

UNIVERSITY SENATE  
ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORT 2020-21

Committee Name: Diversity Committee

Number of meetings held this year: 6

Committee Chair: Rachael Shapiro

Committee Members:

|                    |                               |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Rachael Shapiro    | Faculty or Professional Staff |
| Susan Browne       | Faculty or Professional Staff |
| Rachel Budmen      | Faculty or Professional Staff |
| Kate Kedley        | Faculty or Professional Staff |
| Ai-Guo Han         | Faculty or Professional Staff |
| Joseph Higgins     | Faculty or Professional Staff |
| Ashley Lierman     | Faculty or Professional Staff |
| Colleen Montgomery | Faculty or Professional Staff |
| Marybeth Walpole   | Faculty or Professional Staff |
| Richard Jonsen     | Faculty or Professional Staff |
| Karen Stesis       | AFT Representative            |
| Denise Williams    | CWA Representative            |
| Kyle Perez         | SGA Representative            |
| Jason Brooks       | SGA Representative            |
| Ayala Gedeon       | SGA Representative            |

**Purpose of/Charge to Committee:** Monitors diversity throughout all areas and for all members of the Rowan University community, with special attention to issues of social justice; recommends practices and policies that will enhance diversity at Rowan; and assists in the development and establishment of such practices and policies.

**Summary of Activities this Year:**

This year, we accomplished the following and more:

1. Invited Dr. Penny Meyers-McPherson to discuss with us the limits, overlaps, and unique roles and potential for DEI btw the DEI Division and the Senate Diversity Committee.
2. Provided feedback to the DEI Division's Strategic Priority Committee 3 on inclusive teaching and scholarship on their MOA revision to integrate DEI language.
3. Provided feedback to the DEI Division's Strategic Priority Committee 3 on inclusive teaching and scholarship on their "Toolkit for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Faculty Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention."
4. Held an international faculty panel with guests Yannick Kluch, William Mikkell Dack, and Senate President Bill Freind to discuss pre-tenure international faculty members' experience with visa and residency processes, campus climate, and structure support.
5. Diversity Awards:
  1. Recognized the 2020 winners via the Rowan Announcer and DEI Division Blog and university awards, as they hadn't been recognized last year due to Covid-19.

2. Established a new award to include the medical schools: Excellence in Diversity for the Study or Practice of Medicine.
3. Circulated the call for nominations, established an awards selection subcommittee; reviewed nominations; selected winners for all 7 categories; designed, ordered, and delivered plaques; highlighted winners via Rowan Announcer and [DEI Division Blog](#); and coordinated with organizers of faculty and students awards events around the university to recognize the winners' accomplishments.
4. Articulated policies and procedures for the awards
  1. Developed award descriptions, protocol, and procedures
  2. Suggested ongoing partnership with DEI Summit organizers to feature award winners there going forward

6. We also planned a webinar on explore how the history of racism in the practice of medicine in the U.S. has created mistrust in Black and Brown communities in order to give context for the Covid-19 vaccine and BIPOC communities, but we discovered there were very similar panels already being planned with the same panelists we'd invited. Thus, we canceled our efforts there and offered our support to panel organizers.

### **Excellence in Diversity Award Winners**

After reviewing 15 nominations, our Excellence in Diversity Awards this year have gone to the following:

- Faculty Social Activism: Dean Paula Watkins
- Faculty Scholarship: Stephanie Abraham
  - w/honorable mentions to Heather Lanier, and Nicole Vaughn
- Student Performance: Stephen Cobb
- Student Group Project: Kerry Cormier, Donn Garby, Mbuu Payne, Sanaz Shahi, and Sa-Rawla Stoute
- Practice of Medicine: The Black Collective at RowanSOM
- Student Social Activism: Shareise Katrell Abdullah w/ hon mention to Eliya Bravo
- Faculty Group Project: Cate Romano and Anna Bassiri

### **SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Suggestions:

The Senate Diversity Committee offers the following suggestions:

- The university should develop a comprehensive Transgender Student Services plan that includes changing rooms at various sites on all campuses.
- The Diversity Committee in the past two years has learned of structural and campus cultural challenges for international students and faculty at Rowan, particularly on the Glassboro campus. We recommend continued assessment of and advocacy on behalf this population as an issue of equity and inclusion. This is particularly pressing as Rowan looks to secure and expand its international position and pursue R1 status in the future.
  - In particular, we recommend follow up with HR's international faculty policy with regard to visa and green card sponsorship, with emphasis that international faculty should have the opportunity to review and offer feedback on the policy as experiential experts on the issue.

Recommendations:

The AY 2021-22 Senate Diversity Committee might consider taking up the following:

- Seek further partnership with the new Provost's Fellow and the DEI Division on their work. There continues to be opportunity for developing synergies between our committee and the other DEI groups around the university.
- Contact university advancement to identify an established and consistent funder or funders for the annual Excellence in Diversity Awards (for cash awards, plaques, etc.).
- Seek to establish the Excellence in Diversity Awards as a regular part of the annual DEI Summit.
- Seek ways to establish additional public forums for faculty and student discussion on important current issues affecting the campus community and beyond.
- Continue to offer consultation on DEI efforts around the university.
- Continue to seek ways to support BIPOC students on campus, particular in the post-pandemic return to campus. Consider how we might leverage the return as an opportunity to let go of harmful patterns in campus culture and establish new ways to thrive as a vibrant campus cherishes its BIPOC community members as essential to our identity.
- Include SGA members in committee meetings.