Institutional Equity and Diversity Committee   
Summary Report

2013/14

Contents

[Committee Membership and Charges 1](#_Toc454984974)

[Subcommittees Progress Reports 2](#_Toc454984975)

[Administrative Fellow Subcommittee 2](#_Toc454984976)

[Charge: Continue to provide opportunities for qualified candidates to shadow a College administrator as a form of professional development and to gain a better understanding of the institution. **–** Two faculty members continue to participate in the Administrative Fellows program (Engineering and H &SS). 2](#_Toc454984977)

[Climate Subcommittee 3](#_Toc454984978)

[Charge: The subcommittee was assigned to analyze the results of the climate survey. 3](#_Toc454984979)

[Diversity Subcommittee 4](#_Toc454984980)

[Charge: To develop an effective approach to promote and inform campus about diversity issues. 4](#_Toc454984981)

[Mentoring Subcommittee 5](#_Toc454984982)

[Charge: To design a mentoring survey for assessing faculty perceptions of mentoring on campus and analyze the survey results 5](#_Toc454984983)

[Student Life Subcommittee 6](#_Toc454984984)

[Charge: To address issues of diversity that impacts all students on campus. 6](#_Toc454984985)

[Moving Forward 7](#_Toc454984986)

# Committee Membership and Charges

At the end of the 2011-12 academic year, the Institutional Equity and Diversity Committee (IEDC) proposed a number of changes to its membership in order to better represent the entire campus community. The proposed membership included:

- 8 Faculty members (two appointed from each school)

- 2 Students - from the Multi-Cultural Council and SGA Diversity Committee

- 1 Individual from Educational Equity (Andy Herrera) – Ex Officio

- 1 Individual from the Chancellor’s office (formerly Dr. David Christiansen) – Ex Officio

- 1 Individual from the Women’s Liaison Committee (Member) – Ex Officio

- 4 Staff members (selected from different areas, such as: 1 academic, 1 other area [e.g., CMC, Development, CE], etc.)

This new structure was successfully implemented during the 2012-2013 academic year.

In order to continue the progress made in previous years, existing subcommittees were maintained. Inquiries and suggestions regarding additional subcommittees were later discussed.

Initial Subcommittees included:

* Administrative Fellow
* Campus Climate
* Diversity
* Mentoring

With the addition of the student representation, a Student Life subcommittee was established. Also, an “Alumni Issues” subcommittee was proposed and established.

# Subcommittees Progress Reports

## Administrative Fellow Subcommittee

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### Charge: Continue to provide opportunities for qualified candidates to shadow a College administrator as a form of professional development and to gain a better understanding of the institution. **–** Two faculty members continue to participate in the Administrative Fellows program (Engineering and H &SS).

##### #1. Dr. Dharma Jairam – H & SS, PSYCH. Fellowship with Dr. Steve Hicks, H & SS Director

1. Attended administrative meetings (e.g., CAC, ALT, and CAB) with Dr. Steve Hicks. Meetings provided greater understanding of the administrative process that occurs at Penn State Behrend.

2. Served on the Retention and Recruitment Committee with Dr. Eric Corty, associate Director of The School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Currently working with Dr. Tom Noyes, and Dr. Corty on a continuing education program that aims at spreading the word about Penn State Behrend as an education center and recruiting local high school students.

3. In the interest of student retention, created a new Penn State Freshman Seminar course that is specifically designed around students gaining effective learning strategies.

4. Assisted in Penn State Behrend’s Spring Open House with Dr. Hicks and had the opportunity to speak with prospective students, many of whom indicated their interest in either education or psychology.

5. Together with Dr. Corty, assisted Dr. Hicks on the final edits of HSS’s strategic plan. In addition, researched and outlined some new program ideas and directions that H&SS and Behrend could take in our efforts to address some of the goals outlined in the strategic plan and increase student enrollment.

