

Equity and Inclusion Committee
Regular Meeting
11/30/16, 1:30-3:30 PM
Saint Paul College, room 2320

Present: Chris Elias (Interim Executive Director of Diversity and Student Life), Diana Lundell (Library Technician), Gregory Reid (Financial Aid Officer), Asher Edes (Student Senate Diversity Officer), Milford Muskett (Dean of Liberal and Fine Arts), Mary Crispin (English Instructor), Rachel Flaherty (Psychology Instructor), Kathleen Gordon (Director of College Partnerships)

Agenda

Clarification of the Committee's Charge

Bringing Issues to the Committee

"Elf on the Shelf" Video

What do we hope to accomplish as a Committee?

Plans for the Next Meeting

Clarification of the Committee's Charge & Bringing Issues to the Committee

As CDO, Chris will start attending the Cabinet meeting once a month, where any major policy that affects students, faculty, or staff will be reviewed. Our original charge as a Committee had been to review all policies. Instead we will focus on practices because there are too many policies for this to be practical, because the CDO position is only half-time, and because looking at how they play out in practice may be more effective. All committee members will pay attention to our respective areas of the College and to bring questions relating to equity, inclusion, and diversity to this group. For an example of a well-intentioned policy that adversely affects students, the majority of students receiving disciplinary action for violating the plagiarism policy are students for whom English is not their first language and who may not understand the policy.

"Elf on the Shelf" video

The marketing department sought input on making an "Elf on the Shelf" holiday video. Their goal is to make a fun video that does not center Christmas over other holidays. Committee members shared different perspectives on whether or not this could be carried out without being exclusionary. Overall, the Committee's view is that although it's unlikely that people would be offended, the video might not be worth it.

What do we hope to accomplish as a Committee?

We only have mental health counselor on staff, which is not enough to meet the needs of our large student body. How can we increase access to mental health resources? To what extent is stigma about seeking help for mental health a barrier? Would more students feel comfortable accessing mental health resources if counselors of color and male counselors were available?

When will the Intercultural Development Inventory be taken by all faculty and staff? Task Force members have already taken it, and management will be next, followed by staff. It remains to be seen whether we can afford to provide the test to students. Before the College provides more tests, it needs someone who can interpret results and advise people on how to use them for personal growth.

The cafeteria has made improvement over time such as explicitly labeling ingredients. It could still do better at providing food that meets everyone's needs. For instance, it could always offer halal meat and vegetarian entrees. Would traditional cultural foods be popular, or do most students prefer "American" food like pizza and hamburgers? Could there be special foods for holidays like Cinco de Mayo, the Chinese New Year, and so forth? Maybe this Committee will recommend to the Culinary Arts department, next time it is hiring a chef, to seek someone with experience in foods of cultures we aren't currently representing.

How can equity and inclusion become more prevalent as topics in the classroom? There's a possibility of starting an academic program around equity and inclusion. Perhaps the College could include a social justice class in the requirements for all students, as St. Cloud Technical & Community College and other schools do.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held December 14, 1:30-3:30pm in room 3230. Committee members will read Chris' forthcoming email about the College's Affirmative Action Plan and prepare comments for the meeting. Look out for issues that the Plan does not address that you believe should be added. Be aware that we are in the later stages of revision.