

Diversity & Inclusion Town Hall – UVA Dept. of Psychology
Minutes of December 4, 2017 Meeting – 3:30 p.m.

Bethany Teachman opened the meeting and stated that today's focus would be the proposed changes in the structure of the Diversity and Inclusion Committees, a topic which was tabled at the last town hall meeting.

- 1) Before this discussion, brief updates were provided on the following topics:
 - a. **Diversity & Inclusion mission statement:** The new, updated statement was displayed. The statement was revised based on input from the last Town Hall meeting and has now been approved by the Faculty Steering Committee and is posted on our department website.
 - b. **Diversity & Inclusion web site revamp:** Jason Sumontha reported that more material is in creation and will be added as time progresses.
 - c. **Item to add to students' teacher evaluations:** Bethany reported that the department was able to add the following item to all teacher evaluations for this semester: "The class environment created by the professor seemed welcoming and inclusive and respectful of the diversity in students' identities, background, and perspectives." In addition to a rating, students were provided with space to make specific comments about the environment created with respect to diversity and inclusion.
 - d. **Survey plans: Grad student well-being, climate:** It was shared that the current survey of graduate student well-being is not designed to address issues of diversity and inclusion. These issues will be addressed in a separate survey, which will probably be conducted at the beginning of the next semester.

- 2) **Proposal for new Diversity & Inclusion committee structure** (to be implemented in the Fall of 2018)
 - a. Bethany provided some **background** as to the motivation for changing the committee structure. Some of the issues that led to the desire for change are as follows:
 - i. Confusion about committees' scope
 - ii. Some redundancy
 - iii. Lack of communication {committees are not always clear in their understanding of what other committees were doing}
 - iv. Need to have a longstanding focus on certain issues but also flexibility to respond to emerging and changing issues
 - v. Concern about too many meetings for certain individual (mainly graduate students) who sit on multiple committees
 - b. The **proposal** was presented to create three standing committees, with a faculty member and a graduate student as co-chairs of each:
 - i. Race and Ethnicity
 - ii. Gender and Sexuality
 - iii. Emerging Issues/Other Challenges: this committee would be mandated to be responsive to current needs which could include crises or longstanding issues that don't fit elsewhere

c. **Discussion** of the proposal:

- i. There was some concern expressed that if only three committees existed, with a combination of graduate students and faculty on each, that the students may not feel comfortable expressing themselves. They may fear the stronger voice of the faculty.
- ii. A benefit was noted that faculty could help provide the authority to ensure actions are taken and things can get done.
- iii. A faculty member shared that it is valuable to have a student or two on faculty committees; however, it was acknowledged that this does require a significant time commitment from the student who sits on both the student and the faculty committees and attends Town Halls. It was noted that the same people generally keep filling all the roles.
- iv. Concern was expressed that three committees may spread our efforts too thinly; however, it was then explained that three committees is a streamlined version of what currently exists, i.e., six committees, with faculty and students being separate.
- v. It was noted that Town Hall meetings could provide the opportunity for committees to share updates on their work, to eliminate the burden of grad students attending faculty committees.
 1. Discussion ensued, stating that break-out sessions for committees could be included in Town Hall meetings.
 2. Each committee could be given a piece of the agenda to present their current projects.
 3. It is important to have ALL voices and to make sure that no issues are overlooked.
- vi. Bethany asked whether it might work to have just two Diversity and Inclusion committees, one for faculty and one for graduate students. Within each committee, one member would be assigned as the point person for gender/sexuality, one for race/ethnicity and one for emerging issues/new challenges.
 1. The two committees could share their work at Town Hall meetings and intersectionality would be revealed and discussed. The point people would ensure that the important targets are not forgotten.
 2. Concern was expressed that there are many more graduate students currently involved in committees than faculty and the logistics of finding common time to meet might be difficult if one large committee were formed.
 3. Faculty members shared that they really appreciate having graduate students in their committees and value their input "early in the game." It was suggested that a graduate student could still sit on the faculty committee, maybe rotating the representative each semester to lessen the burden.
 4. The consensus was that one faculty committee with three point people would be a good change.

5. ACTION ITEM: Graduate students will discuss whether it will work for them to combine the current committees into one, larger committee with three point people.

3) Review of available data on Psychology Department Graduate Admissions from 2003-2017: Jason was available to present an update on this data and to seek input on how to best protect privacy as internal analysis proceeds; however, due to time constraints, this agenda item was postponed for the next Town Hall meeting.