written by several faculty (including Kari), staff, and students.
- A visit to the Bothell City Council by several faculty (including Kari) and students advocating for Bothell to declare itself a sanctuary city.
- A joint statement of support by Chancellor Yeigh and President of Cascadia
- Scott Kurashige asked the DC to formally adopt/approve UC statement on sanctuary for UWB. As part of the investigative process Kari visited the Chancellor's executive team to discuss/compare/contrast UWB and UC statements: mostly they differ in explicit statements about campus police as well as hospital policies. Follow ups with UWB and UWS campus safety and Bothell police confirmed a practice of not holding individuals based on immigration status. (Questions still remain regarding the presence of other policing agencies such as Bellevue Police).
- Kari met with the Co-chairs of the Advisory Council on Campus Safety (Katherine Kameron of Cascadia and Andrew Shinn of UWB). This was a preliminary meeting to ensure that ongoing campus safety decisions take into account the impact on climate and safety for minoritized individuals on campus. (ONGOING COMMUNICATION NEEDED).
- In May, Jose Fusta visited the Diversity Council to discuss a list of concerns and requests coming from a group of IAS faculty. We walked through each of the points on the list; some of them were already in motion, and others were discussed as future possibilities (such as free immigration law clinics for students). These are ongoing concerns which must be taken up again next year.
- The Diversity Council co-sponsored a "Covering Immigration" panel on June 1.

Title IX/sexual harassment, assault, & Interpersonal violence. This sub-committee worked both internally and externally with others at UWB. Activities included:

- An extra class co-taught by Kari (as instructor of record) and **graduate student DC member Asaya Plumly** (as graduate student facilitator) on masculinities, race and racism, and violence, focusing on the work of bell hooks;
- Conversations on how to better coordinate anti-sexual harassment trainings for all student employees. Under the direction of Gina Christian and Tami Gerrard, **Title IX trainings for student employees this year included those for Student Affairs, IT, WaCC, Library, and the QSC.**
- Planning activities for sexual assault awareness month, and laying the foundation for a broader campus committee on sexual and interpersonal violence.
- A new subcommittee on Sexual and Interpersonal violence was formally charged by Chancellor Yeigh in May. This committee has been charged as a subcommittee of the Diversity Council. <https://www.uwb.edu/chancellor-blog/may-2017/assault>

Diversity Trainings. Several diversity related trainings happened this year that were co-funded by the Diversity Council * (see endnotes for details).

Recognizing, Rewarding, & Setting expectations. Members of this subcommittee created several recommendations. These ideas include:

- Create campus-level award (sponsored by Diversity Council) for excellence in advancing diversity (maybe one for faculty in area of research, teaching, or service; one for staff; one for student/student group). Maybe recipient could get a plaque/certificate that is presented during the Annual Diversity Conference. Chancellor is interested in creating a service award (on the level of the current teaching and research/creative practice awards), so this may be a good time to ask for a separate Diversity-specific award. (MORE SPECIFIC CRITERIA ARE STILL NEEDED).
- For annual merit review (faculty) and annual performance review (staff), Diversity Council may in the future ask and assist academic/administrative units to incorporate the following...
 - Faculty: On annual merit review self-assessment, faculty will be asked to include a statement as to how their research, teaching, and/or service has contributed to advancing diversity in the prior year, as well as set goals for the next year. Merit increase will consider accomplishments, scholarship, activity, participation toward advancing diversity on campus.
 - Professional Staff: On annual performance review, staff will be asked to include a statement as to how they have contributed to advancing diversity in the prior year, as well as set goals for the next year. Merit increase will consider accomplishments, activities, participation toward advancing diversity for the campus.
 - Classified Staff: Recognizing that there is a union contract, work with supervisors (who are professional staff) to consider devoting staff meeting time or professional development opportunities toward activities/participation/training that advances diversity on campus.

- Create more specific guidelines for faculty going up for promotion in terms of the Diversity option under Ch. 24. (Initial conversations happened on this in the CCPTFA with Scott Kurashige and Kari Lerum).

Visibility & Community Building: Work on this issue was hindered for a variety of reasons including difficulty in coordinating with student groups; Our hope is that this work will be revitalized with direct coordination with the new Student Diversity Center Director.

