

Northern Virginia Community College Senate  
Meeting Minutes – Special Meeting

6/18/2020

Meeting conducted on ZOOM

Attending: Teba Aljumali, Kristin Balbuena, Breana Bayraktar, Mike Blackwell, Felicia Blakeney, Barbara Canfield, Julie Combs, Kerry Cotter, Santwana Das, Kathleen Deal, Karen Doheney, Cari Dresser, Nicole Evans, Andrew Goldstein, Chris Hafen, Stephanie Harm, Katherine Hitchcock, Trish Kurban, Elizabeth Lanthier, Jack Lechelt, Rakene Lee, Aldous McCrory, Friba Alizai (proxy for Beatrice McKeithen), Mike McMillon, Donna Minnich, Mary Moseley, Tykesha Myrick, Manori Nadesalingam, Negin Noorzada, Mary Pat O'Brien, Marilyn Odaka, Mark Plaughter, Lucy Weber (proxy for Mike Polcen), Nicole Reaves, Maxine Toliver, Ashlie Warnick, Chevella Wilson, Ghul Zadran

Absent: Rebecca Carrier, Stephanie Dupal, Joan Elrich

GUESTS: Caitlin Chazen

Senate Chair Donna Minnich called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM. Roll called.

I. Request from Dr. Kress

I'm reaching out to you, chairs of NOVA's councils and asking you to join Administrative Council in identifying three specific, measurable, visible actions that your group can and will take directly in the coming year to improve equity in our college's outcomes.

Please think about tangible changes to policy, procedure, curriculum, and more that are within the scope of your council to make. What can you do within your roles to address implicit bias in policies or practices, eliminate racial inequities in student outcomes, and improve college climate and culture for the full diversity of our NOVA community? These concrete actions at every level—taken together—will make manifest NOVA's commitment to our values, students, and colleagues.

This work is incredibly important to all of us, so I would ask that you advise me of the willingness of your council to engage by June 8 and then to forward your three commitments—the actions your council will take in the coming year—to me by June 26.

- a) Questions about Dr. Kress's charge – about ethnic diversity or other types of diversity? What are the structural issues?
- b) Need research to identify institutional barriers to equitable access
  - a. Completion
  - b. Retention
  - c. Unclear what the barriers are that the college needs to correct
- c) Clarification about Dr. Kress's request. She asked each Forum Council as well. Also sent to Admin Council and other groups.

- d) Research element is important – need to track progress. Want to do what works and not waste energy.
- e) What are NOVA's current initiatives to improve equity? Are we improving or coming up with new ideas?
- f) Need to ID problem before offering solutions.
- g) How do inequities outside NOVA affect people? Look at all marginalized groups
- h) Need implicit bias training. Make it mandatory for all employees.
- i) Who is at the table? Majority of Senate is white. How do we encourage more diverse Senate membership?
- j) Classism/Status discrimination
- k) Everyone needs to actively work to enlighten, broaden and educate; cultural humility
- l) Need research about what training is best
- m) Look at inherent biases in test questions
- n) Need to start with data – recommendations become paternalistic without data.
  - a. Recommendation from Senator Nicole Reaves: Data summit for college – at PUP or Convocation to share data with break-out sessions to make informed recommendations
- o) What the college is already doing. ATD meeting – Dr. Gabriel proposal. Specifics we need to address (especially for Black and Hispanic students vs. White and Asian students):
  - a. Course success rates
  - b. Retention
  - c. Graduation rates

Race is a factor we need to address. ATD has done a lot on equity. Want to avoid duplication of efforts
- p) Need to educate students, staff, and faculty about why people feel marginalized. What are cultural differences? Want all to feel included
- q) Virtual Pride Week. Feedback from students and what we saw: LGBTQ students don't feel as supported as they could be. The college should provide LGBTQ training 101 to faculty and staff
- r) Look at different groups. How have we implemented hiring practices at NOVA to ensure neutrality? Do we need 3<sup>rd</sup> party involvement?
- s) We don't hear enough about what instructors and professors can do. Need training for instructors and professors. Changing culture of the role of the instructor. Instructors may not be informed about resources at NOVA or in the community to help students
- t) Implicit bias is unconscious bias. Training alone doesn't do a lot to get rid of implicit bias. Faculty/student connection is important for retention. Faculty have to make connections. K12 experience shows that the connection can reduce discipline achievement gaps. Need to include student voices.
- u) People have referenced data – what specifically do people want?

