

College of Education Diversity Committee

2/19/16
Melby Center

MINUTES

1. Present: Michael Zourdos, Melissa Mariani, Emery Hyslop-Margison (for Dilys Schoorman), Rina Bousalis, Jillian Powers, Laura Snellgrove, Patty Kirsch, John Hardman
2. News: Christine Sleeter at FAU
 - a. Reminder that Christine Sleeter, renowned social justice researcher and advocate, will be presenting at the College of Business on Saturday, February 27.
3. Review of the mission and goals of the Diversity Committee
 - a. Redefining under-served populations

Discussion:

The committee reviewed the current definition of diversity contained in the College of Education Conceptual Framework (pp. 15- 16) as ratified by the Faculty Assembly in 2010. It was agreed that the definition is more closely aligned with an understanding of the goals of multicultural education, and that a new definition is needed.

Action

The committee members volunteered to participate in the process of redefining diversity by engaging in a broad consultation process to include:

- Faculty and staff across College units
- The current definition of diversity as incorporated in the FAU Strategic Plan
- Other units and initiatives at FAU (Financial Aid, Provost's Office, Office of Students with Disabilities, Life Long Learning Society, Jenny Peluso's Student Success, FAU Advising Services)
- External partners (e.g. Broward and Palm Beach school districts)
- Higher education, national and international
- Relevant nonprofit organizations and community organizations (e.g. Teach for America)

The committee also agreed that the definition, rather than a list of a broad spectrum of diverse populations and human conditions, should contain a statement of intent designed to inform the manner in which the College of Education can acknowledge and respect the dignity of all people, regardless of origin and circumstances. The following is an initial discussion draft designed to stimulate meaningful interactions with the constituents listed above:

The College of Education acknowledges and respects the dignity and worth of all people, regardless of their provenance and current circumstances. Therefore, it defines diversity as the equitable treatment and meaningful involvement of all those who participate directly or indirectly in College and University affairs as students, alumni, faculty, staff, partners, and members of the wider community.

When initiating conversations with different stakeholders, and in order to collect a rich variety of responses, it was suggested that the following prompt might be of value:

What are some of the unique aspects of diversity as they pertain to your area/unit/organization?

It was further suggested that the responses could be collected in the form of a Wordle.

It was felt that the definition should be accompanied by a statement of the assumptions held by the College with regard to the current local, national, and global context in which institutions of higher education are expected to operate, with a special reference to issues of diversity especially relevant to FAU's service area.

Motion: Given the infrequent use to which it is currently put, Patty Kirsch proposed that the College's Diversity Data Report update and reporting cycle be extended from one to three years, with the caveat that the Office of Accreditation and Assessment will prepare special diversity reports upon faculty request (e.g. for grant writing purposes). The motion was seconded by Emery Hyslop-Margison and approved unanimously. Patty Kirsch will inform the Dean to this effect.

4. Next meeting: Friday, April 1, 10:00 am, Melby Center.