2017-2018
ANNUAL REPORT
OF
STATUS OF DIVERSITY COUNCIL

Presented at the
781st Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
November 15, 2018

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Laurie Anastasia  Eric Moschella
Richard Chu      Alice Nash
Doris Clemmons   Shelly Perdomo
Leda Cooks       MJ Peterson
Alex Deschamps   Kalpana Poudel
Derek Doughty    Melvin Rodriguez
Brittany Frederick Ilina Shah
Willie Hill      Talya Sogoba
Karen Kurczynaski Jean Swinney
Laura Lovett     Nancy Symmes
Mzamo Mangaliso (Co-Chair) Rui Wang
Nandi Marumo     Ernie Washington (Co-Chair)
David McLaughlin Nathaniel Whitmal
Daniel Morales   Hadiya Williams
The Status of Diversity Council (SODC) is charged as follows:

The Status of Diversity Council shall make recommendations on all matters affecting the status of diverse populations and underrepresented communities on the campus including such matters as faculty librarian and staff recruitment retention promotion and salaries the recruitment admission and retention of undergraduate and graduate minority students granting of financial aid and the development of programs to reflect the needs of our diverse community.

The SODC met on the first Monday of every month during the Academic Year 2017-2018 for a total of seven meetings – three in fall 2017, and in four in spring 2018. Throughout the year the SODC maintained strong collaborative working relationship with other campus councils, committees, and organizations that deal with issues of diversity and inclusion. These included the Office of the Ombudsperson, the Status of Women Council (SOWC), and the Massachusetts Professors Union (MSP), to name a few. Individual University officers were also invited to make presentations to the Council on issues of concern. The highlights of the year are outlined next.

Our first meeting held on October 2, 2017 began with the election of Mzamo Mangaliso and Ernie Washington as co-Chairs. Most of the time was dedicated to a discussion of the College of Social and Behavioral Science’s language proposal whose passage by the Faculty Senate the International Studies Council (ISC) had asked to be tabled for further discussion. Jim Hicks, Chair of ISC attended the October meeting to answer questions from SODC members. Associate Chancellor Anna Branch gave an overview of the results of the Campus Climate Survey. An extended discussion followed about the implications of the responses by different campus constituencies for diversity and inclusion on campus. At the conclusion of the meeting a subcommittee was formed to recommend a position to be taken by the SODC in response to the amendments suggested by ISC for the SBS language proposal.

At the November 6 SODC meeting the Associate Dean of the College of SBS, Julie Caswell, was the invited guest. In her presentation she highlighted the rationale behind the College’s international and intercultural education proposal. The presentation was followed by an interactive session during which Dean Caswell responded to the various concerns of the Council members. After her departure, council members discussed the recommendation of the subcommittee on the ISC-SBS Proposal. The subcommittee had met a week before and recommended that the SODC should support the ISC recommendation for a campus-wide task force to consider the best way to revise the language requirement. However it was decided that more information was needed.

Two topics were scheduled for discussion at the December 4 SODC meeting: the position of ISC on the College of SBS language proposal; and issues around diversity and inclusion arising from the campus climate survey. Most of the meeting was dedicated to a discussion of the former since Associate Chancellor Branch was unable to attend the meeting. ISC Chairperson, Jim Hicks, updated the council on the latest position his Council had taken, which was essentially to call for a wider discussion among the broader University constituencies, but to support the proposal and not to ask for it to be tabled. After discussion, the SODC members in attendance were happy to support this position.

Two topics discussed were at the February 5, 2018 SODC meeting: the Diversity Strategic Plan, and matters related to disability services and SRTI evaluations. Associate Chancellor Branch discussed the overall goals of Diversity Strategic Plan. She stated that for it to be
successfully implemented, it must be fully integrated into the larger Campus Strategic Plan. In the ensuing discussion, several ways of doing this were discussed. Assistant Ombudsperson Derek Doughty informed the Council about the needs and issues that affect undergraduate and graduate disability students, and the plans in place to meet those needs.

At the March 5 meeting reports were given about a recently held meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Language Proficiency where the SODC. The committee was scheduled to meet several times over the next few months, even over the summer, and to present its interim report at the last meeting of the Faculty Senate in fall 2018. The meeting also discussed the contents of the handout titled “Diversity and Inclusion Commentary” that was provided by the office of Associate Chancellor Branch, who was unable to attend. In the absence of Assistant Ombudsperson Derek Doughty, some members raised concerns about the attention paid to accessibility of the new campus building in their designs. In anticipation of the end of Ernie Washington’s term as the Council’s co-Chair, Nate Whitmal was unanimously voted to be the next SODC Co-Chair.

The meeting of April 2 was a continuation of the discussion of the SRTI evaluations, with a focus on issues of diversity and equity in the evaluation of diverse faculty, and their disparate impact in the new online format. Some members noted that although it has been reported that there is no statistical difference in faculty evaluations for majority professors and diverse professors, reports from faculty suggest that (1) there may be disparities in the evaluations from white students, with regard to faculty of color, and (2) class sizes may also contribute to the disparities with larger classes often yielding poorer evaluations than smaller classes. A discussion of the Diversity Strategic Plan was led by Becky Packard who represented the office of Associate Chancellor Branch. She reported that amendments have been made to the plan to include a number of diversity initiatives, which she enumerated. The meeting concluded with representatives from various campus units giving brief reports about the diversity efforts and initiatives taking place in their Colleges and Units.

The invited guest at the May 7 SODC meeting was Martha Stassen, Associate Provost for Assessment and Educational Effectiveness who was invited to discuss and clarify issues concerning teaching evaluation with special reference to the SRTI forms. Several concerns were expressed by SODC members about the evaluation of teaching as it relates to diverse faculty and graduate teaching assistants, which the Associate Provost noted. The second half of the meeting was dedicated to reviewing the progress made during the year, and setting priorities for the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Mzamo Mangaliso & Ernest Washington
Co-Chairs, Status of Diversity Council