6. Looks forward to using this experience to pursue future administrative work.

##### #2. Dr. Sharon Dale – H & SS, HIST. Fellowship with Dr. Ralph Ford, School of Engineering Director

1. Shared productive conversations and saw how “a good deal of his activity” as School Director for Engineering took place off campus--was unable to see much of the interaction with businesses and local industry.
2. Felt there was not much to have contributed to SOE.
3. Decided to focus on the proposed DIGIT major--since it has some overlap with Engineering/Computer Science courses. The SOE faculty and Ralph contributed a good deal to the P1. Sharon attended Leadership team meetings and said she learned quite a bit from them.
4. Was also invited to CAC meetings and found them to be very informative regarding the workings of the College.
5. Felt she learned quite a bit about administrative work and this experience has helped her in her role Chair of the Arts and Arts Administration programs.

Despite a concerted effort to recruit participants, only three faculty members and no staff members applied for the fellowship during the 2012-13 academic year. Of the three faculty, one was awarded the fellowship to work with Ralph Ford in SP14. The award of a second fellowship to another faculty member is currently under review.

The committee discussed the possible reasons for this lack of interest. Possible reasons may include:

* Limited number of Administrative Staff to shadow.
* Hesitation in deviating from current job responsibilities.

One suggestion regarding Staff was the possibility of trading positions, e.g., a person from Admissions switches places with a person from ACPC. This would allow them to learn and experience other areas of the college without neglecting their job responsibilities. The level of expertise, however, could be an issue. Also, this wouldn’t necessarily expose them to supervisory level positions.

The committee revised and expanded on previous recommendations regarding the Administrative Fellows Program.

1. **Alternate Years:**

We currently have one individual participating. The next cohort will start in fall of 2015 (recruitment to take place in spring of 2015).

1. **Incentives:**

Clearly state the course release and/or reallocation of weights that the Fellows will receive. Typically, this is ½ time course release for faculty and ½ time work release for staff.

# Climate Subcommittee

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## Charge: The subcommittee was assigned to analyze the results of the climate survey.

The subcommittee worked on developing initiatives that addressed some of the findings and recommendations made after the Climate Survey provided in the 2011-12 academic year. These included:

1. Enhance opportunities for faculty to interact. Possibly:
   1. Faculty dinning space
   2. Catered Socials
   3. “Brown bag” Series
2. Physical Plant Matters
   1. Family Support Areas
      1. Lactation accommodations
      2. Diaper-changing stations
   2. Escort Services
3. Support for non-native English speaking faculty

They also discussed other possible initiatives such as:

1. An annual award to faculty, sort of an “Ambassador for Outreach.”
2. A “Welcome Wagon” initiative for new faculty and employees.
3. Study abroad issues – increase in the number of participants.
4. Social gathering opportunities
   1. To enhance faculty interaction.
   2. Promote mentoring of non-native English speaking faculty.
   3. Issues of student with mental illness conditions—some information was be presented to faculty on this topic by Student Affairs staff.

Towards the end of the 2013 spring semester, the sub-committee organized a couple of faculty social/networking events at the Metzgar Center. They reported that it was nicely attended and well received.

# Diversity Subcommittee

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## Charge: To develop an effective approach to promote and inform campus about diversity issues.

This sub-committee explored the possible distribution of materials about diversity using social media, posters, newsletters, the Beacon column, etc. Specific items may include:

A newsletter featuring:

1. Stories or profiles of international students in the Beacon, e.g., what brought them in the US? Career aspirations? Why the US? Why Penn State?
2. Stereotypes - based on ethnicity, gender, or sexuality. How stereotype incidents regularly pop up at various colleges across the country and how the underlying ignorance and insensitivity needs to be addressed (<http://inamerica.blogs.cnn.com/2012/12/07/penn-state-sorority-photo-insensitive-or-just-fun/comment-page-1/>).
3. Facts about students with physical disabilities – perhaps percentage of the  
   student population (or faculty population?); what we as shared-residents of the campus can/should do to help them out or should not do; what the campus physical plant staff does/can do to help (i.e., students in wheelchairs have to get across campus in the snow— and have to get around buildings where there are doors that are not hooked up to an automatic opener).
4. Facts about students that are in 'traditionally' gender-dominated majors of  
   the opposite sex (i.e., a perspective from female students in math/science, and a perspective from male students in nursing) to open up the eyes of the community that those are not as gender-dominated as they once were.

