

UCWFS Meeting Minutes  
February 13, 2023

Voting Members: Christine Trinter, Melissa Berke, Mark Caprio, Christopher Kolda, , Stephanie Larocque, Alessandro Pierattini, Jennifer Mason McAward, Kathleen Eberhard, Abigail Ocobock, Jennifer Hunt Johnson, Susan St.Ville, Laurie Littlepage, Alixandra Underwood, Lane Obringer

Voting Members Excused or Absent: None

Non-voting Members/Observers present: Keona Lewis, Denise Murphy,

Agenda

1. Committee welcome, introductions (Chrissy Trinter)
2. Welcoming our new Assistant Provost for Academic Diversity and Inclusion, Keona Lewis
  1. Getting to know one another and building community
3. Vision and goals for our work this semester (Chrissy Trinter)
4. Academic Articles revisions (Laurie Littlepage)
5. Kathleen Cannon lecture vote
6. Varia

1. Chrissy Trinter welcomes the committee and members introduce themselves.

- One goal this semester is to build community and conversation within the committee.
- Keona is introduced to the group as a conduit to the Provost's office. This is the first time we have had someone in this position as a dedicated link to our leadership team. We will work with Keona as servant leaders to the administration and in service to the larger university community.

2. Keona Lewis

- Goal is to build a community of practice around DEI across campus at both the micro- and macro-community levels.
- Shared her successful experience at the Georgia Institute of Technology in developing initiatives and programs around DEI. Feels her greatest strength is in building partnerships and community.
- Would like to get our input on how to make the university community more inviting for everyone.
- Question from a committee member for Keona - Do you have resources or people to call upon?
  - I am one person on this job but we are hiring someone to help me.
  - I also have other people in the university administration/leadership team and the greater ND community who will be supports in this work.

- Discussion ensued around support for Keona in this new role.
- Question from a committee member for Keona - Psychology has established a DEI committee in the department. This has been a rough go for many reasons. Graduate students feel there are many issues to address but some faculty do not feel that these are relevant issues. Do other colleges have DEI committees?
  - The college of engineering has directors of DEI in every department who meet with the heads of DEI and we meet as a college. This year we are establishing goals for our department and how those goals will be evaluated.
  - The school of architecture also started with someone (Crystal Bates) in this position. We also have huge issues that Crystal will help us overcome. Recently there were some nasty comments toward Crystal but the architecture community supported her. The level of comments that were made about Crystal from alumni was shocking. There is a culture to build around this area.
- Keona - I did consult with the DEI councils at Tech within the context of my role but not just a part of my role. I have found that the will is often there but there are not strategies and tools to empower faculty members around engaging in that type of work within the confines of the classroom. Training will be a good solid part of what I do. Some things we can't fix but moving forward, taking a strong stand is a first step. We are in a good situation because of the mission of the university. We have what we need to say - this is not acceptable. We are in a good starting position.
- Question from committee member for Keona - I want to hear your thoughts about DEI as a class versus women. Do we need to separate them out or do we have unique opportunities through a committee like this one (UCWFS) that we may not necessarily address with a DEI program.
  - Keona - a committee like this gives us opportunity. Within the perspective that women will identify as needing inclusion. Inclusion cuts across the differences.
- Laurie - During the Executive committee on Academic Council, the question was raised as to whether this committee (UCWFS) is necessary any longer. Some believe that we should rope it into a DEI committee. Questions were asked such as, why would we have this committee versus focusing on Native American groups or any number of other sub-groups?
  - Keona - too often when it comes to 'either/or', 'both/and' is the answer. There is value in acknowledging who people are and recognizing them in their wholeness. It works against overarching goals to say either/or. We have to create a space where all women can find a place or feel as if they can belong. Historically, institutions that have focused on gender issues haven't always been inclusive of various intersecting identities. There's value in this committee committing to truly championing inclusion, not just in words, but also in deeds. My approach to DEI is community building and making sure more people feel welcome.

- Question from committee member for Keona - What can we, as a committee, do for you and people in other departments to support you as you are trying to get the lay of the land here?
  - What I need more than anything right now is knowledge. However, knowing that I have partners in each unit would be the biggest help. Knowing that I can reach out and ask you a question in the law school. I am in the process of meeting a number of stakeholders. Having the ability to connect with supporting partners in each unit will be a huge help.
- Question from a committee member for Keona - In student government, I am constantly trying not to overlap across committees. Everyone is thinking about this which is exactly what we want. I also work in the dean's suite in Mendoza. Is there a list of all of the people who are working on DEI issues? Can we compile some kind of list of all units who are working on it? I've been trying to streamline information just within the student union.
  - Keona's response: The Office of Institutional Transformation - I believe they are compiling a list. I don't know how high level or in depth that list will go. There is something in the works. Maybe try to connect with them in some way.
- Question from a committee member for Keona - What is your relationship to that office (Institutional Transformation)? I was thinking you were part of it.
  - Keona - My understanding is that it is institutional level. My role specifically is academic. I will also collaborate with Eric Love in Human Resources.
- Question from committee member to group - For those of you who have been on this committee for a while - Was there ever any conversation about including staff on this committee?
  - Response: Brought it up a year ago. Heard from people in my department that it was a need.
  - Response: Because this committee falls under the Provost's office, the committee decided it should remain for academic faculty and students.
- Question for group - Graduate students do not receive maternal health care past the five year mark, even though they are still graduate students. Maternal health care cuts off even while we are still paying and employing the graduate student. It is up to the faculty member to go above and beyond to get the maternal health care benefits. Does anyone know about this?
  - Denise Murphy - There is student insurance that is offered through the health center. I have never heard there is a limited time frame for insurance. I would be happy to ask this question and bring the response back to you.
    - Action item - Denise will follow up on this.

