

CONTEXT

Regarding the Resolution on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at PSU

At Portland State University, we are facing a number of challenges and problems regarding the diversity, equity, and inclusion of underrepresented groups and individuals. As PSU faces a time frame of budgetary constraint, these challenges and concerns become exacerbated.

The Faculty Senate Steering Committee initiated a series of conversations with the Faculty (via the special meeting that we conducted in November, Faculty Senate, and conversations in other contexts) as well as with other members of faculty, staff, student, and community groups, including and not limited to: our Interim Vice President for Global Diversity and Inclusion, the Director and Chairs of the School of Gender Race and Nations (SGRN), the President of the Student Body (ASPSU), the Diversity Action Council, and Presidential Fellows working on equity and campus climate issues.

Some of the themes arising from these conversations are:

- Real changes and investments need to be made for underrepresented students, faculty, and staff to feel included and supported at PSU. We need to go beyond the webpage/brochure/poster in our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts. If we say we value DEI, we also need to show it.
- The School of Gender, Race, and Nations (SGRN) plays a fundamental role in helping us examine and understand the DEI challenges that our communities face. As such, the school is of strategic importance to PSU and merits strategic investment to ensure its success. That said, DEI responsibilities cannot be placed solely on their shoulders. DEI is everyone's responsibility and must be fostered at the different levels and contexts of the university (institutional, curricular, departmental, etc.).
- Underrepresented students, faculty, and staff are distributed across campus and face multiple challenges (lack of support, bias, microaggressions, etc.). Administrators need to help our underrepresented PSU population to deal with the problems they encounter. Underrepresented individuals need to be listened to and their problems considered seriously and addressed effectively.
- The nuances and complexities of DEI challenges as experienced by underrepresented students, faculty, and staff on campus need to be examined. These include the convergence/intersection of multiple underrepresented identities in individuals such as gender, race, national/immigration status, etc.) and the specific challenges that these intersections bring when there is a lack of understanding and support of these identities and circumstances.
- DEI is crucial for student success; a lack of support for DEI undermines our student success efforts.
- Long term planning is needed along with more immediate solutions. We need to strategically ponder where we want and need our campus to be 10, 20, 30 years from now in terms of DEI, to be able to adequately serve our students and our Portland, Oregon, national, and international communities. We need to start investing now in balancing our current, and creating our future, DEI landscape.

- If we are serious about institutionally facing our DEI challenges, DEI must be a central element/pillar in the shaping of our new budget model.
- Financial investment is necessary; we need to replace our lost underrepresented faculty and also invest in tenure lines, necessary to bring long-term development to our DEI efforts. We also need to invest fully in cluster hires.
- Balancing our diversity landscape constitutes a real return of our investments. Students expect a healthy DEI environment and will come to PSU if we are able to meet their expectations. They want to feel represented and reflected in PSU's faculty and staff and they want to feel visible and supported in an environment that fosters their sense of belonging.
- The current culture of externally hired "temporary" administrators, who often do not remain at our institution for a period longer than 5 years, also undermines our DEI efforts. Administrators often come with signature projects and/or commission reports from task forces whose recommendations are not implemented. Faculty and staff put their energy and time in creating these reports and recommendations, which often do not go anywhere after administrators leave. We do need continuity of DEI projects and efforts within a context of continuity of leadership.
- DEI values need to be reflected in evaluations and reviews, not only student evaluations of faculty but also in evaluations of administrators, and P&T criteria. We currently do not have a consistent way of conducting evaluations of chairs, deans and higher-level administrators in connection to DEI. The ability to assess ourselves is key; evaluations and annual reporting are needed to benchmark our progress and hold ourselves accountable.
- Effective faculty, staff, and student training on DEI needs to be implemented consistently across campus.
- Exit interviews need to be consistently carried out in order to examine and address the reasons why our underrepresented faculty is leaving PSU (this piece of data has been missing).
- Both quantitative and qualitative data need to be integrated for us to have a cohesive and wide sense of our DEI challenges and problems and to be able to effectively address them.

In addition to these DEI conversations that the Faculty Senate Steering Committee has held with constituents (including faculty, staff, students, administrators, and also non PSU affiliated community members), the Faculty Senate Steering Committee and the Diversity Action Council requested data from our institution to try to understand the issues that we are facing regarding underrepresented faculty hiring and retention, in order to identify existing patterns and more fully understand our equity, diversity and inclusion situation. The Faculty Steering Committee continues to collaborate with relevant campus groups in looking at, integrating, and contrasting the data that is being made available to us, as well as conducting conversations within the context of DEI long-term efforts.

The present resolution on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at PSU is designed to call for attention and action regarding the DEI issues that our institution faces.

FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION
REGARDING PSU'S DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ISSUES

WHEREAS a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment is fundamental for the optimal functioning of our university and a diverse faculty, staff, and administrative body is necessary to serve our increasingly diverse student body as well as the Portland, Oregon, and our global community

WHEREAS PSU's underrepresented students, faculty, and staff face challenges and problems that need to be effectively addressed

WHEREAS PSU continues to lose underrepresented faculty and staff at an alarming rate across campus

WHEREAS the future students to Portland State University are likely to be from underrepresented communities

WHEREAS departments and programs in the School of Gender, Race and Nations are of strategic importance to PSU's mission and need strategic investments in order to better advocate for historically under-served populations crucial to Oregon's success

WHEREAS diversity, equity, and inclusion are everyone's responsibility and needs to be fostered across campus at all the different levels of our institutional organization

And WHEREAS Faculty Senate is currently working on closely examining PSU's diversity, equity, and inclusion problem and issuing recommendations

Faculty Senate, as the representative of the Faculty, RESOLVES that PSU's administration

- a) In partnership with the relevant constituents, develop and present to the Faculty as soon as possible an updated plan with short and long term strategies to support underrepresented faculty and staff, and remedy PSU's diversity, equity, and inclusion problem to adequately serve our students, faculty, staff, and communities, including a protocol for its implementation.
- b) Take urgent action regarding the unsustainable situation and needs of the departments and programs of the School of Gender, Race and Nations.