Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday October 17, 2018 3pm-430pm  
Location: University Center Room 332/333


Old Business:

Approve September 2018 Minutes:
- [https://umt.box.com/s/owmqamumzec4u0f9go449k07sbn4ctk1](https://umt.box.com/s/owmqamumzec4u0f9go449k07sbn4ctk1)
  - Morgan Allwell motioned to approve minutes
  - Larry Abrahamson seconded approving minutes
  - All present voted to approve the minutes for posting

New Business:

- DAC members introductions
- Discussion on draft of diversity content in President Bodnar’s five priorities for action
  - DAC Staff Co-Chair presented a draft for feedback ([https://umt.box.com/s/4nx44eq1otgnbi4xobigq6vgtaniukam](https://umt.box.com/s/4nx44eq1otgnbi4xobigq6vgtaniukam)).
  - DAC Treasurer is taking notes on this discussion in the UMBox document ([https://umt.app.box.com/file/342578150062](https://umt.app.box.com/file/342578150062)).
  - Each sub-committee assigned by President Bodnar will begin assessing the Priorities for Action by the end of January.
  - The discussion focused on narrowing down the measurable steps into a smaller number of achievable items.
  - Focus on various types of diversity.
  - Developing both short and long-term goals.
  - Discussion of DAC’s role as one of many task groups developing measurable items for each priority area.
  - Goal to make most items broad enough that each units can adapt them to fit their context.
  - Dialogue about the format of the suggested items (such as adding a third tier of action items with specific measurable steps).
  - Goal to have DAC members provide feedback by Monday October 22, 2018 to UMBox.
• A small working group of comprised of DAC Executive Council and other volunteers will continue working on recommendations (Laurie, Adrianne, Jill, Hailey, Eliot, Jordynn, Amanda, and Larry).

- Website Feedback
  • The diversity website edits are still in progress (see http://staging.umt.edu/diversity-sandbox/default.php).
  • The primary target audience is students, then staff and faculty.
  • Send comments to DAC Co-Secretary (Hailey) or Treasurer (Adrianne) who are working with the University Center Marketing team on the website.
  • Faculty please provide sample syllabus diversity statements, diversity course evaluation questions added by departments, and any other relevant content for the Academics and Curriculum section of the page that requires faculty input. If you do not have these developed yet, please consider developing these individually or forming a faculty work group to help develop the page. Past administration encouraged many examples from different perspectives that faculty can use as examples in drafting their own statements.
    ▪ University Class Attendance/Absence Policy: Students are expected to attend all class meetings and complete all assignments in which they are enrolled. Instructors are encouraged to notify advisors or the appropriate administrators regarding students with excessive unexcused absences. Instructors may excuse brief and occasional absences for reasons of illness, injury, family emergency, religious observance, cultural or ceremonial events, or participation in a University sponsored activity. (University sponsored activities include for example, field trips, ASUM service, music or drama performances, and intercollegiate athletics.) Instructors shall excuse absences for reasons of military service or mandatory public service.

Cultural or ceremonial leave allows excused absences for cultural, religious, and ceremonial purposes to meet the student’s customs and traditions or to participate in related activities. To receive an authorized absence for a cultural, religious or ceremonial event the student or their advisor (proxy) must submit a formal written request to the instructor. This must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony and the importance of the student’s attendance or participation. Authorization for the absence is subject to approval by the instructor. Appeals may be made to the Chair, Dean, or Provost. The excused absence or leave may not exceed five academic calendar days (not including weekends or holidays). Students remain responsible for completion or make-up of assignments as defined in the syllabus, at the discretion of the instructor.

Instructors may establish absence policies to conform to the educational goals and requirements of their courses with due consideration of the class’s diversity. Such policies should be set out in the course syllabus and
should include the procedures for giving timely notice of absences, explain how work missed because of an excused absence may be made up, and stipulate any penalty to be assessed for excessive or unexcused absences.

The UM Faculty Senate encourages the faculty to accommodate students incurring an excused absence by allowing them to make up missed work when this can be done in a manner consistent with the educational goals of their courses. Students expecting to incur excused absences should consult with their instructors early in the term to be sure that they understand the absence policies for each of their courses.

