

**University Faculty Senate
Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Committee
Aimee M. Woznick (Acting Chair)
Annual Report
June 5, 2020**

Committee Charge

The Committee on Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity will concern itself with issues pertaining to equity, inclusiveness, and access, as they are reflected in the curriculum, student body, and personnel of the State University. Among the activities of this committee will be collecting and disseminating information, organizing periodic meetings and workshops, and providing guidance and recommendations to the Senate so that it may act with the best intentions of all people in mind.

Committee Members 2019-2020

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Summary of Committee Actions

New since spring plenary: The committee strongly desires to work with the University Faculty Senate to issue a public condemnation of the murder of George Floyd (and other BIPOC at the hands of police) and to express solidarity with the movement to end police brutality. The committee would like to see SUNY and/or the University Faculty Senate issue a strong statement with concrete, actionable steps that we can take on our campuses to move forward with antiracist work and has already begun some brainstorming and drafting on our listserv that can be shared with the Executive Committee.

Following the departure of committee chair Cephas Archie in January, Aimee Woznick was appointed to serve as Acting Chair through the summer 2020 planning meeting.

Committee conference calls were held in February, March, and April.

In the wake of COVID-19, the committee voted to defer new resolutions until fall 2020. Nonetheless, the past three meetings saw robust discussions on the following topics:

- **Desire for an updated Diversity Data Brief:** The most recent Diversity Data Brief was published in 2017.¹ Many committee members reported that it was an extremely valuable tool, but the information contained therein is now outdated. Given the resources put into initiatives like PRODiG, the committee would like to request an updated Diversity Data Brief for benchmarking and assessment purposes.
- **Concerns around protecting First Amendment rights in the classroom while simultaneously taking a strong stand against hate speech.** The committee would like to consider seeking guidance from SUNY General Counsel about standard language that instructors may include on syllabuses to promote healthy debate while preserving safe learning spaces.
- **Desire for regular climate surveys at all SUNY campuses that consciously include outcomes related to equity, inclusion, and diversity.** The committee held productive discussions with SUNY Admin liaisons and suggested that the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) research this topic further. There are some real barriers to regular, consistent climate surveys, such as the differing needs of each campus and the costs associated with contracting a third-party vendor. There was some thought that perhaps SUNY could harness the expertise within the system (particularly among the CDOs) to develop modularized survey templates as a resource to campuses seeking to conduct climate surveys.
- **Possible revision to tenure and promotion timelines in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:** Some U.S. colleges and universities have provided junior faculty with the option to pause their tenure clock. As part of the ongoing effort to retain diverse faculty, will SUNY also be considering this option?
- **Discussion of compensation for the UFS President.** Currently, there is no set salary for the President of the University Faculty Senate; rather, campuses are reimbursed \$75,000 if a member of their faculty serves in this role. Given the high demands of this position, there has long been some feeling that the individual serving in this role should be compensated either the full amount of their regular salary or \$75,000 (whichever is greater). There is some thought that perhaps this change may incentivize diverse candidates to apply. The Executive Committee is aware of this discussion and plans to discuss further during budget talks at the summer planning meeting.
- **Discussion of the SUNY system response to the COVID-19 pandemic.** The committee has numerous concerns about student, faculty, and staff welfare as the pandemic progresses. In particular, the committee is concerned about the ability of students from diverse backgrounds and life circumstances to thrive in college when faced with new and/or intensifying challenges as varied as: limited access to technology, sudden loss of income, trauma, illness, new childcare and work responsibilities, and so on. There are also concerns about racist and xenophobic sentiments that are rapidly emerging and how they may impact students from Asian and Asian American communities.²³ The Acting Chair met with the Chairs of Student Life and

¹ <https://system.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/institutional-research/Diversity-Data-Brief-June2017.pdf>

² <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/03/coronavirus-covid19-xenophobia-racism/607816/>

³ <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/04/02/scholars-confront-coronavirus-related-racism-classroom-research-and-community>

Undergraduate Academic Programs and Policies to brainstorm ideas. EID seeks to continue the dialogue with these committees and actively solicit feedback about how groups are being impacted so that we may provide suggestions for how SUNY can respond proactively rather than reactively (see below).

Requests to UFS Senators from this Committee:

If you hear reports from your campus community of individuals being negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of their held identities (e.g., race, gender identity, sexuality, socioeconomic status, ability or disability status, age, immigration status, and so on) – or as a result of the institutional response to the pandemic – please share with the Acting Chair.