Senate Diversity Initiative Pilot Program

Spring 2024

As part of the Academic Senate’s aim to support DEI values and implementation throughout the Senate, the Executive Board approved a pilot program as a step to determine what efforts could be incorporated into committee/council practice to achieve this goal. Through this pilot, the Academic Senate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee (ASDEI) will adopt and support the following four items for the five involved committees/councils (Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Council on Planning and Budget, Faculty Welfare Committee, Graduate Council, and Undergraduate Council):

- Support for Chairs on DEI Matters
- Identification of DEI considerations for each Agenda Item
- Highlight DEI implications and effects in committee/council responses
- Include a summary of DEI Efforts in the AY23-24 Annual Report

Item #1 – Support for Chairs
ASDEI plans to support chairs through a pilot introduction session, checking in throughout the spring quarter, and bi-weekly updates during the spring Executive Board meetings. At each meeting, different chairs will provide updates on the implementation within their committee/council. The update schedule is as follows:

- May 9th – Chair Samantha Butler (Faculty Welfare Committee)
- May 23rd – Chair Catherine Sugar (Undergraduate Council) and Chair Brooke Scelza (Graduate Council)
- June 6th – Chair Michael Emmerich (Council on Planning and Budget)

Item #2 - Identification of DEI Considerations for Agenda Items
Following the practices adopted by the Executive Board, the committee/council Chair (advised by the Analyst) will identify DEI considerations for the discussion of each agenda item. When preparing for discussion of each agenda item, some questions that can help identify these factors are:

- What groups are being affected (intentionally or unintentionally) by this change?
- Would a certain group of individuals be disproportionally impacted by this decision?
- How does this decision influence the experience of the involved parties?
- Could this decision be used against a certain group in an unfair way?

Item #3- Highlight DEI Implications and Effects in Committee/Council Responses
Through this action, the goal is to ensure that the written responses pertaining to agenda items will reflect the committee’s discussion of DEI considerations. Here is an example of a response that highlights DEI efforts:

> Some members expressed concern about salary equity related to this program not only within the division but also across the university system where implementation has been uneven. ... A few members noted that the pilot offers a useful mechanism to help the university remain competitive as well as to potentially provide equity between those faculty who are eligible for the HSCOMP and those who are not.

(Excerpt from the Executive Board’s Response to (Systemwide Senate Review) Proposed New APM - 672, Negotiated Salary Program)
Item #4- Inclusion of DEI Efforts in Annual Report

In order to create some institutional memory of the Senate’s efforts, committees/councils are being asked to include their DEI efforts in their Annual Report. This section should clearly describe the DEI efforts and contributions of the group throughout the Academic Year.

Additional Resources

Inclusive Meeting Guide – An inclusive space for members to share opinions and voice concerns is pivotal, especially in efforts to acknowledge DEI in the work we are doing. The Harvard Office for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging has created a guide which outlines considerations when facilitating meetings to ensure they are inclusive to all.

Best Practices for Communication- The UCLA Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion states research shows that groups with higher social diversity (i.e., diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) share more information, are more creative, and perform better than those with lower social diversity. However, diverse groups may exhibit less cohesion and may encounter greater conflict and communication challenges. How, then, do we maximize the value of diversity and ensure that all group members have an opportunity to meaningfully contribute to the conversation? It all starts with communication.

Free Speech on Campus- The UCLA Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion states that free speech is critical to every democracy’s health and longevity. The same goes for higher education, where freedom of expression and freedom of inquiry form bedrock principles central to our mission to pursue knowledge and understanding. Nevertheless, translating theoretical principles into real-world practice is messy. This document offers a point of departure for this journey.

De-escalation Tips: While implementing new practices, it is possible that you may experience pushback from various members. The Crisis Prevention Institute has created a resource guide which includes the top 10 de-escalation tips.