

MINUTES

FACULTY SENATE – SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 3 p.m.

Altgeld Hall 125

Northern Illinois University

DeKalb, Illinois

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Bohanon, Books, Johnson, McConkie, McGowan, Montana (for Barrett), Palese, Scanlon, Vahabzadeh, Valentiner

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Barrett, Douglass, Hu

OTHERS PRESENT: Flynn, Reeves

I. CALL TO ORDER

Faculty Senate (FS) Social Justice Committee (SJC) chair, **D. Valentiner**, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was verified.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

F. Bohanon moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by **B. Palese**. Motion passed.

IV. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 7, 2022, MINUTES – Pages 2-5

B. McGowan moved to approve the minutes, seconded by **I. Montana**. Motion passed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

A. Academic Affairs – Xiaodan Hu

- The first wave of conversations with the college councils regarding tenure and promotion policies is completed, and the second round of conversations have been scheduled with the college councils.
- Feedback is being organized and reviewed.

- Next steps will include:
 - Reviewing the feedback received from the college council conversations and using it to develop a framework to guide the Faculty Senate's review of the FS Bylaws, Articles 8 and 9.
 - Aligning the working group's review of the FS Bylaws, Articles 8 and 9 tenure and promotion with President Freeman's 2023 presidential goals.

B. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Natasha Johnson

- Working with Alan Clay, Associate Director, Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, to obtain data for analysis; but this work is currently paused, due to workload issues in AAEO.
- The idea of an on-campus DEI Fest, possibly for Fall 2023, was discussed:
 - Event could showcase activities, initiatives, research, and encourage collaboration among units, as well as highlight that DEI is transdisciplinary.
 - Provost's Office has shown interest. Representatives of the Presidential Commission on Race and Ethnicity, as well as Office of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion also indicated interest in collaborating on this project.
 - It could be valuable to present the event as a Faculty Senate event.
 - How does DEI Fest align with the prioritized recommendations?
 - The working group was encouraged to draft a plan or a program for the DEI Fest.

C. Institutional Racism – Beth McGowan

Two goals:

- Changing institutional culture
 - What are reward and stick structures?
 - How does this goal align with the presidential goals?
- Decolonizing the curriculum
 - Who is responsible for making sure that curriculum committees and other curriculum-related units across the university align themselves with the presidential goals relative to decolonizing the curriculum?
 - Does shared equity leadership play a role in this endeavor, providing a tool to bring the loose ends together?
 - What is administration/leadership's role? Is administration/leadership already doing this? **B. McGowan** was encouraged to visit with key committees to research how it can be accomplished.
 - Does the Committee on Academic Equity and Inclusive Excellence (CAEIE) play a role? Can the CAEIE be engaged to assist?

- What about the term, decolonization? Does it promote – or derail – valuable conversation? As an alternative, can we strive to speak more specifically about what we’re trying to change?

VII. ITEMS FOR FS-SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Continuing discussion of request for anonymous survey

Pros and cons:

- Destructive activity can result from lack of accountability in an anonymous survey.
- A confidential survey could be an alternative mechanism.
- Bias Incident Reporting – ADEI maintains it and, in theory, one could send a comment that way. However, if one is concerned with the activities that are aligned with ADEI thinking, they aren’t likely to use this tool.
- **D. Valentin** has invited feedback, which he would keep confidential, but how can confidentiality be guaranteed?

B. Continuing discussion of how to promote academic freedom

- How can discussions with agreement to disagree and hear each other be facilitated?
- Some fear retribution for their comments.
- In a university setting, push-back should be an anticipated facet of all speakers.
- Sometimes it can be daunting to express an opinion with anticipated pushback.
- It's inherent in the work we do to anticipate and welcome other opinions.
- Some NIU faculty have expertise in this area; they and others might be interested in further discussion of this topic.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

X. ADJOURNMENT

N. Johnson moved to adjourn, seconded by **F. Bohanon**. Meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.