

LSA Undergraduate Education Committee on Campus Climate

Faculty Communities for Inclusive Teaching, 2015



Key Insights / New Questions

Faculty participants were eager for the opportunity to engage with one another around these issues. Most noted the dearth of conversations about classroom pedagogy among their departmental colleagues. This confirmed that faculty do feel a need and desire to talk through these questions about diversity, inclusion, and climate. **How do we help more faculty engage in these discussions?**

Participants were interested in issues outside the classroom. For example, there was interest in admissions, retention, and pathways for student success. As a result, we invited a representative from Admissions to participate in our first session. **How do we link classroom interactions with student success activities?**

Participants

- Paul Barron, Sweetland Center for Writing
- Netta Berlin, Classical Studies
- Adrienne Dessel, The Program on Intergroup Relations
- Angela Dillard, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education and DAAS
- Dwight Fontenot, Comprehensive Studies Program
- Bill Gehring, Psychology
- Marjorie Horton, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education
- Nicolai Lehnert, Chemistry
- Kelly Maxwell, The Program on Intergroup Relations
- Solange Muñoz, Residential College
- Catalina Ormsby, Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program
- Robbie Routenberg, Global Scholars Program
- Naomi Silver, Sweetland Center for Writing
- Carol Tell, Sweetland Center for Writing and Lloyd Hall Scholars Program
- Theresa Tinkle, English
- Kyle Walton, Health Science Scholars Program
- Mariah Zeisberg, Political Science

Project Overview

The impetus for this project came out of the Undergraduate Education Campus Climate Subcommittee on Inclusive Pedagogies. We reached out to participants in the May 2014 LSA Diversity Institute, in the LSA “Just-in-Time” Diversity sessions in Winter 2014, in climate course modules the subcommittee had piloted in previous semesters, and in other similar activities. As we described our aim in our invitation:

We are proposing a learning community designed to amplify and build on the work of these previous initiatives by bringing together an interdisciplinary group of LSA faculty to share our experiences integrating diversity and campus climate materials into our teaching, discuss resource needs based on our own experiences, and develop methods for sharing resources and know-how with other faculty on campus.

The group met 5 times (about every 3 weeks) over a meal for discussion on the topics listed below. The first meeting in February was devoted to planning. Participants shared topics and themes they wanted to explore together and members volunteered to facilitate discussion and/or invite a guest speaker. Each session included readings, (co)facilitators, and/or speakers and a blog post ahead of the session. The four sessions (after the planning meeting) focused on the following topics:

March 9th: Setting the Context for Campus Inclusion, Invited Guest: Erica Sanders, Interim Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Co-facilitators: Angela Dillard and Theresa Tinkle

March 23rd: Building Inclusive Classrooms: Engaging Ideas and Strategies, Co-facilitators: robbie routenberg, Naomi Silver, and Kelly Maxwell

April 7th: Using Social Media to Create Inclusive Spaces, Invited Guest: Martha Jones, Professor of DAAS, History, and Law, Co-facilitators: Angela Dillard and Naomi Silver

April 28th: Assessment as a Tool for Building Inclusive Classrooms and Retaining Diverse Students, Co-facilitators: Bill Gehring and Angela Dillard

Artifacts

We held a focus group of our faculty community participants on Sept. 30, 2015. Some general feedback:

- Faculty have gained confidence in the classroom by having these small group discussions. They are more readily at ease to bring up diversity issues in the classroom than before.
- If the class content is not related to diversity, equity, or inclusion, there’s still a greater understanding and appreciation for what underrepresented students might be facing. Understanding the nuances of issues like microaggressions helps to minimize their negative impact.
- Even as we, faculty and staff, do this work, issues of inclusion should be something students hear and learn about over and over throughout their time at U-M: orientation, classes, residence halls, sub-communities (like MLCs), etc. Repeating the message will really help.

Resources

Ahmed, Sara (2012). *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Selected chapters.

Bain, Ken. (2004). *What the Best College Teachers Do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Selected chapters.

Chatelain, Marcia. (Nov. 28, 2014). Teaching the #FergusonSyllabus. *Dissent*.

Obear, Kathy (2013). Navigating Triggering Events in L. Landreman (Ed.). *The Art of Effective Facilitation*. pp. 151-172. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Schuman, Rebecca (Sept. 8, 2014). The Birth of the #Ferguson Syllabus. *Slate*.

Sue, Derald Wing (2010). *Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Chap. 13: Helping People Talk about Race: Facilitation Skills for Educators and Trainers.

Tough, Paul. (May 15, 2014). Who Gets to Graduate? *NY Times Magazine*.

Resources produced: Annotated resources lists, Community Blog

Next Steps

- The group is interested in continuing to meet. We met in September for a focus group to discuss possible outcomes of our experiences together (see Artifacts).
- This project is also a springboard for a CRLT Faculty Development Fund grant project to collect and develop resources on creating and maintaining inclusive classrooms in LSA. These will include videos demonstrating classroom activities, as well as annotated handouts and other materials, and will be housed on an LSA-sponsored website for Inclusive Pedagogies.
- Individually, faculty are bringing these conversations to their own departments and small group settings to open opportunities for more involvement in diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.