An example of a syllabi diversity statement is:

- **Classroom Climate and Inclusivity:** The University of Montana (UM) Master’s of Social Work mission names a commitment to prepare graduates, “who will promote and support the profession’s historic commitment to social justice and equality through direct-practice activities and community-based efforts that reflect the needs and dignity of all people. The program educates students to become competent, ethical, and collaborative practitioners, community leaders, and researchers who appreciate diversity, use critical thinking skills, and understand the intersection of rural and global contexts. Graduates will embrace advances in knowledge and practice, promote the wellbeing of people, and create a more humane society.” Therefore the instructor and students in the course will form a community where we encourage each other to critically examine issues related to power, privilege, and oppression. In order to have the most supportive environment possible, we must all commit ourselves to fostering an inclusive, anti-oppressive space where each person takes responsibility for their own language, actions, and interactions. The instructor will work with guest speakers and those enrolled in the course to create a classroom climate where we listen to each other and pay attention to how our words and actions have an impact on each other and the learning environment. We share the task of negotiating developing our professional voice, respecting one another, and being open to diverse perspectives and ideas. We recognize that all people make mistakes, may unintentionally offend others via microaggressions, or be triggered when interacting in multicultural groups and therefore these interactions will be viewed opportunities for mutual learning and discussion. The UM Diversity Strategic Plan recognizes and embraces several different identities including: “age, ideas and perspectives, disabilities, creed, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, national origin, race, religious and spiritual beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, and the socioeconomic and geographic composition.” Overt slurs, microaggressions, or disrespect in relation these identities or world view, immigration status, size, marital status, political affiliation, or any other identities, will be addressed directly as appropriate. The direct conversations may occur individually, in a group, or in writing (such as via email or written feedback on assignments). As a result, some class discussions may be difficult, challenging, or uncomfortable. We will
negotiate and renegotiate guidelines about class discussions throughout the course, as needed. Students are encouraged to dialogue with the instructor and their classmates, as they are able, to create an inclusive and engaging classroom climate where all students are actively engaged in learning that respects diverse perspectives and is culturally safe.

- **Diverse U**
  - DiverseU is November 1, 2018 and November 2, 2018. Please encourage students, faculty, staff, and administrators to attend and/or sign up to be a moderator of sessions. Keynote speaker Christian Picciolini on Thursday from 6pm-8pm in the University Center Ballroom ([http://www.umt.edu/diverseu/](http://www.umt.edu/diverseu/)).

- **Selecting New Leadership for DAC**
  - Both the Faculty and Staff Co-Chairs selected for the next term resigned from their positions on the DAC.
  - A student co-chair is also still needed.
  - The past Faculty Co-Chair will act as an Interim Chair during the transition and until the new Co-Chairs are trained and confident in their positions.
  - Nominations for positions will occur beginning at the next meeting. Individuals can self-nominate, others can encourage individuals to self-nominate, or others can nominate individuals.
  - DAC will vote on new Co-Chairs at the next meeting.

- **President’s Cabinet Meeting**
  - DAC representative will be attending the President’s Cabinet meeting (tentative date is on November 14, 2018 at 9am). A DAC subcommittee will present refined Priorities for Action.
  - **Note:** The meeting is likely delayed until November 28, 2018.

- **President’s Lecture Series**
  - The President’s Lecture Series is a high-profile event and it is an important venue to highlight diversity. Speakers come from all over the world, but historically these lectures have not represented diversity. How can we apply pressure to make sure speakers are diverse? Perhaps include this recommendation in the Priorities for Action recommendations.

- **Disability Services for Students Concerns**
  - DSS American Sign Language interpreters were present at most recent President’s Lecture Series; however, MCAT was told not to film the interpreter. DSS staff are concerned we are not following policy.
    - MCAT used to have picture in picture with two cameras filming the lectures.
      - The inconsistency in following our interpretation policy highlights the need for a Compliance Officer on campus to enforce policy.
      - In the interim, should the DAC help facilitate communication that establish commitments and best practices for interpreters at events?
• Discussion students with disabilities and Vocational Rehabilitation complaints about treatment, access to textbooks, and billing processes that were in place before the change in management at UM Bookstore.
  o DAC Treasurer will approach the management or board as an initial step in trying to name and resolve the issues.