

Minutes

Ethnic Diversity Committee Meeting (EDC)

Meeting #1 August 27, 2020

In attendance: Tom, Carlos, Craig, Gabriel, Charles, Sneha, Kemi.

1. **Welcome to our new members!** Dr. Sneha Thamocharan, from the Department of Psychology, and Dr. Kemi Ajayi, from the Business School, are joining our committee. We're very glad to have their experience and perspective added to our own!

2. **"Purple Ink" Protocol**

The Denver Post recently described CU's attempt to stifle speech on a range of topics including COVID19 Science, Health Insurance, DACA, Climate Change, Academic Freedom, LGBTQ+ and "Race Relations." This protocol mandates a "measured," "evenhanded," and "purple ink" approach to communication that "cascades" down to "colleges, schools, units, etc." and requires the President's Office be notified of a campus communication on such issues 24-48 hours in advance of dissemination. The administration's claim that this does not impact faculty is misleading at best, given that the protocol regulates the speech of our academic leaders and given its intent that this approach "cascade" to "colleges, schools, units, etc."

- Faculty Council has notified President Mark Kennedy, Chief Diversity Officer Theodosia Cook, Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Lightner, and Vice President for University Communication Ken McConnellogue, by email, that they reject any attempt by the President's Office to suppress the speech of colleges, schools, and units as well as individual faculty, staff, students, and administrators. As a consequence, they ask that this protocol be rescinded (a copy of this email will be forwarded along with this agenda).
 - A few committee members express the recoil effect this measure is having on all four campuses and how this is not the first time we have gone through this.
 - President Kennedy has tried this before in his previous post in ND and it did not work so some believe he is trying to implement this same practice here throughout the CU System.
 - This issue is about a violation of faculty's academic freedom.
 - ***Should EDC support Faculty Council in this effort?***
 - ***Carlos motions to support this letter, Craig seconds, all in favor.***
3. **Chancellor Mark's "Commitments for Action" on Diversity and Inclusion.**
Chancellor Marks has committed to the following actions over the course of the 2020-21 academic year, as regards issues of equity and eliminating racism and injustice: <https://www.ucdenver.edu/about/leadership/chancellor/equity-and-racial-justice/commitments-for-action>. Per the Chancellor, these steps will allow CU

Denver to set a cultural tone and to move forward toward becoming an even more socially and racially just academic institution. They are intended to complement programs and activities of this nature that are already in place. Some of the actions are slated for early fall and others will take longer to implement, but the Chancellor expects they will have a cumulative effect, and taken together, evolve CU Denver toward a better, more equitable future for all.

- One of these actions, to be completed by the Chancellor by Sept 30, 2020, is as follows: “I will relaunch a national search for the next vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion by mid-August. Currently the role reports to the provost and supports both CU Denver and the CU Anschutz Medical Campus. However, after discussing with Chancellor Elliman and Provost Nairn how we can best drive meaningful change and accomplish ambitious goals on both campuses, we have concluded that each campus needs focused leadership on this issue. At CU Denver the position will report directly to the chancellor and will have *equity* added to the title: Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).
- Should we invite the Chancellor to meet with us, regarding the above action and the others indicated, given their exceptional relevance to EDC’s work?
- The committee agrees that we should have Chancellor Marks participate in one of our upcoming meetings, it was also suggested that someone from this EDC could become a member of the search committee for the vice chancellor for diversity and inclusion position. We have committee members who would gladly volunteer.
- We will draft a list of questions from the committee members to share with the Chancellor.
- We need to discuss the involvement of this committee in helping fulfill these goals set by the Chancellor plus a faculty representation factor.

4. Availability of Laptops and Internet Access for Students

A quick update on our and the Faculty Assembly’s resolution to the Chancellor regarding the lack of laptops and internet access for a significant number of our students (a copy of this resolution will be forwarded along with this agenda).

- After receiving our resolution, the Chancellor forwarded it to Erika Larson, Executive Director of Student Success Initiatives (SSI) at the Provost’s Office. SSI has been serving as the main point of contact for students that are in need of laptops and internet access, and they will continue to do so throughout the fall. They will provide either a laptop, or “direct students to the resources most applicable to their situation.” Between them, the Auraria Library, and CLAS, there are 132 laptops and 27 hot-spots available for students to check out or borrow on campus. At present, our students are eligible for 2 months of free internet access through Comcast and Spectrum, though there is some indication this may be extended to one year.
- On July 9, 2020, Tom emailed Erika asking how her office is determining the technological needs of our students, and what internal and external resources

they might be using to supply those needs? He also asked what efforts they were undertaking, if any, to build partnerships with one or more computer manufacturers; with Comcast, Spectrum and/or other internet service providers; and/or to request grant funding or charitable contributions (as mentioned in our resolution)? Lastly, he asked if EDC or the Faculty Assembly Executive Committee could be of any assistance to them with these efforts, and if so, in what way? Erika never responded to this email, despite Tom's repeated attempts to contact her. Tom will continue to reach out to her, and if need be, to the Chancellor.

- Tom met with Michelle Larson-Krieg, on Staff Council, to ask that they support our resolution. They will consider doing so at a future meeting. Michelle told Tom that she had been in touch with Erika, and was convinced that SSI was doing everything they could to acquire laptops and internet access for all students who need them.
- We will contact the different representatives of the student resource offices to see if they have new resources available or if they know of any new programs available to our students.

5. Other

- a. When meeting Chancellor Marks other committee can be present or we can share information with these other committees.
- b. Sneha wanted to know the status of our previous committee statement (drafted and sent during this past summer) and was wondering if any new status/statement was issued. Tom had yet to hear any news in relation to this statement.
- c. Sneha voiced her idea of making it a committee goal to collaborate and support the Ethnic Studies Department in every way we can, which we all agree with and will continue to do so.