

## **Faculty Minority Affairs Committee (FMAC) meeting minutes**

When: 9-10:30am, Friday, December 4, 2020

Where: Microsoft Teams

**Attendance:** Stephen Cho Suh, Kimbra Smith, Deborah Pina-Thomas, Anthony Cordova, Esther Lamidi, David Kocsis, Heather Albanesi, Julie Torres, Tre Wentling, Ilaheva Tuaeone, Suhaan Mehta, Jesse Perez, Melanie Fields, Chris Bell, Emily Skop, Federico Martinez Garcia, Edin Mujkic, Carlos Duarte, Sandy Ho, Larry, Eames, Venkat Reddy, Tom Christensen

### Minutes

1. Welcome [9:00-9:05]
2. Reviewed and approved October meeting minutes [9:05-9:10]
3. Announcements [9:10-9:15]
  - a. Stephen Suh: The Scribe is seeking faculty participants for an editorial on the pandemic and mental health. A call for participants letter from the Scribe will be distributed through the email list.
4. Chat with Chancellor Venkat Reddy and Provost Tom Christensen about issues concerning hiring and retention, faculty morale, and equity/diversity/inclusion [9:15-10:10]
  - a. Stephen Suh begins by welcoming Chancellor Reddy and Provost Christensen. Explains how the impetus for this meeting stemmed from questions and concerns about Andrea Herrera's termination from her position as Associate Vice Chancellor of EDI. Reiterates that the goal of the meeting is to "discuss if not address larger concerns and issues related to campus climate and morale at UCCS, in general, and to the hiring and retention of minoritized faculty staff, in particular."
  - b. Stephen Suh suggests using the talking points memo drafted by himself, Kimbra Smith, Gia Barboza, Heather Albanesi, and Chris bell, as the foundation for the discussion.
  - c. Chancellor Reddy responds with "opening comments." Stresses the importance of multi-level approach to addressing EDI issues at UCCS. Explains that a more transparent and systematic approach is needed in hiring and retaining diverse faculty. This is one of the reasons why HR was moved under the Chancellor's office, and also why HR has undergone substantive changes to its structure and vision over the past year. Chancellor Reddy believes that HR will be even more instrumental to the hiring and retaining of diverse faculty moving forward, and thus encourages FMAC to invite them into a future meeting.
  - d. Chris Bell and other FMAC members raise questions about the AVCEDI position and proposed national search. Bell and others urge Chancellor Reddy to postpone the national search for as long as UCCS employees are being furloughed. "It is a bad look." Chancellor Reddy responds that he intends to keep it a national search but is open to the idea of postponing the search to later in 2021. His desire is to elevate the chief EDI position and office and feels that a national search is warranted. Kimbra Smith adds that it might make sense to have the AVCEDI position report to multiple channels, not only the Chancellor's office. Sandy Ho suggests elevating the AVCEDI position even during the interim as a "practice run" to see what works and what needs further modification for when new AVCEDI is hired

- e. Stephen Suh raises the need to pay attention not only to the “front-end” of the hiring/retention process, but also the back end. Asks why there isn’t a Diversity Champion type figure for when faculty leave UCCS. Chris Bell adds: What accountability exists for departments and faculty who bully their colleagues/faculty? Provost Christensen remarks that addressing workplace bullying and toxic work environments is difficult because “people don’t tend to come forward,” and because there are few mechanisms in place to keep people accountable for their actions. Chancellor Reddy agrees that more mechanisms are needed to hold people accountable. Reddy laments that the Diversity Champion figure is a symptom of a larger problem and that UCCS needs to move away from simply “checking boxes” as they pertain to EDI. Agrees that the Diversity Champion figure will need to be reevaluated by HR.
  - f. Heather Albanesi asks how much of this conversation, if any, also applies to staff. Chancellor Reddy remarks that it is difficult to implement comparable measures and protections for staff because they are defined as “at will” employees by CU and the state of CO.
  - g. Melanie Fields suggests that UCCS check in with faculty regularly with surveys or the like. Chancellor Reddy agrees that more mechanisms, such as mentoring and campus climate surveys, are needed, especially for the retention of new faculty. Hopes that some of the funding from the President’s office can be used toward these initiatives.
  - h. Stephen Suh asks what types of long-term funds are available for EDI initiatives at UCCS beyond these one-time funds. Chancellor Reddy responds by stating that while money is tight, it is about making priorities. EDI is a priority.
  - i. Chancellor Reddy concludes that it is important that various functions of the University “work together” in order to “build good practices.”
5. Reviewed and voted to co-sign “X Gender Marker Letter” authored by Faculty PRIDE [10:10-10:20]
- a. Faculty PRIDE liaison and co-author of the letter briefly introduces the initiative’s goals and next steps.
6. Potential leadership changes for 2021 [10:20-10:30]
- a. Co-chair, Edin Mujkic is on sabbatical during the 2021-22 academic year. Because current chair, Stephen Suh’s tenure as chair ends in Spring 2021, FMAC will need someone to step into the co-chair role as soon as possible.
  - b. Stephen Suh suggests someone new step into the co-chair position so that they may “shadow” the chair for at least one semester. Nominations are encouraged.