



FACULTY SENATE

Student Affairs Committee

Minutes

May 6, 2021

8:30-10:00

Microsoft Teams

Present Kenneth Allen (CNHS), Chris Burns (Faculty Senate President), Sin Yee Chan (CAS), Terry Delaney (CALs), Jonathan Flyer (LCOM), Steve Gove (GSB), Denise Hersey (LIB), William Louisos (CEMS), Jennifer Prue (CESS), Kris Stepenuck (RSENR), Berke Tinaz (GSA), Sarah Twitchell (LCOM), Scott Van Keuren (CAS)

Absent Troy Kane (SGA)

Guests J. Dickinson, Max Galbraith, Kate German, Tessa Lucey, Rachel Seremeth, Alex Yin

Co-Chair Jennifer Prue called the meeting to order at 8:30 am via Microsoft Teams.

1. Minutes. The minutes of the April 2021 meeting were approved as written.

2. Policy Updates, J. Dickinson.

- **The Professional Boundaries Policy** has gotten a lot of really good feedback. This policy will be set by the administration and will be circulated for feedback as soon as a draft has been set. This policy will not go to the board this year, the earliest this will roll out will be Spring 2022. J. Will make sure that the policy is sent to the SAC for consideration.
- **Walk Policy** is a one-time change that will only apply to the 2021 commencement.

UVM's Institutional Policy Site: <https://www.uvm.edu/policies>

UVM's Nepotism Policy: <https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/UVM-Policies/policies/nepotism.pdf?t=qsoqkn>

3. Graduate Student Policy Request. Max Cordes Galbraith

Call for Support: Pass a Resolution to Combat the Erasure of Queer and Trans Students at UVM

UVM's current approaches to collecting demographic data about the student population erase the identities and experiences of queer and trans students on campus. This erasure contributes to queer and trans students not having equal access to, and opportunities within, academic programs as well as increased hostility towards queer and trans students. Queer and trans students report worse experiences on our campus compared to their straight, cisgender peers. Yet UVM does not collect enough data to hold the institution and academic departments accountable for being unwelcoming and hostile toward queer and trans students. Because of the Faculty Senate's responsibility to advocate for the needs of University members and improved educational environments, the Faculty Senate has the opportunity to challenge the university to support queer and trans students at UVM by advocating for comprehensive data collection inclusive of queer and trans students. **I ask that the Faculty Senate pass a resolution supporting inclusive data collection practices, data-based actions from the UVM administration in response to the data collected, and an option for queer and trans students to declare and update at-will their gender identity and sexual orientation through the student portal.**

Students choose to attend UVM because of its publicized commitment to social justice and inclusion. However, despite UVM's claims as a welcoming and inclusive environment, queer and trans students are experiencing a more hostile, less inclusive, and less respectful campus compared to their straight, cisgender peers. In UVM's most recent campus climate survey, queer students and students who identified themselves as nonbinary or chose multiple gender identity labels reported lower satisfaction rates for all measured experiences—overall, academic, non-academic, and social—compared to their straight peers and peers selecting only a binary gender identity (man/woman). Additionally, these same students reported feeling less respected by faculty, staff, administrators, and peers along with higher rates of discrimination compared to their straight peers and peers selecting a binary gender identity. UVM already has data showing queer and trans students are experiencing this hostility; however, they are not collecting enough data to hold those discriminating against queer and trans students accountable and to meaningfully improve UVM's campus climate. Beyond the campus climate survey, few opportunities exist for students to select their gender identity and sexual orientation, causing a lack of data pertaining to the presence, development, experiences, and retention of queer and trans students. University members and University governance bodies must hold the UVM administration accountable for collecting more comprehensive data, acting upon collected data, and increasing institutional support and recognition of queer and trans students.

The Faculty Senate can support queer and trans UVM students by passing a resolution calling on the administration to provide an option for queer and trans students to declare and update at-will their gender identity and sexual orientation through the student portal, to form more inclusive data collection practices, and to act upon collected data. By allowing students to self-declare their gender identity and sexual orientation on their student portal, UVM reduces its erasure of queer and trans students on campus and creates an automatic opportunity for data collection, particularly for retention and the presence of queer and trans students within academic departments. By enabling students to easily update this information at-will, UVM recognizes the fluidity of gender identity and sexual orientation and the chance students' identities may change during their time at UVM.

