

PUBLIC NOTICE AND AGENDA

FACULTY SENATE – SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 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 MARCH 6, 2024, MINUTES – Pages 2-4

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

VI. ITEMS FOR FS-SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

- A. Status report on recommendations in [FS Ad Hoc SJC Draft Report](#)
Executive Summary – Pages 5-8
Ben Creed, FS President

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Updates to proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Bylaws – Pages 9-10
Article 3.5, Social Justice Committee
Ben Creed, FS President
- B. Continued discussion of priorities for 2024-25 focus

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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.

Executive Summary of Faculty Senate Ad-Hoc Social Justice Committee's Draft Report and Recommendations

At its September 30, 2020 meeting, Faculty Senate endorsed and approved a motion establishing an Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee (ADHSJC) composed of 12 members described below. The charge to the Ad Hoc Committee was to “identify factors contributing to institutional racism at NIU, particularly policies, procedures, and practices and take actions to correct them.” This executive summary is based on three subcommittees reports created by the Ad Hoc Committee following the expression of such need by the committee members. The goal for the Ad Hoc Committee to submit a draft report and actionable recommendations to Faculty Senate by March 24, 2021, limited the scope of the work to what could be accomplished during the time available.

Context of the Report

In the aftermath of the summer of 2020 that witnessed nationwide antiracist mobilization sparked by the senseless killing of George Floyd in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Faculty Senate responded to Black students demands calling for prioritizing antiracism efforts and concrete actions to address racism against the Black community at Northern Illinois University (NIU). Because institutional racism creates arduous systemic barriers and social inequities, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, faculty, and staff are disproportionately unable to achieve their full potential as members of NIU and its broader community. Not only are individual academic success, inclusion, and well-being impacted, but the BIPOC community and the university as a whole suffers from loss of talent, knowledge and skills as individuals from BIPOC communities are inhibited from becoming full participants in the life of the university.

Why the Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee (ADHSJC)?

The purpose of the Ad Hoc Committee is to assess and identify current policies, procedures and practices perpetuating institutional racism at NIU and to make actionable recommendations to hold ourselves and our institution accountable to address and eradicate them. The ultimate goal is to confront deep-rooted inequities stemming from institutional biases in policies, procedures, and practices that privileges White and disadvantages BIPOC students, faculty and staff. This objective is central to NIU's ongoing and evolving mission, as set forth in Goal 4 of President Freeman's AY 2021 Presidential Goals outlining "commitment to social justice, equity and inclusion" to "eradicate inequitable practices" for all Huskies. NIU's 2021 Presidential Goals statement has enshrined closing equity gaps as a key priority to eliminate disparate outcomes for all Huskies. These goals offer a way forward and respond to the current calls for social justice initiatives. Those calls are forcing higher education institutions across the nation to re-examine their institutional policies, practices, and procedures. Sustainable solutions to systematic problems can only be reached by moving systematically away from pre-drawn conclusions. It is imperative that Faculty Senate leverage its position as a shared governance body to work with the administration and stakeholder groups to address these issues in a meaningful and sustained way. NIU must move beyond diversity and inclusion to proclaim antiracism as our core value and institutional norm.

The barriers and inequities hindering the success of BIPOC students, staff, and faculty did not emerge overnight and will require collective will to dismantle. Much like other higher institutions in Illinois and across the US, the roots of these barriers and inequities at NIU are inextricably tied to the ideals of White supremacy setup to propagate racist beliefs and values that continue to inform and influence our institutional structures, domains, policies, and

practices. To address these historical and structural foundations of institutional racism encoded in policies, practices and procedures that cause BIPOC students, faculty, and staff's struggles at NIU, the Ad Hoc Committee pursues a collaborative approach to engage our shared governance bodies (Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI), Human Resource (HR), Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity (AAEO), antiracist organizations across campus, and engagement with BIPOC community) to collectively address our problems of institutional racism. This collaborative approach and interactive process is vital to enable the Ad Hoc Committee to address these pressing issues from the current institutional available dataset. The Ad Hoc committee also drew from existing reports and community resources, including prior efforts already undertaken to implement equity, diversity in hiring, tenure, and promotion (HTP) system at NIU as outlined in the 2014 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Report. The Ad Hoc Committee will also ensure that perceptions of our BIPOC faculty are adequately represented in this work moving forward.