- v) We need to educate ourselves. Our library has NOVA Libraries Anti-Racism Guide. Library is expanding print collection to include more diverse authors
- w) Senator Tykesha Myrick said that Dr. Kress's email directed people to contact her (Senator Myrick) for data. She hasn't gotten any requests.
  - a. What is missing from the data? Which groups are missing?
  - b. For equity, we need benchmarks, strategies
  - c. She's working with OIR. Looking at islands of disadvantage. She has the research
- x) But is it the right research to answer these questions? Senator Myrick wants to know what people need.
- y) Senator Bayraktar suggested the following:
  - a. Draft equity and justice syllabus statement
  - b. Bias Response Teams to help faculty review assignments, assessments
- z) We know that Black students aren't performing as well as other groups but we don't know why. Rather than giving "solutions," we need to find what's needed.
- aa) Senate Chair Donna Minnich said that the Senate narrow the request and request that information. Senate is to submit its own 3 proposals. Need to figure out what data is needed before requesting it
- bb) Students have felt uncomfortable in classrooms because of what professors have said or done. Some professors don't know how to communicate with students of color. Need culturally relevant teaching seminars
  - a. Work with CETL for training. Students feel powerless and don't want to rock the boat. They don't feel that they have a seat at the table. Do monthly training, maybe required. Conversations and reading, not online training we do now.
  - b. We need eye-opening training. Safe space to ask questions. Anecdotal data is the most powerful. Make "training" more interactive and conversational.
  - c. Need to make sure faculty and staff comfortable asking and answering questions.
- cc) Training sounds passive. Harvard's Project on Implicit Bias. Incorporate finding out about ourselves and then have a conversation
- dd) Teach growth mindset so that students can overcome setbacks. For ourselves and our students.
- ee) Senator Nicole Evans offered that Baltimore Community College (CCBC or BCCC?) rewrote SDV with growth mindset and has success.
- ff) Data we might want to look at:
  - a. Retention and course completion
  - b. Competition and gateway courses
  - c. What initiatives aren't working?
- gg) Manassas professor's ADJ course may be a good starting point. Course was proposed for Fall 2019 but not added to the schedule. Way to better prepare law enforcement personnel. Should Senate recommend adding this course?

- hh) At ATD meeting about the diversity of courses offered, “white professors feel that they shouldn’t be teaching courses that delve into race issues.”
- ii) Loudoun’s Persistence Project – willingness from faculty to reach out to students and be engaged in their learning.
- jj) ATD and CETL can train faculty to improve assignment design to improve outcomes
- kk) Are professors being asked to see students by their race, color, gender? Use communication and treat students equally. Pointing fingers makes implicit biases worse.
- ll) Don’t single out students to provide their experience as representing a “group’s” experience. Want inclusive conversation for those who want to participate.
  - a. Equity work is hard. Good intentions mean a lot but everybody won’t have them or see as others see. To have policies that treat all students equitably, have to treat them differently.
  - b. Equality vs. Equity. Sometimes used as synonyms. Goal is to improve equity. Data sought – how many faculty participated in ATD program? Changes? Outcomes?
- mm) We have outcome data, we need process data. Student perspective is missing in data some Senators have seen. Have to figure out how to get student perspective data – qualitative, interview data vs. quantitative/survey data. We have a lot of quantitative data, need qualitative data to look at interventions and which work and what makes them work.
- nn) ENG 111 and MTH should be in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester. Students put off math and jump into classes they aren’t ready for. Lots of data that shows that taking first year classes early leads to more success. Transfer VA initiative.
- oo) Senator Tykesha Myrick said that she can advocate to get the data we need.