Advocating for more comprehensive data collection combats the invisibility of queer and trans students by including respectful and comprehensive gender identity and sexual orientation questions on key forms and in surveys and allows for reports to include results broken down by gender identity and sexual orientation to reveal disparities for queer and trans students. **Calling on UVM administrators to take action based on the reports they receive** increases opportunities for UVM to move away from harmful practices and assess the success of their social justice and inclusion initiatives. While this letter focuses on students, there are similar efforts to capture this data for faculty and staff; please reach out to the Prism Center if you also want to support this effort. Providing queer and trans students opportunities to embrace and declare their identities creates a more inclusive UVM environment for all and encourages the celebration of all identities held by members of the UVM community.

Max Cordes Galbraith

he/him/his

UVM Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration, master's candidate

RESOLUTION: TO CALL UPON THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT TO COMBAT THE ERASURE OF QUEER AND TRANS STUDENTS

Whereas, the University of Vermont understands diversity and academic excellence to be linked and recognizes it must be accessible to students with all gender identities and expressions[1], and;

Whereas, there is a dearth of data pertaining to queer and trans students in higher education[2,3], and;

Whereas, UVM's current approaches to collecting demographic data about the student population erase the identities and experiences of queer and trans students on campus by not including enough opportunities for students to publicly declare their sexual and romantic orientations and their gender identity [4], and;

Whereas, this lack of data leads to colleges not implementing significant programs to support their queer and trans students because they cannot track the success of these programs on student experience and retention [5], and;

Whereas, queer and trans students report worse experiences on our campus compared to their straight, cisgender peers [6], and;

Whereas, queer students and students who identified themselves as nonbinary or chose multiple gender identity labels reported lower satisfaction rates for all measured experiences—overall, academic, non-academic, and social—compared to their straight peers and peers selecting only a binary gender identity (man/woman) [6], and;

Whereas, these same students reported feeling less respected by faculty, staff, administrators, and peers along with higher rates of discrimination compared to their straight peers and peers selecting a binary gender identity [6], and;

Whereas, few opportunities exist for students to select their gender identity and sexual and romantic orientations beyond the campus climate survey.

Therefore, be it RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate urges the President and Board of Trustees to allow students to self-declare their gender identity and sexual and romantic orientations on their student portal and on their alumx /a/us profile in order to reduce UVM's erasure of queer and trans students on campus and create an automatic opportunity for data collection, particularly for retention and the presence of queer and trans students within academic departments, and;

Be it further RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate urges the President and Board of Trustees to enable students to easily update this information at will in order to recognize the fluidity of gender identity and sexual and romantic orientations and the chance students' identities may change during their time at UVM, and;

Be it further RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate urges the President and Board of Trustees to implement more comprehensive data collection in order to combat the invisibility of queer and trans students by including respectful and comprehensive gender identity and sexual and romantic orientations questions on key forms and in surveys and to allow for reports to include results broken down by gender identity and sexual and romantic orientations, when ethical, to reveal disparities for queer and trans students, and;

Be it further RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate urges the President and Board of Trustees to take action based on the reports they receive in order to increase opportunities for UVM to assess the success of their social justice and inclusion initiatives and move away from practices that harm and do not support queer and trans students.

References

- [1] https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Top%20Tier%20files/UVM_Board_Why_Diversity_Strategy.pdf
- [2] Garvey, J. C. (2019). Queer Quantitative Query: Sexual Orientation in Higher Education Surveys. *Journal of College Student Development*, 60(4), 495-501. doi:10.1353/csd.2019.0042.
- [3] Garvey, J. C., Hart, J., Metcalfe, A. S., & Fellabaum-Toston, J. (2019). Methodological Troubles with Gender and Sex in Higher Education Survey Research. *The Review of Higher Education*, 43(1), 1-24. doi:10.1353/rhe.2019.0088.
- [4] Garvey, J.C. & Dolan, C.V. (2021). Queer and Trans College Student Success. In: L.W. Perna (Eds), *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, vol 36. Springer: Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-44007-7_2
- [5] Garvey, J. C. (2020). Critical Imperatives for Studying Queer and Trans Undergraduate Student Retention. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 21(4), 431–454. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025119895511>
- [6] <https://oir.w3.uvm.edu/catdat/campus/uvm-campus-climate-2019-dashboard.html>

Motion: Ken Allen moved that the **RESOLUTION: TO CALL UPON THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT TO COMBAT THE ERASURE OF QUEER AND TRANS STUDENTS** be supported by the Student Affairs Committee and moved forward to the full Faculty Senate for approval at the May meeting. The motion was seconded and **carried unanimously**.

4. COVID Vaccine Policy Concerns.

5. Parking Lot Issues for 2021-2022.

- Culture and Climate
- Senate Representation from committees and feedback loop.

6. Old Business. None at this time.

7. New Business. None at this time.

The SAC was adjourned at 10:00am. The next meeting of the SAC will be on September 2, 2021 at 8:30am on Microsoft Teams.