Overview of EDC operations in the 2016-2017 Academic Year

The EDC Committee had 9 full committee meetings during the year. Given the quantity of business, numerous task forces were created; these groups met outside of formal committee meetings. In addition to committee members, other interested persons were invited to participate (but not vote) in EDC committee meetings and task forces. The Committee Chair’s budget was used to provide working lunches for committee meetings.

Highlights of the EDC’s accomplishments in the 2016-2017 Academic Year

1) The Chair and Vice-Chair spent time in the early fall meeting with members of the university community who were newly appointed to positions that support diversity initiatives on campus, including the new Director of the Office of Institutional Equity, new Director of the Latino Cultural Center, and new Director of the Asian American and Asian Resource and Cultural Center. One output of these lunches was a (granted) request to the Steering Committee to invite Cultural Center directors to present to the full Senate about their work.

2) Throughout the year, the committee discussed the dissolution of health benefits for same sex and domestic partners at Purdue. The EDC learned that the IU Faculty Senate passed a resolution that the EDC will look at in the next academic year. The committee also got information about what other Big 10 universities are doing. This conversation is being framed as: “Purdue recruitment and retention for the best faculty and staff meeting the changing needs of a diverse campus community and allowing Purdue to remain competitive in the hiring market.” In the 2016-2017 year, this task force will work on a presentation to Human Resources as a first step to resolving this issue.

3) Senate Document 15-19: Enhancing Faculty Recruitment and Retention was strengthened at the beginning of the year to also address staff recruitment and retention (although the title remained unchanged). This resolution was brought to a full Senate vote in the Fall of 2016. The committee then spent time discussing the implementation of this resolution, including sending a letter to all Deans at Purdue asking for information about diversity committees. This work will continue into the next academic year.

4) Senate Document 15-11-Amended: Recommendations for Interpreting the Board of Trustees’ Statement on Freedom of Expression was passed in the 2015-2016 year. Work on implementing this resolution took place in the 2016-2017 year:
   a. A task force of the committee worked over the summer of 2016 to help develop and participate in a module for Boiler Gold Rush on freedom of expression. This is one of the first presentations of this type in the country. Plans were made to evaluate this module in 2017.
b. An email template was developed to send to university leadership when it seemed appropriate for university leadership to use their freedom of expression to speak out against hateful acts on campus. Subsequently, Linda Prokopy (Chair) sent numerous emails to the President and Provost over the course of the year asking them to speak out against fascist flyers that appeared on campus. Linda Prokopy also met with President Daniels and his Chief of Staff to discuss what the committee would like to see in terms of strong leadership from administration on these issues.

c. The EDC talked to Steve Schultz about freedom of expression for staff.

5) Resolution 16-02 to update Senate bylaws to change the structure of committee leadership was written by the EDC and passed by the Senate. At the same time, gendered language was removed from the committee section of the Senate bylaws.

6) Resolution 16-01: Value of Immigrants, International Students, Scholars and Visitors to Purdue and Community was written by the EDC and passed by the full Senate. This was a strong show of support to the university community.

7) The EDC provided feedback to the Faculty Affairs Committee on Resolution 16-05 to help remove biased teaching evaluation scores.

8) The EDC discussed a Dear Colleague letter from the Department of Education regarding transgender students. This led to discussions with Residence Life to ensure transgender students were being treated fairly.

9) The EDC spent time discussing Purdue’s retraction of promises made in anticipation of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Initially the committee passed a motion asking the university to honor its original commitments regarding salary raises. Ultimately, however, through discussions with APSAC, the EDC did not pursue this issue.

10) The EDC heard presentations about the work of the Disability Resources Center (DRC) and the Center for Instructional Excellence. A request was sent to the Steering Committee to ask that Randall Ward from the DRC be invited to speak to the full Senate in the fall.

11) The EDC initiated conversations about how well the transition from a standalone Chief Diversity Officer into the operations of the Provost position was working. Outcomes of this work were:
   a. Metrics need to be developed to see how well diversity and inclusion efforts are progressing at Purdue. Statistics about recruitment and retention are already being collected but it is imperative that a campus wide climate survey be conducted every few years. Linda Prokopy, Kip Williams, and Alberto Rodriguez met with Provost Dutta and incoming Interim Provost Akridge and stressed this need at the end of the Academic Year. This issue will be pursued in 2017-2018.
   b. The EDC has requested a permanent seat on the Provost’s Advisory Committee on Diversity.

12) The EDC explored how opportunity hires work at Purdue and learned that the program, which has existed for 4-5 years, has not yet been reviewed. This conversation will continue in the fall with information provided from the Provost’s office.

13) The EDC discussed the need for dialog circles to provide space for people to have open discussions. The Associate Dean of Engineering is moving forward with a campus wide initiative that the committee will support however needed.