Reports of the Subcommittees

Over the course of this 2020-2021 AY, the Ad Hoc Committee worked collectively on a bi-weekly basis to review policies, practices, procedures, identify key issues, and explore the various methods to carry out our charge in greater depth through three subcommittees: (1) Institutional Racism, (2) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and (3) Academic Affairs. Each subcommittee conducted weekly meetings in smaller conversations and reprioritized the key issues within the realm of its focus. While all three subcommittees drew on the current available institutional data, current and existing reports, and quantitative data from focus groups, each subcommittee used additional data, reports, and resources pertinent to its focus within the charge from Faculty Senate.

Key Recommendations

1. The Faculty Senate should create a standing Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee (IR1).
2. The Faculty Senate, in response to the President's First Goal calling for empowerment and shared responsibility, should institute an ongoing critical process to examine the domains of the University, recognize those that reproduce traditional oppressions, and then dismantle them (IR2).
3. The administration should facilitate the development of new kinds of data and new analyses of data to better understand how institutional racism functions at NIU. These new data sets and approaches should support the work of the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee (IR3).
4. The Faculty Senate should work with the administration to set measurable goals towards the alignment of faculty diversity with student body diversity (AA1).
5. The Faculty Senate should work with the administration to create a unified policy document which addresses faculty hiring, tenure and promotion, aligns each component with the others and with university goals, and embeds equity and social justice principles throughout (AA2).
6. The Faculty Senate should work with the administration to develop a University-wide Principles of Inclusivity which encompass NIU's ideals reflecting a culture of belonging, a sense of value, respect, acceptance and encouragement by the entire Huskie community (DEI1).
7. The administration should establish a 5-year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Process (DEI2).
8. The administration should develop a one-page Statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for NIU to be distributed and posted at workspace (DEI3).

Proposed amendment to Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 3.5 Social Justice Committee

The first change in this proposal is focused on representation on the Social Justice Committee. To ensure this committee includes sufficient representation from all constituencies without placing unfair burdens on particular faculty senators, this proposal allows the tenured/tenure track faculty senators from the University Libraries and the College of Law, as well as the clinical faculty representative, to determine if they would like to serve on this committee. Currently, there is only one tenured/tenure-track faculty representative from the University Libraries and the College of Law and one clinical faculty representative, which can lead to these members being overburdened by various Faculty Senate committee requirements.

The second change is to clarify language in 3.5.2.1 so the language is aligned with how actions take place within shared governance and to add a specific item (3.5.2.6) which clarifies that the five-year reviews are summative, not penultimate. These changes were made due to feedback received after the first reading.

Changes from first reading are highlighted in yellow.

ARTICLE 3: STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE FACULTY SENATE

3.5 Social Justice Committee

3.5.1 Composition

The membership of the committee shall be Faculty Senate members appointed by the president of the Faculty Senate and approved by the Faculty Senate. One ~~faculty senator~~ ~~tenured/tenure track faculty member~~ will be appointed to the committee to represent each of the Colleges of Business, Education, Engineering and Engineering Technology, Health and Human Sciences, Liberal Arts and Sciences and Visual and Performing Arts, ~~as well as University Libraries and the College of Law.~~ A tenured/tenure track faculty member representing the College of Law and a tenured/tenure track faculty member representing University Libraries may be appointed upon their expression of interest in service on the committee. A faculty senator representing clinical faculty may be appointed upon their expression of interest in service on the committee. ~~A committee chair will be appointed from the tenured and tenure track faculty members.~~ In addition, one student, one instructor, one operating staff member, and one supportive professional staff member serving on Faculty Senate will also be appointed. A committee chair will be appointed from the tenured/tenure track faculty members.

3.5.2 Duties

The committee shall be a primary voice of tenured and tenure track faculty and advise the Faculty Senate on matters and issues to include:

3.5.2.1 Identify the intersecting structures contributing to racism, sexism, classism, ageism, transphobia, homophobia and ableism at NIU, particularly within policies, procedures and practices; and create strategic plans and take actions to correct them ~~with approval of Faculty Senate~~ operating within appropriate shared governance procedures. All substantive policy recommendations are subject to Faculty Senate Approval Evaluate progress on an annual basis with penultimate reviews every five years.

3.5.2.2 Coordinate and communicate with other campus entities to pursue social justice initiatives.

3.5.2.3 Report to Faculty Senate and provide guidance and input on issues related to institutional racism, diversity, equity and inclusion.

3.5.2.4 Facilitate discussions on social justice issues and community engagement for faculty, staff and students.

3.5.2.5 Work with relevant units/committees to strengthen anti-racism and social justice curriculum at NIU.

3.5.2.6 Evaluate progress on an annual basis with summative reviews every five years.