

CAL Diversity Council Minutes March 22, 2017

Appointed Members:

Chair: Frances Flannery flanefl@jmu.edu Phil/Rel

Members:

Elizabeth Pass	passer@jmu.edu	WRTC
Erica Cavanagh	cavanaek@jmu.edu	English
Stephen Chappell	chappesx@jmu.edu	History
Michael Davis	davismk@jmu.edu	SCOM
Yenisei Montes de Oca	monstesyx@jmu.edu	Foreign Languages
Alexandra Vilela	vilelaam@jmu.edu	SMAD
Heather Scheuerman	scheuehl@jmu.edu	Justice Studies
Liam Buckley	bucklelm@jmu.edu	Soc/Anth
Jennifer Byrne	byrneje@jmu.edu	Political Science

In attendance: Erica Cavanagh, Stephen Chappell, Yenisei Montes de Oca, Heather Scheuerman, Jennifer Byrne, and David Jeffrey

1) We further discussed Mary Thompson’s email regarding the presence of evangelical preachers on campus. Dean Jeffrey offered to find out the specific policies JMU has in place for how these individuals are able to come to campus.

The Council also discussed best practices for students who may encounter these individuals. Among these practices it was suggested that students: 1) do not engage in a dialogue with these speakers; and 2) inform students that these individuals are essentially engaging in a form of trolling. Last, the issue was raised as to whether the Council should look to the ACLU or other institutions to examine whether there are policies in place that can assist in dealing with speakers who may espouse hateful rhetoric.

2) The Council further discussed Provost Benson’s response to the request for a comprehensive, external campus climate survey.

a) Members would like to confirm whether the Provost’s response and the update that was received from Mike Davis can be shared with departments. Heather Scheuerman offered to share an email (found immediately below this item) she is compiling for her department regarding the status of an external, comprehensive campus climate survey.

“I have attached the minutes from our last Diversity Council meeting to this email. I also wanted to give you an update regarding the external campus climate survey. The issue was discussed at the Diversity Council Charis Meeting that took place on Wednesday, February 15th.

There is support from those who did the COACHE survey to bring in external people to do a more developed campus assessment. The goal is going to be to add significant diversity elements to the assessment. The initial assessment will be primarily director level or higher with the goal of eventually including faculty, staff, and students.

Provost Benson's Response:

I am responding to you, as Chair of the CAL Diversity Council, regarding the letter submitted by the Council to me dated January 15th and received in my office on February 1st. First, let me say that I appreciate the efforts and initiatives of the Diversity Council, and the serious thought informing your letter. The letter requested that a campus wide externally conducted campus climate survey be undertaken. I had delayed in responding to your letter as I knew that Drs. Johnson and Baker, on behalf of the COACHE committee, would be addressing an upcoming meeting of the Diversity Council Chairs and would specifically talk about the COACHE survey results as an assessment of the perceptions of instructional faculty of current attitudes and support and analyzed by gender and racial groupings. I have copied Mike Davis on this response because I believe he represented you/CAL at this meeting and he could provide more detail to you and the Council. We believe that using the COACHE data we will have some understanding of the climate and this can serve as a base for initiating actions. I also believe that this approach is favorable because it would allow us to put monies that would be needed to conduct a campus survey toward actual interventions. Dr. Johnson (and probably another of her colleagues from the COACHE group) has offered to come to one of your Diversity Council meetings to discuss the COACHE process and results in more detail if you would like.”

- b)** The Council recommended inviting Marilou Johnson and Cara Meixner, who will be analyzing data from the COACHE survey, to a forthcoming meeting.
 - c)** Dean Jeffrey also offered to send the link to the COACHE questionnaire so that Council members can assess its diversity-related content.
- 3)** In regard to Tim Ball's email, the Council would like to confirm if other Diversity Chairs and Councils received the CAL Diversity Council's letter requesting an external, comprehensive campus climate survey. In addition, the Council raised no objection in regard to sending the letter to the incoming Provost, Dr. Coltman. Last, the Council recommended that the Madison Caucus for Gender Equality show their support by affirming the CAL Diversity Council's letter.
- 4) Other Items:**
- a)** Erica Cavanagh will be leaving the Council in the Fall. Greg Wrenn will be taking over as the new representative for the English department.
 - b)** Stephen Chappell will host the International Faculty Potluck sometime in early April.
 - c)** Either Chris Arndt, Interim Dean of CAL, or a Dean's representative will take over for Dean Jeffrey.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather L. Scheuerman