Committee: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Chairs: Luis, William and Acra, Sari

Members:
William Luis, Co-chair
Sari Acra, Co-chair
Victor Anderson
Adriana Bialostozky (non-senate member)
Franklin Ellis Jr.
Lourdes Estrada
Stacey Floyd-Thomas
Ben Harris
Susie Leming-Lee
LeTizia Smith
Christopher Lind
Rolanda Lister
Jonathan Waters (non-senate member)
William Robinson

EC Liaison: Harris, Ben

Committee Description:
The committee had faculty representation from across academic disciplines and its membership composition was reflective of the cultural diversity on campus. The committee was supported by the active participation of non-senate members. The committee met through secure video conferencing on 6 different occasions, supplemented by subgroup meetings to help advance legislative items when necessary. The committee chairs also liaised regularly amongst themselves, and with senate leadership to help navigate the resolutions put forth by the committee. The chairs also communicated with senate legal counsel as well as with relevant academic experts in relationship to Native American History. The committee coordinated with William Robinson and Andre Churchwell (Provost’s WAVE committee) for their support on ongoing University DEI initiatives.
Committee Charges

Charge 1
- Background: Multiple on-campus DEI initiatives exist, led by students, faculty, staff, as well as VU/VUMC administration
- Goals: Engage and align with other DEI efforts – Ensure that DEI efforts align with the broader efforts within VU and VUMC
- Actions: Liaised with other key stakeholders
- Outcomes and/or recommendations:
  - Andre Churchwell and William Robinson met with committee and advised the committee on current and planned campus-wide initiatives
  - Appraised of student initiatives, both ongoing and precedent

Charge 2
- Background I: the Latinx community on campus is disproportionality undersized compared to national demographics, yet remains the largest community on campus without an identity center to promote welcomeness and inclusiveness
- Background II: Nashville was historically the home of Native Americans. Part of the University’s mission is to disseminate knowledge of native peoples and their relation to the institution’s history, including Vanderbilt University’s location on ancestral hunting and traditional lands of indigenous communities
- Goals: Evaluate the potential of centralized strategies around increasing campus diversity and inclusiveness. Consequently, the goal is to promote actionable opportunities that will result in sustainable change and recommend measures that will indicate success related to students/faculty/staff from underrepresented groups in the areas of recruitment and the inclusiveness of campus life
- Action I: Senate resolution to create Latinx identity center, with goal of also paving the way evaluating how to embrace the needs of other underrepresented communities
  - Outcomes and/or recommendations: Senate resolution passed for the creation of a Latinx Identity Center, and an urge to evaluate further steps for multicultural inclusiveness
- Action II: The DEI committee proposed tandem Senate resolutions to affirm faculty commitment to the principal of freedom of expression within the context of civil discourse and to study and understand the history of indigenous people associated with the land on which Vanderbilt University is located, and to incorporate that into the official history of the University
  - Outcomes and/or recommendations: Both resolutions were passed by the Senate

Charge 3
- Background: Recent resurgence of attacks on Asian, Asian American and Pacific Islander
Goals: Emphasize and re-affirm the Senate’s commitment to its statement of principles “to foster an open and diverse society where the rights of all members of the community are respected,” and the faculty condemnation of “racism, sexism, xenophobia, and expressions of hate, bias and discrimination in all forms”

Actions: Proposed Senate resolution condemning attacks targeting Asians and Asian Americans across the nation and expressing support for all communities targeted by abuse and discrimination

Outcomes and/or recommendations: Resolution passed supporting Asians and Asian Americans in all communities across our nation, including institutions of higher education, as well as condemning racism, sexism, xenophobia, and expressions of hate, bias and discrimination in all forms

Suggestions for Future Charges/Actions

Suggestion 1
- Create mechanisms for multicultural dialogue, perhaps through endorsing a creation of a physical or virtual multicultural center

Suggestion 2
- Endorse sensitivity and diversity training across campus life

Suggestion 3
- Work with executive committee on creating a mechanism that advances implementation of past resolutions in conjunction with the administration and other key stakeholders