### 3. Chrissy shared vision for the committee

- The purpose of the committee is to support university administration in their commitment to cultivating an environment in which women faculty and students thrive as integral members of the university community.
- As committee members, we are servants to the university community with particular attention toward students, faculty, and administration.
- Historically, this committee has served in a variety of ways that, from my perspective, needs more purpose and direction.
- We find ourselves in a unique moment in time with the instantiation of a new assistant provost for diversity and inclusion, who will serve as a conduit between our committee's work and our university's leadership team. Change in leadership brings with it both the opportunity and the responsibility to thoughtfully reimagine a group's long-term goals and, in effect, the in-the-moment work toward accomplishing these goals. I see our work this semester, and moving forward, as running along two related but parallel tracks, the 'here and now' and the 'long view.'
- I believe that to be effective servant leaders, we must begin by situating ourselves as learners. In alignment with Keona's vision for building community, I propose that we spend a portion of the next three meetings of this semester learning about the many units on campus who are attending to the needs of the female population we are charged with supporting such as AWIS, ERGs, and Gender Relations, among others. The purpose of this listening session is three-fold: (1) better understand our context to inform our vision for future work (the long view), (2) increase visibility of our committee across campus, and (3) lay the foundation for building credibility for the work of our committee.
- While we are imagining the long-term goals of this committee, we do not want to lose sight of the fact that there are immediate needs of our community that need attention. While supporting immediate needs, we will also build credibility as a productive contributor to the university community.
- I suggest we take on several small projects this semester as this will allow us to build our own internal (committee's) community, build community with campus constituencies, and establish ourselves as a serious and productive committee. This is the foundation we will need in order to take on the long view and larger issues. Therefore, I would like to invite guests to each of our next three meetings whose initiatives will benefit from our feedback, expertise, and guidance.
- By May, my hope is that we will have a record of success in these areas:
  - We will feel more comfortable with one another and engaged with the work of this committee than we do today,
  - We will all have a better understanding of the work of each unit on campus that is attending to the female demographic,

- We will have preliminary ideas around the purpose and goals for this committee, both in the immediate and the long view, that align with the university's priorities. These ideas should be solid enough to allow us to hit the ground running in the fall semester in solidifying goals and crafting a work plan.
- Committee Member: This committee should think strategically about how the units on campus can come together. We should have a goal of ND being a place where people know us as a university that is welcoming and supportive of women.
- Committee members agree and a point is made: The scope of what the committee has not been taken advantage of to date. We are situated under the Provost's office which is historically why it is faculty and not staff. We should also spend time thinking about what the scope of the committee should be and do we have the right people on the committee? We should have a discussion about what we want to accomplish.
- Committee Member: This committee considers issues. Do we have power and how can we reword this to establish policies and practices that promote a more inclusive environment?
- Committee Member: One of the committees' responsibilities that bothers me about sexual assault prevention is that we only provide recommendations. We provide recommendations but then it gets quiet. How does that make a more long-term effect?
- Committee Member: I hear what you are saying about the "considers" part and I want to push back. You are not making the decisions ultimately but we do have a voice. Making sure people listen to our voice helps. Initiatives we can do to raise our awareness on campus our voice is valuable. One tangible thing we can do is to have Chrissy meet regularly with the Provost - to bring issues there.
  - Keona responds that she will be meeting regularly with the Provost to bring those issues to the forefront.
- Committee Member: We should raise issues through the Academic Council - we don't want to ask the same questions.
- Committee Member: There is a need for recognition to be heard on these issues. We can ask the Provost's Office for information. They help us too. We need to take advantage of that relationship.
- Committee Member: Our terms are two years - it feels like you scramble up a hill and there is a seat change. Part of the whole Groundhog Day feeling is the change in membership. Maybe we should have longer terms?

#### 4. Laurie Littlepage shared changes to the Academic Articles

- Changes to the academic articles to include adding Keona's position and we also made the change that the chair is not limited to tenure and tenure track faculty but to all faculty. These were approved by the Academic Council Executive Committee. There was some discussion with the Executive Committee - issues

that were raised about why more tenure track faculty were not attending meetings. Another issue was there was a sentiment that less interest in this committee because the gender issues have been dealt with. There was a discussion that Hugh Page engaged in that it is worth considering that the roles of the committee fall under a DEI category. This is worth thinking about. What are the deliverables that we hope to get out of the committee? I anticipate that we will bring more items to the Academic Council.

#### 5. Vote on Kathleen Cannon Lecture

- The Reilly Center for Science, Technology, and Values proposes inviting Naomi Oreskes (Henry Charles Lea Professor of the History of Science, Harvard University) as a Sister Kathleen Cannon Distinguished Lecturer.
  - Vote was unanimously affirmative.