Diversity related Community Engagement: Work on this issue was also stymied for a variety of reasons, including a breakdown in communication and trust between members of the DC and CEC. Preliminary suggestions on how to move forward on this and other challenges faced this year are listed below.

PART II: RECOMMENDATIONS

Initial Recommendations (from Kari including feedback from DC members in our June meeting as well as via a Canvas survey)

1. The subcommittee model should continue and be improved. When working at its best, subcommittees empower members to envision institutional change and create more personal investment in diversity work.
2. The Committee Against Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence (CASARV), now a subcommittee of the DC, should receive substantial support from the DC. At minimum, there should be a liaison between the DC and the CASARV. A portion of DC Funds should also be earmarked for CASARV activities.
3. DC Meetings should be set for the entire year, marked on everyone's calendars, and made publically available. DC meetings should distinguish between open meetings and executive (closed, confidential) sessions. Different expectations for both.
4. Term limits and work expectations for all members need to be set and clarified.
5. Student participation: Stipends or other incentives (e.g. offering credit for students with the DC chair as faculty supervisor, or as part of student employment such as the Social Justice Organizers) are needed for students to participate and take leadership roles.
6. Define the jurisdiction and authority of the Diversity Council,
 - a. This must be in relation to the other campus diversity leaders, in particular, the Director of Diversity, the Director of the Student Diversity Center, and the VCAA advisor on Diversity.
 - b. This must also include recognition of % of time each position is expected to be dedicated toward diversity work. Currently: Director of Diversity = 100%; Director of Student Diversity Center = 100%; VCAA advisor = 50%; Diversity Council Chair = ?% (currently this is essentially a **service** on top of other full time faculty duties).

7. Diversity Council work should continue through the summer. DC work should not come to a complete halt during the summer, or at least should continue at least scaled back operations. This would require summer funding for the DC chair + meetings only with staff members otherwise on summer contract. (Hence summer work might focus on staff diversity work).
8. Diversity Council concerns should be balanced between staff, faculty, and student affairs. Due to power dynamics and constitution of at least the 2016-2017 Council, faculty voices and concerns often took priority over staff and student voices and concerns.
9. More intentional and systematic collaboration is needed with other units on campus (e.g. Organizational Excellence & Human Resources; Advisory Council on campus safety; counseling center and student affairs; all academic programs and schools).
10. Diversity related trainings need to be centralized, with regular & required trainings offered for faculty, staff, and students.
 - a. The Diversity Council may be responsible for some of these trainings, but they need to be part of a larger campus wide plan and commitment.
 - b. Faculty and staff should be trained to lead some of these trainings, and compensated (or integrated into their job description) for doing this on a regular basis. This both increases the capacity and investment by faculty and staff in these trainings and as well allow us to “Bothellize” our trainings rather than to rely on outside experts in the Diversity training industry.
 - c. Given that Faculty are particularly averse to trainings, they might be given an expectation to attend x/#trainings every x/#years.
11. A fresh commitment and plan must be made to establish a healthy and functioning working relationship between the Diversity Council and the Community Engagement Council.
 - a. In the short run, this includes the task of creating a mutually agreed upon set of criteria by which to create and evaluate proposals to spend the allocated 50K for jointly sponsored work.
 - b. This may also require some revision of membership for both councils.
12. The Diversity Council should create a code of conduct for all DC members – and by extension ideally all other diversity leaders on campus.
 - a. This should include an agreed upon plan for how to keep Diversity leaders accountable for working within mutually agreed upon and institutionally mandated behavioral standards, with consciousness of implicit bias based on subject position (e.g. sex, race, age) and professional status/rank in the university.
 - b. Conflict is part of life, and diversity workers may be particularly prone to highly emotional discussions and disagreements. Because of this, leaders in diversity work must also be models in how to ethically, mindfully, and respectfully work through conflict. If we cannot do this, we cannot expect others (many of whom do not have training in institutional and interpersonal inequalities) to do so.

- c. Substantial time should be set aside, on a regular basis, for interpersonal bias and communication training for all members of the Diversity Council.

