

## MINUTES

### FACULTY SENATE – SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 3 p.m.

Altgeld Hall 125

Northern Illinois University

DeKalb, Illinois

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:** Arado, Barrett, Bohanon, Books, Creed (for Nyunt), English, McGowan, Palese, Scanlon, Vahabzadeh

**VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:** Atkins, Johnson, Nyunt

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Diggs, Elish-Piper, Valentinier,

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

Faculty Senate (FS) President **B. Creed** called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

#### II. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM

A quorum was verified.

#### III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

**F. Bohanon** moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by **T. Arado**. Motion passed.

#### IV. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 7, 2024, MINUTES

**T. Arado** moved to approve the minutes, seconded by **B. McGowan**. Motion passed.

#### V. PUBLIC COMMENT

#### VI. ITEMS FOR FS-SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

#### VII. NEW BUSINESS

## VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Overview of work within the domain of the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee  
Ben Creed, FS President

Discussion included the following points:

- The FS Social Justice Committee (SJC) operates within NIU's shared governance system.
- The FSSJC's core work includes:
  - Identifying institutional structures which systematically contribute to inequities, create plans or make recommendations to correct these systems, and working with the right bodies on campus to advocate for these changes;
  - Providing guidance to the FS on relevant issues;
  - Coordinating campus-wide conversations.

- B. Continued discussion of priorities for 2024-25 focus

Discussion included the following points:

- Reminder of last month's conversation on this topic, including a strategy for monitoring project progress, stakeholder review of the ad hoc draft report and assessment of societal/organizational changes since the establishment of the FSSJC.
- Key considerations for possible future topics:
  - Does the topic fall in a particular bucket of FSSJC activities?
  - What is the FS(SJC) better situated to do than others on campus?
  - Is the work outcome/action oriented rather than information gathering/problem identification oriented?
- Possible future topics:
  - Supporting updated tenure and promotion system;
  - Learning from all faculty, staff and students about opportunities for improvement;
  - Coordinating speakers, presentations, information for FS meetings;
  - Supporting relevant programming across campus;
  - Leading critical conversations on campus;
  - Crucial Conversations-style forums for discussion;
  - DEI Fest – How does it connect with the Real Talk Conference?
  - Observation that some of these topics are connected.

- Key points of discussion included:
  - Identifying institutional structures is challenging, and often seeing what needs to be seen is not that straightforward.
  - How can a deepening understanding of institutional racism campus-wide be supported?
  - What are we, as an institution, actually willing to do to move the needle?
  - Recognition that many problems go beyond NIU or higher education.
  - The need to identify a way to elevate ongoing conversations.
  - What can be learned from faculty, staff and students who separate from NIU, or employee candidates who decline job offers? How can useful feedback be obtained?
  - Identifying how the work of the FSSJC intersects with the presidential commissions to ensure consistent communication, collaboration and avoiding overlap.
  - Power of having unified voice among FS, presidential commissions and others in pushing issues forward – including development of required training around issues of DEI.
  - Discussion of using panel discussion model to share what has worked well for some departments to ensure search committee processes are effective, have diversity plans and are fair for hiring. Similar efforts are in planning for supporting promotion and tenure changes.
  - Need for NIU, FSSJC and others to include students in conversations and events, need to learn from students and need to focus on student impacts of the work. Messaging to student organization leaders about events, such as the Real Talk Conference, needs to be improved. Students outside of FS aren't aware of social justice activities.
  - If the goal is to improve the student experience in class, how can high-level theoretical discussions grow into hands-on assistance/support to the teachers in the classrooms? Perhaps data from the new student Huskie First survey could be shared to learn about key trends or issues that students experience.

Between this meeting and next, a refined list will be created with opportunity for feedback.

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**F. Bohanon** moved to adjourn, seconded by B. McGowan. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.