A Diversity at Behrend facebook page was created, but not launched.

Sub-committee members also suggested other ways to disseminate Diversity information within the campus community, including:

* Messages on the TV monitors across campus.
* During movie trailers shown by the Lion Entertainment Board in Reed 117 Auditorium.
* Fun facts to incoming students during New Student Orientation (formerly FTCAP).

# Mentoring Subcommittee

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## Charge: To design a mentoring survey for assessing faculty perceptions of mentoring on campus and analyze the survey results***[[1]](#footnote-1)***

This sub-committee collected and reviewed mentoring policies at the each of Behrend’s Schools. Their goal was to work on developing recommendations from the existing policies and from data in last year’s campus-wide survey of mentoring policies. They would also consider staff mentoring practices.

They discovered that Schools have their own mentoring process of assigning a senior to a junior faculty. There seems to be a lack of follow-up, but the responsibilities of both parties are pretty clear. The School of Engineering has a formal document for mentoring. The university-wide mentoring programs vary for the different colleges (no more details).

At the end, this subcommittee had more questions than answers. Some of these included

1. Do we need to have a College policy which recognizes the importance of each school developing a process that works best for it?
2. What are the contents of the policy? Guidelines for mentoring?
3. What is the role of Diversity Committee in mentoring?
4. Could/Should mentoring workshops be held on issues or topics such as: teaching and advising, research, outreach, P&T review? Address mentoring policy in new faculty orientation?
5. What is the role of Glenhill, School directors, program chairs in mentoring?
6. How to pair mentor(s) with mentees?
7. Who should follow up? Chancellor’s Office, School Directors, Program Chairs?

Also, the current policy needs to be clarified as to whether mentoring is to be provided to all faculty or just some--FT, PT, Adjunct, etc.?

After discussing some of these issues, several suggestions were made:

1. This may be a task for newly appointed School Assistant Directors.
2. Or be coordinated by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.
3. Or overseen by the Faculty Senate/Faculty Affairs (apparently, there is already a report addressing this issue).

# Student Life Subcommittee

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## Charge: To address issues of diversity that impacts all students on campus.

This sub-committee collaborated with students organizations on a “Unity Day” event for all students across campus.

* Students created a t-shirt featuring the word “SLUR” which stood for “Serenity”, “Love”, “Unity”, and “Respect.” They distributed the t-shirts to others students during the Unity Day event in SP13. The goal of the event was to promote diversity awareness and better relations.
* Students worked on developing a short commercial regarding the “SLUR” concept to be shown during the campus’ weekly movies.
* They also considered a contest that invites the campus community to share their perspective on Diversity, i.e., “This is Diversity.” They would hope to do this every spring semester and award prizes to best works. Has not been implemented.
* They also discussed approaching the college’s administration to discuss final exams scheduling and how it affects international students travel plans at the end of the semester.

# Moving Forward

The committee is currently in the process of replacing members who completed their membership or have withdrawn. In discussions with the Faculty Senate Chair regarding faculty participation and whether an open invitation would be made or individuals would be assigned by School directors, we determined that a request would be made to School directors to appoint individuals. The appointment will be for the remainder of the 2013-2014 academic year and will continue through the 2014-2015 academic year. Starting in spring 2014 and continuing into the future, open elections will be conducted during the Faculty Senate election process to fill the position of current members whose service time will conclude at the end of the academic year. Elected members will serve two-year terms.

For staff, an open call will be made. The heads of the Student Government Association (SGA) and the Multi-Cultural Council (MCC) will be contacted for them to assign their representatives.

We will be reviewing current charges and adjusting as needed. Plan to submit report and recommendations by the end of the 2013-14 academic year.

1. The mentoring survey design began in 2010-2011 after the subcommittee studied the mentoring policies of the four schools at Penn State Erie. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)