Equity and Inclusion Committee End-of-year report

AY 2021-2022

April 12, 2022.

Drafted: Joel Wendland-Liu, chair

1. Teach-In:
In collaboration with Karen Gipson, organizing and running events to promote awareness of the importance of social justice and campus diversity (e.g., the Teach-in) is one of the ongoing responsibilities of the EIC. For the coming year, organize and run the Teach-In with a specific focus on the forces of systemic racism to deepen an understanding of social justice and racial equity, debrief afterwards, and report to ECS on outcomes and plans for 2021-22.
SHORE Log: 1120-2019

Our first charge was to collaborate with DEI and the new organizer of the university teach-in, Karen Gipson, to help organize the event. The teach-in was held on Nov. 10-11 in in-person settings and virtual settings. This year, the committee reviewed about 50+ session proposals, first by establishing a general rubric for accepting the proposals, meeting twice as a whole committee (with aid from student support for the teach-in), and selecting sessions that met the criteria. Session proposals that didn’t meet the criteria were returned to the proposers with questions and suggestions for revision. We held two rounds of review in October. A total of 49 sessions (37 in-person and 12 virtual) were approved and split between Allendale and DeVos Campuses. More than 1,150 university community members participated, evenly split between the virtual and in-person modalities (revealing that the smaller number of virtual sessions were far better attended). Initial reporting from the assessment data showed that about 90% of those who submitted evaluations (about 30% of the better attended virtual sessions and 60% from in-person sessions) indicated that learning objectives were achieved. Organizers and committee members discussed boosting the level of faculty participation in future teach-ins and surmised that holding sessions on the medical campus would attract more GVSU community members there. Further, the teach-in organizer, Karen Gipson, suggested improving the means for virtual participants to submit evaluations would improve the assessment data.

1. Diversity of Faculty, Staff, and Students across Colleges:
Update ECS on the diversity of faculty, staff, and students across colleges; report findings and make recommendations to ECS on an ongoing basis; and include this as an ongoing responsibility of EIC in your revision of the faculty handbook language.
SHORE Log: 1008-2018

Report draft, discussed and submitted.

1. Accessibility Task Force Committee Recommendations:
Conclude a review of the recommendations of the UAS accessibility taskforce (review which recommendations have been implemented and which have not yet been implemented but should be) and forward any recommendations to ECS/UAS.
SHORE Log: 1009-2018

We met with the authors of the DEI-A framework, provided some feedback and individual members of the committee shared additional feedback.

1. Documenting Relationships:
Document the relationship between I & E and EIC as well as FTLC and EIC. Include in your report a recommendation about whether or not this charge should be an ongoing responsibility for EIC. SHORE Log: 1165-2020

We took up a discussion of FTLC in our Nov. 9th meeting with a brief report and detailed discussion which was reported in our minutes of that meeting. To summarize, we sought to emphasize EIC and FTLC’s most important connection is the point at which we can support FTLC’s mission of faculty leading faculty on professional development around improving faculty skills in building inclusiveness in their syllabi, their knowledge about experiences of diverse faculty, staff, and students in the campus community, and generally improving human relations. After a discussion on mentorship, its complexities, and its role in helping faculty to be open to learning about and valuing differences as well as helping new faculty to achieve success in their personnel process, we agreed that we can from time-to-time point to issues that FTLC may wish to enhance in its ongoing programming.

A second discussion of the FTLC-EIC relationship took place in our Feb. 1 meeting. Details are included in our minutes. Discusses Inclusive Excellence Initiative and expansion of resources on inclusive teaching, including a Sandbox learning grant, Minds that Matter series led by Patria Bolea, NCFDD, and Pace initiative for connecting mind and health. Asks for feedback from the committee regarding how to best communicate these resources on the website. Some initial suggestions: 1) Think about how to solicit feedback from faculty so FTLC knows what they need and faculty know these resources exist, 2) Add a question about inclusive teaching on FARs, 3) Enlist unit heads to communicate resources, perhaps through FTLC monthly newsletter.

