

PUBLIC NOTICE AND AGENDA

FACULTY SENATE – SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

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

Altgeld Hall 125

Northern Illinois University

DeKalb, Illinois

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM**
- III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**
- IV. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 8, 2023, MINUTES – Pages 2-4**
- V. PUBLIC COMMENT**
- VI. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**
 - A. Academic Affairs – Xiaodan Hu
 - B. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Natasha Johnson
 - 1. DEI Fest Draft Proposal – Pages 5-11
Biagio Palese
 - C. Institutional Racism – Beth McGowan
- VII. ITEMS FOR FS-SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION**
- VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
 - A. Continuing discussion of request for anonymous survey
 - B. Continuing discussion of how to promote academic freedom
- IX. NEW BUSINESS**
- X. ADJOURNMENT**

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.

1st Northern Illinois University DEI Fest

Proposal Draft

Presented by the FS Social Justice DE&I Subcommittee
Natasha Johnson, Biagio Palese, Sahar Vahabzadeh
February 8, 2023

Introduction

To achieve our goal in making NOU a more equitable institution, there are measures the university could consider adopting to inspire and encourage faculty to take a deeper dive into DEI's initiatives. One suggestion the DEI Working Group would like to propose, for instance, is instituting an annual DEI fest (either in Spring or Fall) where faculty, students, and staff could come together in a series of forums to share ideas, make research presentations or exhibit creative artistries to promote equity and DEI climate at NIU. Our working group is still brainstorming how to model this idea as an annual DEI festival. Should this idea receive the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee's and the university's buy-in, the DEI Working Group would be responsible for organizing this event annually. We propose that the venue of this event be rotated to allow each of our seven colleges to work with the DEI Working Group to co-host and invite the whole campus community to participate. While we are still brainstorming how to structure this idea of DEI fest, we envisioned that it could be a combination of individual presentations, round table panels and creative exhibitions. Interested and prospective presenters would be required to submit about one-page length abstract or summary of their presentations. Submissions for round table panels will also require a prior submission of abstracts on the subject of the panels. We are also thinking of the possibility of inviting a renowned scholar in DEI's domain to deliver a keynote address during the DEI fest. We are not aware of other institutions organizing this type of event at a university level, but we truly believe that the DEI fest would be a perfect avenue to promote, discuss research, and spark additional interest on the topic and potentially foster the beginning of cross-disciplinary/ trans-disciplinary collaborations that will bring advancement to the topic. The research generated from the discussions at the DEI festival will help promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and togetherness for all NIU faculty, staff and students. This event clearly aligns with our educational goals of the DEI prioritized recommendations. Finally, there is doubt that NIU has been recognized as a leader in DEI's efforts. We also believe that a DEI fest would offer NIU an opportunity to sustain the DEI and equity work that is already underway. For more detailed information on the work completed this summer, please see the extensive report DEI Hiring Statements and Practices available in the FS-SJC Repository in Teams.

Date and Location

- September (depending on the approval)
- NIU College of Business (it will rotate among other colleges in the next years)

Tentative Event Structure

Day 1:

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM: Opening ceremony and welcome speech from the university administration

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM: Keynote speech from a renowned DEI expert

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM: Panel discussion on current DEI initiatives and best practices at the university

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM: Lunch break

1:30 PM - 3:00 PM: Academic presentations from professors from different departments, showcasing their research and initiatives related to DEI.

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM: Poster presentation session, where students can showcase their projects and ideas related to DEI.

4:00 PM - 5:00 PM: Break

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM: DEI-focused workshops and interactive sessions. This can include activities such as role-playing, simulations, and games aimed at promoting DEI awareness and understanding.

6:30 PM - 7:30 PM: Cultural showcase, where students and local community members can showcase their cultural talents and performances (e.g., multicultural dinner).

Day 2 (if needed):

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM: DEI-focused breakout sessions, where participants can choose to attend a more focused and in-depth session on a specific aspect of DEI.

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM: Roundtable discussion and Q&A session with DEI experts, open to all participants.

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM: Lunch break

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM: DEI-focused training sessions, aimed at providing practical skills and tools for promoting DEI in various settings.

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM: Closing ceremony and feedback session, where participants can share their thoughts and insights on the event.

3:30 PM- 5PM Networking break

5PM-9PM Social Event (Multicultural dinner)

Budget

Here's a budget estimate:

- **Marketing and promotion: \$1000 to \$2000**
This includes the cost of creating and distributing marketing materials, such as flyers, posters, and email campaigns, to promote the event.
- **Speaker fees: \$1000 to \$5000**
Depending on the keynote speaker, you may need to pay a speaking fee.
- **Food and beverage: \$2000 to \$3000**
The cost of food and beverage will depend on the number of attendees, type of menu, and any dietary restrictions.
- **Miscellaneous: \$1000 to \$3000**
This includes any other expenses that may arise, such as decorations, printing, and miscellaneous supplies.

This is a rough estimate, and actual costs may vary.

DEI Conference (Academic side of the DEI event)

In this section we will present the information related to the academic side of the event. Such as:

Types of submissions:

- Treo Talks
- Panel Discussions

Submissions deadlines:

- TBD

Submission guidelines:

- TBD

Other events (more students oriented):

- **Keynote Speech** Invite a DEI expert to the event to deliver the DEI Fest keynote speech.
- **Book clubs and author readings:** Organize book clubs and author readings focused on DEI themes. This can provide an opportunity to discuss and learn about DEI issues through literature.
- **Workshops and hands-on activities:** Offer workshops and hands-on activities that focus on DEI themes, such as yoga and mindfulness sessions, community service projects, and diversity and inclusion training.
- **Panel discussions and Q&A sessions:** Organize panel discussions and Q&A sessions with experts, community leaders, and activists to discuss DEI issues and answer questions from attendees.

DEI Activities and events (Entertainment/Cultural showcase side of the DEI event)

These events will be offered through the duration of the DEI Fest and the best participant will be featured at the main event (the multicultural dinner):

- **Cultural performances:** Invite local dance groups, musicians, and artists to perform and showcase their talents. This can provide an opportunity to learn about different cultures and traditions.
- **Art exhibitions:** Display artwork from local artists, students, and community members that highlight DEI themes and messages.
- **Film screenings:** Screen films that address DEI themes, such as documentaries, short films, and feature films.
- **Game shows and competitions:** Organize fun and educational games and competitions related to DEI, such as trivia games, debates, and essay writing contests.
- **Main event: Multicultural Dinner (probably find a more appealing name):** This is a social event where multiple culture food (not sure if different association will be asked to bring the food that they think are representative of their group.. still not sure) will be available but also diverse music, dance and art will be in full display. This event will close the Fest.

Potentially useful resources

ChatGPT signaled to me the following existing event connected to DEI. We should probably review them and see if we can get some inspiration from them:

1. Harvard University: The Harvard Office for Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging hosts the annual Harvard Diversity Conference, which brings together students, faculty, staff, and community members to engage in discussions, workshops, and presentations focused on DEI.
2. University of California, Berkeley: UC Berkeley's Office for Equity and Inclusion hosts the annual "Building Community Through Diversity" conference, which features keynote speakers, panels, and workshops focused on DEI.
3. University of Michigan: The University of Michigan's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Summit is an annual event that brings together students, faculty, staff, and community members to discuss and learn about DEI issues and initiatives at the university and beyond.
4. University of Toronto: The University of Toronto's Diversity Institute hosts the annual Diversity Summit, which features keynote speakers, workshops, and panel discussions focused on DEI in education and the workplace