2:30 PM. Need 3 recommendations.

1. Research initiatives to identify barriers to equity
2. ADJ course
3. Data identification – we have data about retention, completion, need more qualitative data; explore qualitative data to understand what we are missing
4. Points of stress and trauma impact learning. Tie findings into student support services and financial aid.
5. Require students to start MTH and ENG early
6. Encourage CETL to develop seminars for faculty and staff:
  - a. Growth mindset
  - b. Implicit Bias
  - c. Learning experiences
  - d. Other topics that impact student success
7. Bias Response Teams
8. Equity and Justice Syllabus statement

Need to agree on 3.

- Will #5 have impact on equity? Could be a barrier if just need 1 class
- How do policies affect groups?

Other ideas:

- Trauma informed classrooms seminar
- What can Senate DO?
  - Trying to rush into a decision with 90 minutes of discussion. Would like to see proposals and data
  - What is Senate willing to commit to?
    - Need data-based solutions

If Senators don't like what has been proposed, will we have no proposal?

- Want to flesh out quality of ideas
- Can we move forward on any of the suggestions? Any motions to adopt any proposal?

Motion for Senate to recommend to Dr. Kress that NOVA adopt/offer ADJ 116 course.

Discussion:

- Why is Senate getting involved in courses being offered?
- Senate can recommend courses due to Dr. Kress's request and the extraordinary circumstances
- How is this course related to equity issues across the college?
- Seems very specific. Perhaps change to "more courses that focus on this topic"
- Could write that we are looking for places within the curriculum
- This a narrow issue responding to Chancellor: "Equity and access to opportunity have been at the heart of our community college mission since we first opened our doors in 1966. However, our efforts to translate those ideals into action for all Virginians have not always yielded the results that we seek as quickly as we would like. Simply stated, we must do better, and we will." Specifically: "launching initiatives to ensure we are doing all we can to serve our students and our communities, including a reexamination of the programs that we offer to train law enforcement officers." Intended for future law enforcement personnel.
- Beyond the Senate's scope. Motion to amend: Charge Pathway Council to look at professional ethics courses to promote equity. Seconded. Senate Chair Donna Minnich accepts the amendment.
- Concern that the Senate is rushing this and that the Senate should push back and get time to do it right.
- Motion withdrawn.

- NEW MOTION: Senate requests that the Senate be extended more time for this important matter and the questions being asked of us. Due to extraordinary circumstances Senate will meet on Thursday 7/16 to continue discussion. Motion seconded. Discussion:
  - Add that the Senate requires that proposals in writing be distributed before the meeting. Forum chairs will share college-wide ideas. Senate Chair Donna Minnich to ask for college-wide proposals from Forum chairs.
  - Why wait a month? Can we meet at a sooner time?
    - Yes, but couldn't find a time that worked.
  - 7/16 at 1 PM. Gives Senators time to think about how to move forward and get information from Forum Chairs.
  - Motion passes by Vote on Chat.

Process for gathering information:

- Requests from Forum Councils. Senate Chair Donna Minnich will ask Forum chairs for college-wide ideas; Senators also asked. 6/26 deadline. Motion to send Senate Chair Donna Minnich ideas by 6/26 to be disseminated to Senators in advance of next Senate meeting. Seconded. Discussion:
  - What about data?
    - Can ask Senate Chair Donna Minnich for data to gather from Senator Tykesha Myrick
  - Motion passes by Vote on Chat.

Senate lost quorum. Suggestion to table remaining agenda items (Feedback to NOVA DEI Statement and Return to Fall discussion). Motions were automatically tabled when Senate lost forum.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.