A discussion of DEI-FTLC’s relation was discussed on two separate occasions. First, the faculty expressed serious concerns about the condition of the Title IX office. We asked the newly appointed director, Kevin Carmody to meet with us to talk about his new role and how he envisions rebuilding trust in the office and its vital role on this campus. Details of his discussion are included in our Feb. 15th meeting minutes. To summarize, he discussed the reporting structure of the office, the climate at the office, a moving-forward plan, and maintaining transparency. Lost several good key people and rebuilding is in progress. The ongoing search for 2 positions: Assistant Director and Lead Investigator. Looking to fill these positions soon. He discussed a major focus on outreach. Students do not have a good understanding of the office and its goals/mission. He discussed outside impressions of GVSU, and that it should have more resources around full-time advocates and have more faculty being co-investigators. Colleagues at other institutes look positively at GVSU. The faculty offered the following suggestions: 1) Maintaining a newsletter to promote transparency and current efforts, 2) Ombuds office can assist faculty to get the students connected to the right resources, and 3) Improve outreach to adjunct faculty.

Marlene Kowalski-Braun discussed the relationship between I&E and EIC. Suggested going back to ADA document. Network of Advisors recommends climate survey be done every two years instead of every four years. Having someone represent this committee will be beneficial. She discussed professional development for faculty and staff. Continuing anti-racism and white consciousness cohorts that are full (group of 25 that attends 10 hours.). Also, in process of implicit bias training for 350+ KCoN and CHP students. Alisha Davis is the co-lead. Doing presentation for the SSN network. SSN is all about mentoring students. Provided information on the network of advisors for racial equity work attempting to institutionalize professional development support for underrepresented faculty. Several recommendations from NoA to strengthen professional development. DEI should be an embedded part of HR and leadership training. Inclusion and Equity Institute is robust and does large amounts of external work and hope is that the institute will become the umbrella for faculty/staff teaching that does not involve pedagogy (FTLC is associated with pedagogy).

5. Teaching about Systemic Racism:
In consultation with GEC, review the General Education curriculum-- Particularly US Diversity and Global Perspectives student learning outcomes—and recommend revisions to increase students’ understanding of the impact of systemic discrimination and racial inequity on individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

SHORE Log: 1183-2020

6. Equity in Learning:
Review the data from the General Education learning outcomes assessment from the previous two cycles to determine whether they reveal demographic differences in student learning outcomes and make recommendations.

SHORE Log: 1184-2020

GE is holding on this curriculum revision. This discussion is expected to continue into the Winter semester of 2022. So far, GE reports that it has developed a third SLO that reads as follows:

Explain how individual and systemic racism affect those who are discriminated against and those who discriminate against others in the United States.

GEC surveyed all faculty teaching in Diversity in the U.S. courses and Global Perspectives to find out what they currently do about race. GEC updated its report as follows: From its survey on how teaching is done in the Global Perspectives. In Winter 2022, GEC members discussed the SLOs with TT and Affiliate faculty – teaching in 21-22 in Global Perspectives – to ask them a bit more about discrimination rather than specifically racial equity. GEC intends to collect more information from faculty and then determine what they might do. Some possibilities include 1) changing the Global Perspective category description – to specifically call out discrimination – this one wouldn’t be hard to do and wouldn’t require all faculty to teach about these topics – but it would acknowledge this is an important thing that could be taught in this category; 2) Adding a Student Learning Outcome. GEC expects to know more after the Winter 2022 term.

7. ECS Reporting:
Create a process to generate reporting to ECS in a meaningful way.

SHORE Log: 1166-2020

EIC will continue to submit mid-year and end-of-year reports on its work.

8. Update EIC Responsibilities:
Consider adding the following responsibility as an ongoing responsibility of EIC: Provide annual review, revision, and update to the website maintained by EIC as the committee adapts the needs of the site and increases functionality for faculty.

SHORE Log: 1121-2019

We drafted new by-laws language creating a sub-committee to handle the website, develop content, and use it to promote faculty-led initiatives on diversity issues. [See memo on by-laws language]

9. Promote DEI-related Professional Development Opportunities

We would include this activity as part of charge #8.

10. In collaboration with FPPC and LIFT-MC, review the recommendations from the EPP taskforce and provide input for FPPC to craft appropriate policies.

Policy change recommendations were submitted to ECS in the Fall 2021 semester.

11. Leadership and Succession Planning:
Please propose language to ensure that the applicable section of the UAS Bylaws (SG 1.02) that charters the committee includes a subsection on Leadership, that describes the leadership positions and succession process.

We drafted new by-laws language. [See memo on by-laws language]

12. In an effort to engage more faculty in our shared governance system, prepare a 1–2-page mid-year progress report at the end of the Fall semester to be disseminated to ECS/UAS and College Deans (a full report is expected as usual at the end of the year).

Submitted December 2021.