

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

December 12, 2018

In attendance:

Vielka Asia	Rebecca Ginnetti	Emily Manes
Mena Burke	James Greene	Maxine McLeod Miller
Sandra Buteau	Nicole Guagenti	Silvia Moore
Jen Cort	Malaika Hill	Kim O'Neil
Tinelle Davies	Brent Hinrichs	Andrea Weiss
Amaya Franklin	Sara King	Crystal Willis
Darcy Franz	Rose Landa	

Andrea opened the meeting at 8:10 am and referred to the agenda for an overview of meeting topics.

Welcome and Introductions

Introductions were made by everyone around the room. Andrea identified Silvia Moore and Tinelle Davies as the Chairs of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Faculty Committee.

Mission Acknowledgement

The mission statement for the Committee will remain the same.

Congressional School's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, in partnership with the broader Congressional community – past, present, and future – continuously strives to recognize, respect, engage, and celebrate the individual differences and identities represented in our community.

We seek to advance diversity of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical ability, or any other distinguishing feature through the recruitment and support of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and Trustees representing diverse identities."

Open Spaces and Daily Diversity

Andrea reported that Amaya Franklin, Silvia Moore and Emily Manes just returned from the NAIS People of Color Conference and will do a facilitated presentation, similar to what they experienced, at the next meeting.

Andrea discussed the Faculty Committee and their discussion around how to move this Committee forward to do the hard work for the school. Do we want to advertise the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee meetings to make them visible and leave it open to whoever wants to participate? Should we establish a set of working groups where the actual work will get done? How do we feel about reorganizing in this way? A potential list of working groups would include:

- Student Experience
- Cultural Competency and Curriculum
- Recruiting and Retention
- Parent Support and Awareness

Discussion around establishing working groups ensued. Rose raised the question on how much influence the working groups would have, specifically the Cultural Competency and Curriculum working group. Andrea responded that the academic team (Andrea Weiss, Brent Hinrichs and Kim O'Neil) would see this as input and they would absolutely have an impact. Emily Manes added that it was important to train the teachers and give them the professional development they need to be confident to present this information and have conversations with students in a culturally competent, respectful manner. Brent concluded that the curriculum is always evolving and while it is not renewed every year, it is constantly being looked at in ways to enhance and improve.

Sandra reported that it was important to have an explanation on each of the working groups so that people may understand where they fit within those groups.

Further discussion was had around opening the Committee to others. It was mentioned that it is important to open it up and put forward what people have done as the more information we provide and can get out, the healthier the situation. Andrea responded by saying she would talk to Alyce Penn on how to get this communication out on a regular basis about the Committee.

Amaya questioned the Committee on the objective for the next meeting. The Committee concluded that they would like to have hot topics to facilitate at the next meeting. Perhaps open spaces, look at what the Committee has done in the past, etc.

Darcy commented on the fact that Congressional School did not have a student counselor two years ago but now have Rebecca Ginnetti and asked whether that was because some of the topics that are being discussed today have come up with her and her students. Darcy commented on the fact that Congressional School did not have a student counselor two years ago but now has Rebecca Ginnetti. She asked whether or not that was because of some of the topics that were being discussed today

Rebecca responded that thus far she hasn't engaged specifically in any of these conversations but generally about how people are treating each other and what they are feeling safe/unsafe about. She stated she recently received her Masters from George Mason University and feels this is an area she is equipped to have conversations about. Brent added that the school felt like it needed to go in the direction to add a counselor as we'd eventually need it.

Andrea introduced Jen Cort, who she asked to come to talk to the Committee about the current state and to help facilitate the conversation.

Jen Cort introduced herself and discussed the following:

- Congressional School has the framework pieces that are needed to build in an intentional way
- The vertical lines are all the things that need to be talked about (gender, identity, race, religion, sexual orientation)—all the social identifiers. These are the things the school wants to grow.
- The horizontal lines are all the things everyone needs to focus on all the time, the implicit bias. These need to be worked on all the time and is more about the how.
- Think about how you scope and sequence these conversations to both young and older children. Teach kids to ask questions. Get teachers to feel comfortable wondering with them.
- Congressional has the desire, the program, the engagement of people and the understanding that there is so much work to be done.

- In her experience, the biggest hurdle is typically the parents. Need to be thinking about how we bring parents into these conversations.

Rose raised the question to Jen about getting resistance from parents. Jen responded that typically, at parent forums, some will say their kids are too young to have these conversations. She responds saying anyone can have these discussions in a developmentally appropriate way. A lot of this has to deal with the parents' own discomfort. Helping parents to see that these conversations are necessary and having a skillset around these conversations is necessary.

Kim stated that she and Andrea recently went to NPS and spoke to Rosetta Lee who is another person that is incredible in this space. One thing she mentioned was that years ago no one talked about race if and if you did then you were racist. Now if you don't talk about it, you are racist. We went from one to the other without any education and now people are uncomfortable about it. Ask questions, sometimes children say things they don't mean. We as educators need to stop and ask questions to understand because maybe what we hear is not what they meant. There is a lot of work to be done, the education piece for faculty and staff is a huge piece, such as putting money towards professional development, reading different books, working with Jen, putting them in those open spaces.

Training for the Committee

Andrea proposed at the next meeting that the Committee does some training so that everyone can continue to open up to one another, continue to ask what does an open/safe place mean and start to do some work around these various areas. The Committee is going to be the leaders in the school to be able to start to have these conversations in a meaningful way, whether at a birthday party, faculty meeting, wherever, we are representing different constituencies that we call the community of the school.

The Committee was in agreement that the next meeting would be training.

Closing comments ensued and included:

- The big Committee would meet at least once a month to not lose momentum. Sara will send out a doodle to find dates that work for next month. It will be up to the working groups to decide how often they want to meet.
- The working group list is not definitive but information around each of them will be sent out.
- Each Committee member to pick 3 of the resources and spend some time on them. Sara will send them out with links.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 am.