

MGH INSTITUTE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council
Monday, October 16th, 2023, 12:00pm-1:30pm
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Gayun Chan-Smutko, M Myer, Mike Boutin, Alexis Guay, Vivian Glassman, Sarah Welch, Paula Milone-Nuzzo, Kim Truong, Keshrie Naidoo, JC Salis, Osman Tanrikulu, Peter Cahn, Tomisin Olayinka, Callie Watkins Liu, Tasneem Pota.

Members Absent: Kiki Broadhurst, Amanda Thai, Rosemary Caron, Antonia Makosky, Lesly Maxwells, Sarah McKinnon, Steve Cieseliski, Lauren Finn, Kelley Hotti, John Shaw, Fatimah Jeudy.

Staff: Michelle Wallace

The meeting of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council was called to order by Council Co-Chairs P. Milone-Nuzzo and K. Truong.

Announcements and reflections:

P. Cahn shared Child Development Day this year featured a hybrid format, combining in-person attendance for faculty and students with virtual participation for children and caregivers. Faculty used the Power, Privilege, and Positionality framework to prompt students to reflect on their observations within the homes of the children and caregivers.

K. Truong announced that Clara Gona was honored with the 2nd annual JEDI leadership award.

C. Watkin-Liu updated that Power, Privilege, Positionality program is currently operating at half capacity for facilitators, and encourage faculty and staff to sign up and promote this opportunity among their student communities.

Equity advocates information session will be on 10/30

MGB DEI summit will be on 11/6 IHP community members can join in person or the JEDI Watch party in 1CW

Approval of the minutes

The minutes from September 18th, 2023, were approved.

Supporting Jewish and Muslim Members of the Community

P. Milone-Nuzzo, shared reflections on the IHP response, highlighting the deliberate timing of messaging to ensure effective coordination and support, including information about EAP sessions. P. Milone-Nuzzo and K. Truong made a specific request for EAP to conduct processing sessions separately for Jewish and Palestinian Faculty, Staff, and Students, recognizing the sensitivity of sharing lived experiences in mixed identity settings. K. Truong added that these sessions generated valuable feedback, with some participants expressing concerns about feeling unsafe due to past instances of doxxing at other institutions and a call for greater recognition of intersectional identities. Currently, JEDI is collaborating with EAP/SAP to develop three additional sessions, while MGB DEI is also conducting processing sessions.

In the past, they have heard from Jewish and Muslim students about not having support for religious observances and the need for accommodations. The IHP sends out three annual emails to faculty and managers containing holiday calendars to facilitate accommodation requests for religious observances and opened the conversation to further ways to support their communities.

K. Naidoo communicated that she sent out emails to acknowledge and create a supportive space within classes, along with sharing resources for assistance, a gesture that has been positively received by students. However, some students are advocating for a more assertive stance. P. Milone-Nuzzo has reached out to individuals with ties to Israel for support but is not aware of contacts with ties to Gaza or Palestine. She has offered to write notes to those affected and welcomes individuals to provide contacts.

In a larger conversation around when and how to issue statements related to events like this C. Watkins-Liu highlighted the diverse interests within the affected communities, with some seeking emotional support, others are politically interested, and others desiring educational resources. She offered a framework to meet individuals at their humanity with the knowledge that different individuals will need different combinations of support. Additionally, K. Truong encouraged individuals to reach out with any further ideas for supporting Muslim and Jewish members of the community.

Continuation of Affirmative Action Conversation

P. Milone-Nuzzo presented the diversity data from admission last year as well as the data presented to the board of trustees focused on building a diverse and inclusive community. Every fall, spring, and summer diversity data is analyzed.

Summary of data: The diversity data for Fall 2023 improved slightly from the previous year, going from 35% to 36%. Departmental breakdowns revealed varying diversity statistics. Men were less represented at 15-16%, prompting an action item to include information on nonbinary individuals. There was a notable disparity in individual categories, with a higher number of Hispanic individuals compared to Native or Pacific Islander individuals, possibly due to targeted recruitment and broader trends in higher education. The Board of Trustees report showed progress in building a diverse and inclusive community among matriculated BIPOC students. While there was an increase in BIPOC faculty and trustees, there is an ongoing hope for further progress. In the admissions process, there was an increase in Hispanic, Native, and Asian students, but a slight decrease in African American students. The completion rate remained high at 97%, with a yield of about 58%. However, student debt for those pursuing their first professional degree exceeded \$100,000 for most groups. An action item was identified to share more data on disabled and first-generation students, collected in separate systems. Additionally, K. Truong shared that LGBTQA data was collected via JEDI survey but not collected in other processes.

The council then shifted into a discussion around shared materials and language usage, particularly the term "race neutral." It was emphasized that redressing issues align with JEDI efforts and that diversity should be connected to the organization's mission, not just numerical goals. Concerns were raised about shifting to a "race neutral" approach, as achieving measurable diversity often requires race-conscious efforts. The idea of becoming "racism conscious" was suggested. An Affirmative Action Padlet resource was shared. Some participants felt that "race neutral" could be associated with colorblindness and expressed a desire for a more holistic communication approach. The group recognized the need to make strong arguments for the importance of a diverse workforce.

