

Faculty Senate DEI meeting, 10/18/2023

Present: Lavoie, Ramos, Olivas, Bronstein, Romero, Bond

Absent: Walker

Guests: Manal Hamzeh

The meeting began at 4:01 PM. The main focus of this meeting was NMSU's failure to walk its talk about cooperating with indigenous peoples and tribes in New Mexico. The failure to adopt a land acknowledgement statement was what started us thinking in this direction, but it was soon agreed that such statements pale in importance compared with actual vibrant, bi-directional relationships. Bandyng about plans for an indigenous faculty cluster hire, and then failing to provide any funding for this, is another example of the disconnect.

The group determined that several propositions should probably emanate from the committee:

- a. A proposition to clarify the Faculty Senate's intention with regard to its proposition in 2018-19 regarding commemoration of Indigenous People's Day. Although it is not a university holiday, the calendar always mentions "special programming" for that day. In 2018-19, the Faculty Senate called upon the university to invest some funds in such programming as bringing in outside speakers, and yet in a conversation with the VP of DEI and the Provost this month, they said that faculty should be the ones taking the initiative for such special programming (despite the complete absence of funding for events etc.). It would have been a great idea to invite Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, for example, to speak. Other options might include facilitating some reading in common, and endorsing teach-ins.
- b. A proposition urging the university not to make public political statements, but rather to support initiatives like teach-ins to educate people. The recent statement on the Middle East is a case in point.
- c. A proposition for a survey of names of buildings, roads, etc. on campus—how do we rethink the names of things on campus to potentially be less colonialist. Public art is also something that can be a focus.

In terms of action items, the committee favored the creation of google documents in which these propositions can be roughed out and then presented to the FSLC. I will be setting up google documents for these within the next few days.

Over and out,
Jamie Bronstein