

**CU Denver DDC FA LGBTQ+ Committee**  
*Meeting Minutes December 11, 2020*

Present: Katy Mohrman, Dale Stahl, Nicky Beer, Nate Thompson, Shea Swauger, Rachel Gross, Ryan Brown, Robert Allan, Mia Fischer

Guests: Mark Rabideau, Assoc Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs CAM; Katie Leonard, special advisor and artist/activist in residence CAM

**Agenda**

1. Explain our committee's goals and what we want to do (pilot a training of some kind for all instructors re: gender expression and inclusion)
2. Learn from Mark and Katie what kinds of trainings they think would work for CAM, i.e., what models have they found workable and effective? Individual? By program? Online or in person? Etc.
3. General discussion of how to try out a pilot (if they're interested in partnering with us) with plans to collect data about effectiveness and scale up.

**Minutes**

1. Updates from Katy about a) gender identity how to guide, both for students and faculty; goal ready for Spring semester; share with committee for distribution; and b) Jacob McWilliams put in his notice, will be gone early January; fears that this might be used to dissolve the Women and Gender Center through unilateral decision by VCDI.
  - a. Ryan: would it make sense to start advocacy now?
  - b. Decision to craft a letter showing appreciation for Jacob's work and the importance of the Center
2. Discussion of potential partnership with CAM on Trainings and what CAM has been doing to address DEI
  - a. Welcome from Mark Rabideau: relatively new to CU Denver, still in Louisville, KY; CAM leadership is examining its policies, practices, priorities in regard to DEI and re-envisioning CAM as a welcoming space; task force committee led by Katie Leonard. Some of the things they are working on: syllabus-wide DEI statements and availability of resources on campus; cluster-higher strategy with DEI at the head: scholarship/teaching with focus on critical race, queer/trans, women and gender studies; pay equity and new requirements for lecturers (70% of workforce in CAM) to make sure they have a set of shared values. So trainings and what our committee is working on is very timely; ways to celebrate/reward faculty who are doing extraordinary DEI work.
  - b. Katie Leonard: Denver native; background in municipal politics and local Denver activist. Was brought in as external specialist, excited to be doing this work.
  - c. Dale: summary of what the committee has been doing in terms of how people inhabit spaces on campus with bathroom access, access to sanitary products etc. Moving to student-faculty relationships with some of the negative experiences. University systems and their opaqueness regarding prioritizing pronoun and name sharing, changing those in various systems. Different systems with different

trainings in Skill Soft which make it easier to ignore these things. Knowing best practices and part of the culture/belonging on campus. Took it to Faculty Assembly and concerns around “mandatory.” Trying to do something different than just a Skillssoft training. Engage with a college that’s interested in doing this type of work, promoting it, accountability, attaching it to pay/merit.

- d. Katy adds: imaging these trainings not as a one-off but in conversation with a multitude of other issues, e.g. race/ethnicity issues
- e. Nate: question for Mark how to entice reluctant faculty or those who don’t think it’s important to attend and why it matters?
  - i. Mark: culture-building; CETEL offering workshops for innovative teaching and no one wanted to engage; carrots and sticks; tie it to lecturers and tied to financial incentive/merit pay. Two different kinds of workshop: for faculty and one for students (what can students expect from faculty)  
Katie: when doing anti-oppression work there are two types of groups: understanding (open and willing to learn) and then to put it into practice; measurable ways of shifting culture. Other folks who think it’s tangential and “extra” – asks us to think carefully about who is our audience.  
Shea: mistake to cater to the least common denominator; cater to folks who have power and cater to their feelings. How to continue the conversation and how to move into more useful, fruitful advocacy, we’ve tried this for two decades. When you are doing anti-racism work with white folks, focus on whiteness; when we are having conversations about LGBTQ people, we need to ask straights to interrogate their heteronormativity  
Katie: recommends Marilyn Frye “On Sexism” as a good jumping off point on heterosexuality; how to bring those who are interested along or don’t bring them along  
Nate: to grapple with Shea’s point how do we change the power structure if it doesn’t matter or we don’t want to engage them? Questioning of straightness, whiteness, maleness can be scary. How to square the circle?  
Shea: I don’t have space for that discomfort because it causes violence; how to move them along: I have the security to be loud and has allowed others to speak up when they are not comfortable to do so.  
Katy: I’m in the privileged position I have to do this work and we have someone in power here so if we have sticks we need to use them  
Mia: Echo, faculty is important to get buy-in and use higher-ups with sticks.
  - ii. Dale: Liked the point about what students can expect, how to evaluate a good teacher and faculty knowing this is what good pedagogy is  
Nicky: making those experiences more “visible” to higher-ups; minimizing pain and suffering; suicide and health risks; but in a way that’s not threatening or exploitative to our students  
Mark: I need to set-up standards and bars where expectations are met or not met; note of caution regarding ageism and complexities of identities with different journeys; common denominator are students: you do in one way or the other care about students, so how can we empower students

Katie L: importance of setting parameters around our own work and doing different work; calling people in; short-term versus long-term; reform versus transform; policy and culture; carrots and sticks are not going to change culture.

Storytelling and narrative making a shortfilm about the EDI work is doing and use it to build out.

3. Summary and Synthesis of meeting:

1. finalize how-to guides and distribute them
2. talk with Mark more about his vision for CAM the lecturer pilot Dale will connect with Katie L about the film project
3. reach out to Student Government for their input and invite to February meeting (Mia will email Daniel Casillas, SGA president)
  - a) Ryan: how to involve students, how much weight to put on them, share stories and student government can give additional weight; not all faculty care about students but we care about their dollars
  - b) Mark: sending out culture climate survey to students which will hopefully give us powerful data; wants to partner with us on the pilot for sure for Fall.

Meeting adjourned: 12.03pm

Katie Leonard also left these comments in the chat for committee:

Katie Leonard (she/they) to [Everyone](#) 12:01 |

Some key terms: Short term // Long term.  
Reform // Transform. Policy // Culture.

Reform in this case sounds a lot like damage control (we call it harm reduction). I.e. protecting your students' well being by incentivizing/requiring (policy change) that administration learns and uses that learning (puts it into practice). This can happen quickly. This will not transform culture (culture has always driven oppression.) In order to transform harm in a way that makes future harm impossible, you must change the culture. I.e. ensuring that future administration come equipped with learning and practices that align with your (our) core values.