

Report to the University of Vermont Faculty Senate from the ad hoc Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ad hoc DEI Committee)

May 19, 2022

Summary of Charge: The UVM Faculty Senate ad hoc DEI Committee was constituted as an action of the UVM Faculty Senate in Fall, 2021, in response to the Faculty of Color Retention Efforts Faculty Senate Resolution, which was passed on February 1, 2021. The Resolution stated that “Faculty Senate recommends the creation of a Faculty Affairs or DEI Subcommittee to specifically address faculty concerns.” The ad hoc DEI Committee was created to formulate recommendations regarding the membership and scope of such a committee, in anticipation of the addition of a DEI standing committee to the committee structure of the UVM Faculty Senate.

Members: A Evan Eyler (chair) (LCOM, Psychiatry; Faculty Senate Vice President); Luben Dimov (Rubenstein, Forest Ecology); Lynn Schimoler (CAS, Theatre and Dance); Sara Solnick (CAS, Economics). Kyle Ikeda (CAS, Asian Languages) served on the ad hoc DEI Committee and withdrew for medical leave.

Process steps undertaken by the ad hoc DEI Committee in addressing its charge: Members reviewed the existing DEI-related policy development structures at UVM and consulted with leaders in DEI policy, including Sherwood Smith, Ed.D, Amer Ahmed, Ed.D and Alex Yin, Ph.D. The ad hoc DEI Committee reached out the Chairs of the existing Faculty Senate committees, regarding DEI-related projects and concerns. Members reviewed existing data, such as the Campus Climate Survey, and engaged with the Faculty Senate regarding policy review and policy development, in effect piloting the functioning of a standing DEI Committee. These activities informed our recommendations for the composition and scope of a permanent committee, in light of the current DEI policy fabric at UVM.

Conclusions of the ad hoc DEI Committee:

Although there are extensive DEI-related activities at UVM, the concerns of the UVM faculty are not always included. For example, no member of the University Diversity Council specifically represented faculty concerns. The ad hoc DEI Committee asked for a representative to be added for that purpose. Luben Dimov served in that role for the remainder of the academic year.

There is significant potential for a Faculty Senate DEI Committee to support the other standing committees of the Faculty Senate. Examples of current DEI-related concerns include the Decolonizing Research project of RSCA and the attention of FPPC to the effect of economic structures on the recruiting of a diverse faculty. Liaison between a DEI Committee and the other standing committees of the Faculty Senate could provide additional resources to the standing committees in addressing DEI concerns, and could help maintain a focus on DEI perspectives over time.

There is a substantial role for additional faculty input into the processes used in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion at UVM. For example, review of the Campus Climate Survey during the design process, from a faculty perspective, could enhance the faculty-user experience in completing the survey and potentially the quality of data derived from it. The ad hoc DEI committee reviewed the current Campus Climate Survey shortly before distribution and recommended revision of the identifiers regarding gender identity and sexual orientation, and the order and flow of questions in that area.

There is a substantial role for DEI-focused faculty review of UVM policies, and in Faculty Senate policy development. Recent examples include UVM policies regarding names and gender identities, and the *Faculty Senate Resolution Supporting Faculty Autonomy in Scholarly Work Regarding Critical Race Theory and Other Aspects of Bias, Discrimination, and Social Justice* (vote on May 19, 2022). The latter began as a project of RSCA and was broadened to include a wider scope of anti-discrimination focus, in conjunction with the ad hoc DEI Committee.

A Faculty Senate DEI Committee can provide support to other UVM faculty-based DEI activities.

Examples from the current academic year include liaison with the Faculty Women's Caucus (FWC), and support for a sizeable grant proposal regarding DEI in STEM fields. The report of the FWC 2021 Survey was presented at the April Faculty Senate meeting, in order to keep the issues it identified before the Faculty Senate, in preparation for additional steps in addressing them.

Recommendations of the UVM Faculty Senate ad hoc DEI Committee:

- ▶ *A Faculty Senate DEI-focused presence is needed, both within the Faculty Senate and within the University on behalf of the Faculty Senate (and faculty generally).* Therefore, a Faculty Senate Standing Committee should be developed to address DEI concerns within and on behalf of the UVM faculty.
- ▶ *This should include Faculty Senate participation in the DEI-related structures already in place or being developed within the University.* For example, a Faculty Senator should be added to the University Diversity Council (UDC) on an ongoing basis. Faculty Senate representation should be included in the structures developed by UDC; the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and other bodies within the UVM.
- ▶ *This committee recommends that the Faculty Senate DEI Committee (Standing Committee) be composed of one member from each of the other Standing Committees of the Faculty Senate (6 members, 7 with Gen Ed) plus 3 members chosen from the membership of the Faculty Senate and its committees.* This committee would report to the Faculty Senate. Ideally, it would meet in the Allen House dedicated space for DEI activities, in order to promote inter-group interaction.
- ▶ *Responsibilities of the DEI Committee would include:*
 - ▶ Liaison with/support for the other Faculty Senate Committees regarding DEI concerns.
 - ▶ Liaison with faculty groups representing BIPOC faculty, LGBTQ+ faculty, the Faculty Women's Caucus, and other DEI-related groups if these are formed, in order to facilitate bringing concerns to the Faculty Senate.
 - ▶ Liaison with Faculty Senate and University leadership regarding faculty concerns.
 - ▶ Review of Campus Climate Survey and other data. Recommend policy and procedure updates.
 - ▶ Review of UVM policies, policy recommendations that are referred to the Faculty Senate or its leadership.
 - ▶ Policy development initiatives and support.

- *The UVM Faculty Senate ad hoc DEI Committee therefore requests reappointment for an additional academic year, with the following Resolution (for Faculty Senate vote on May 19, 2022):*

Resolution to Extend Appointment of the Faculty Senate ad hoc DEI Committee

(Approved by the Faculty Senate Executive Council, May 9, 2022)

WHEREAS, the Faculty of Color Retention Efforts Faculty Senate Resolution of February 1, 2021, called for the creation of a Faculty Affairs or DEI [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion] Subcommittee to specifically address faculty concerns; and

WHEREAS, in its report to the Faculty Senate on April 25, 2022, the Faculty Senate ad hoc DEI Committee of 2021-2022 recommended the creation of a Faculty Senate Standing Committee to address DEI concerns within and on behalf of the UVM faculty; and

WHEREAS, ad hoc committees of the Senate expire after one year; and

WHEREAS, the work of the ad hoc DEI Committee remains ongoing; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a Standing Committee requires an Amendment to the UVM Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws, therefore be it

RESOLVED that the UVM Faculty Senate ad hoc DEI Committee be reappointed for the 2022-2023 academic year, with the charge of:

Drafting a proposed Amendment to the UVM Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws establishing a Faculty Senate DEI Committee and detailing specifics related to composition, responsibilities and scope, for consideration by the Faculty Senate no later than April 2023;

Continuing the activities of the Faculty Senate ad hoc DEI Committee 2021-2022 academic year regarding liaison with other faculty DEI-related groups and UVM leadership; policy development and support, and other DEI activities appropriate for consideration by the Faculty Senate.

Report presented to the Faculty Senate at its meeting of April 25, 2022, and in written form on May 19, 2022, by A Evan Eyler, Faculty Senate Vice President and Chair, Faculty Senate ad hoc DEI Committee.