

ESP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
March 19, 2021
4:15 pm – 5:30 pm ET
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

- Dr. Steve Cohen (Faculty)
- Dr. Adela Gondek (Faculty)
- Rashika Choudhary (Current Student)
- Maya Navabi (Current Student)
- Rachel Patterson (Alumni)
- Iara Vicente (Alumni)
- Stephanie Hoyt (Staff)
- George Sarrinikolaou (Staff)

Agenda:

| | | |
|-------------------|--|------------------------|
| 4:15 pm - 4:20 pm | Progress Update | George |
| 4:20 pm - 4:35 pm | Training | Stephanie/All |
| 4:35 pm – 4:50 pm | Workshop and Equity | Steve/ Maya/Rashika |
| 4:50 pm – 5:00 pm | Electives | George |
| 5:00 pm – 5:20 pm | Creation of Safe Space Brainstorm | Rachel/Iara |
| 5:20 pm -5:30 pm | Next steps and Adjourn | George |

Discussion:

- **Progress Updates:** George provided an update on the DE&I audit, including the administration of the survey to students, faculty, and alumni. With the purchase order for the audit having been approved by Columbia, the survey was to be administered for two weeks, starting on Monday, March 22.
- George also briefly discussed a proposal to create a network of Earth Institute BIPOC alumni and students. Rachel and Iara, the committee’s alumni representatives, had previously expressed support for the proposal. The Earth Institute is awaiting feedback from alumni in the Sustainability Management program before proceeding with the creation of the network.
- **Training:** The committee agreed to have one mandatory DE&I training session at the beginning of the program, which would set the tone for the rest of the year. Subsequent trainings will be optional and will be conducted separately for students and faculty. The overarching goal is to create a culture of inclusion and equity in the program. Next, the committee will identify prospective trainers.

- **Need for program and faculty support:** The student representatives expressed the need to feel supported by the program and its faculty, especially during traumatic periods (e.g. in the wake of the mass shootings of Asian-Americans in Georgia). Steve discussed the need for him to set the example for other faculty by being more vocal.
- **Creation of Safe Space Brainstorm:** The committee also discussed the creation of safe spaces that give students a sense of support by the program. Some ideas included small group sessions with trained facilitators, attendance of diverse cultural events, and symbolic gestures such as celebrating Juneteenth. Staff will seek to program activities that mark Juneteenth this year.

Next steps:

1. The discussion on electives and workshop will take place during the next meeting in April.
2. Increase communication from program and faculty regarding support for students.
3. Roll out the survey to students, faculty, and alumni.
4. Schedule next meeting for the end of April.