13. An Executive Diversity leadership team should be created. This would include the DC Chair as well as all other diversity leaders on campus. Members of this team should have a fall retreat to discuss how to specify and divide up work required based on the DAP and the UW Tri-campus Diversity Blueprint.

Revised Recommendations (in consultation with Wayne Au, Emily Christian, and Terryl Ross).

After consulting with incoming DC Chair Wayne Au about #13 above (creating an Executive Diversity Leadership team), Wayne suggested that perhaps this team could simply be a reconstituted Diversity Council. I (Kari) immediately jumped on this idea, as did Emily and Terryl once we floated it past them. There are several advantages to reconstituting the DC as an Executive Diversity Leadership team:

- All DC members would be incentivized to be full participants of the DC because this is part of their job.
 - Student participants should already be employed by UWB (e.g. Social Justice Organizers), and DC meetings should be both required and paid.
- All DC members would be empowered through their institutional positions to begin institutionalizing diversity initiatives.
- All major diversity initiatives at UWB would be centralized through the DC, hence creating more efficient and more effective coverage for all students, staff, and faculty.

Also:

- CASARV (the new Committee against sexual and relationship violence) could still remain a sub-committee of this reformulated Diversity Council, but one member of CASARV should also be a member of this DC/Executive Diversity Leadership Team.
- The role of the DC chair would be to lead the Diversity council/Leadership team; keep track of and coordinate all the diversity leaders and initiatives.

One immediate question/concern with this proposed model is one of representation for schools and units which do not yet have designated diversity leaders. (E.G.: IAS has a new Associate Dean for Diversity but none of the other schools yet have anything equivalent to this position.) Other concerns about demographic representation on the council will likely arise. Rather than increasing the Council/Leadership Team to an unwieldy size, these important concerns may remain addressed via a number of other options (e.g. subcommittees; commitment to regular rotation of invited guests to DC meetings).

***DC Funding for trainings/workshops:**

1) \$535.80. The Bothell Campus Library's Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice (EDSJ) Team hosted its fourth Community Reads event this spring Quarter. The Diversity Council's purchase of 30 copies of *Kindred: A Graphic Novel* was instrumental in making this event the most successful of our Community Reads events to date. Because of these funds, the EDSJ Team was able to provide a copy of this adaptation of the Black feminist science fiction author Octavia Butler's classic work to all campus community members who wanted one. We were also able to add two copies to our permanent library collection after the event. The funding for books was a key factor in bringing over 25 attendees to the event. Attendees included undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, and faculty, all who had read the work and were ready to engage. The EDSJ Team hopes to work with the Diversity Council in the future to ensure that our diversity and social justice-focused events are as impactful as this iteration.

2) \$1,000: In collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Center, the Campus Diversity Council and First Year PreMajor Programs, the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences invites all UW Bothell faculty to a workshop on Thursday, April 13, from 1:45-3:15 p.m. at the North Creek Events Center: "Grading Writing without Grades: Antiracist Classroom Writing Assessment for A Variety of Courses" with Asao Inoue, Director of Writing, UW Tacoma. This workshop offers a model for designing grading systems that do not require faculty to grade individual writing assignments, or any individual assignment, yet still encourage students to labor in order to learn in the class. The discussion and materials will cover the gradeless model, labor-based grading contracts, issues around motivation and labor required in the class, as well as other issues. There will be a particular focus on how this kind of grading system addresses intersectional antiracist agendas in the judgements of writing, particularly with multilingual students, students of color, and other students who have traditionally found it difficult to meet the standards of a dominant discourse.

3) \$400. *Reconstructing Resistance: Fighting White Nationalism and Racism* on Monday, Dec. 5 4:00pm - 5:30 pm UW1 021. This workshop provides an anti-fascist framework for understanding the rise of white nationalism in the current moment. Participants will unpack commonly held myths about white nationalism while learning about the history of the movement and its current efforts to mainstream. Grounded in an understanding of cultural organizing, we will explore how white nationalists have engaged culture and participants will develop their own anti-racist and anti-fascist cultural organizing practices. Participants will leave with concrete strategies to disrupt, defuse, and dismantle white nationalism and racism.