

MINUTES

FACULTY SENATE – SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, December 7, 2022, 3 p.m.

Altgeld Hall 125

Northern Illinois University

DeKalb, Illinois

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

VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT: Books, Douglass, Hu, Scanlon

OTHERS PRESENT: Burgin, Flynn, Reeves, Weffer

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was verified. It was noted that one non-member was joining the meeting virtually.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

IV. APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 12, 2022, MINUTES

N. Johnson moved to approve the minutes, seconded by **B. Palese**. Motion passed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. ITEMS FOR FS-SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

A. Update on the status of President Freeman's request for feedback

As members will recall, President Freeman requested feedback from FS in regard to NIU's academic reward systems, such as its tenure, promotion and faculty evaluation processes, to be included in the 2023 university goals. The resulting university goal content was provided to President Freeman by FS and SJC leadership, and accepted by her without change. It will be presented to the Board of Trustees as part of the 2023 university goals on December 8.

B. Academic freedom event and/or resources

Is there support amongst the committee members for working on the development of an event, or resources, to help the NIU community better understand academic freedom – What should/should not be discussed in the classroom; what curricular content should/should not be protected? Discussion included the following points:

- Any attention to academic freedom is a good idea.
- A repository for relevant resources would provide ongoing support.
- Are NIU resources or policies already in place?
- Other resources outside of NIU could provide insight.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. FS-SJC updated description for [Working Together for Racial and Social Justice, Equity and Inclusion](#)

F. Bohanon moved to approve the updated description, seconded by **S. Barrett**. A friendly amendment was accepted by **F. Bohanon** to make the following edits to the description:

- First paragraph – “...(2) work with the administration on recruitment, and hiring and retaining of Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) faculty;...”
- Sixth bullet point – “The FS-SJC, in consultation with ADEI, also is developing a strategy to ensure that units/divisions/departments develop and implement plans to address equity and social justice concerns in multiple domains, including, but not limited to, hiring, tenure and promotion, as well as programming, course offerings, curriculum and pedagogy.”

The motion passed as friendly amended.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed Affirming Equity Resolution

B. McGowan moved to approve the proposed resolution for submission to FS, seconded by **F. Bohanon**. Discussion on the proposed resolution included the following points:

- The proposed resolution is modeled on a similar document passed by the Faculty Senate at San Diego State University (SDSU), and implemented by SDSU’s diversity, equity and inclusion administrative staff.
- The proposed resolution lacks context (i.e., Whereas...).
- NIU’s implementation template, which would provide for the deliverables attached to the resolution, is still being developed by NIU’s Office of

Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI). A more manageable timeline for consideration of this proposed resolution might be Fall 2023.

- It is important to ensure that enough support exists to solidly pass the resolution before moving it forward to FS. If the proposal were to fail or pass only marginally, its emphasis, power and impact would be lost.
- The development of a shared equity leadership model also is part of this conversation. Once this model is implemented, faculty might feel more comfortable knowing that these ideas are being discussed with other units, in addition to the FS-SJC.
- Before moving this proposed resolution forward, time and energy must first be invested to understand where each of our faculty members fits into working with equity issues in their classrooms and the university at large. Investing in this effort first will give ADEI time to develop an educational strategy and to have support in place for colleagues who, for whatever reason, may just now be engaging the idea that equity practices could be a positive step forward.
- Most of NIU's colleges and departments are still in the process of reviewing their tenure and promotion documents with an equity lens. This is a long game.
- Sometimes you legislate first and work on winning hearts and minds later. Yes, but it would be much more effective if an 80-90 percent pass rate was achieved first, as opposed to a 51 percent pass rate. If hearts and minds can be won first, perhaps that is the preferred path.
- Can the resolution be brought forward to FS just for the purpose of getting input and conversation going? Can we break it down into smaller steps? Do we need all the deliverables associated with the resolution in place today?
- Perhaps there is room for the proposed resolution to be grounded in the existing work that is happening, but it needs a preamble. Rather than jumping straight to SDSU model, could the proposed resolution, instead, acknowledge what's going on currently at NIU?

D. Valentiner moved to table this item, seconded by **N. Johnson**. Motion passed.

B. Request for mechanism for anonymous feedback

It has been suggested that a mechanism be put in place to receive anonymous feedback on the work of the SJC. No action was taken on this suggestion.

IX. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

A. Academic Affairs – Xiaodan Hu

Second round conversations with the college councils are being scheduled.

B. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Natasha Johnson

- Final edits on the summer work have been completed.
- The summer report has been resubmitted to Provost Ingram.
- Working with Alan Clay, Associate Director, Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, to obtain data for analysis during the spring semester.
- DEI Festival is one of the recommendations the DEI group has provided as an option to get more exposure and buy-in from stakeholders across campus.
- Some additional analysis on DEI work from the summer is being finalized and should be available at the start of next semester.

C. Institutional Racism – Beth McGowan

No report

X. ADJOURNMENT

N. Johnson moved to adjourn, seconded by **I. Montana**. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.