GDI Meeting Notes - 5/10/17

**In attendance:**

Richard Blissett

Brittany Allison

Rachel McCain

Stacey Houston

Chelsea Peters

Erica Shannon

Ali Lutz

**Additional people who might attend next year:**

Susan Patrick

Chelsea Yarborough

At beginning of the year we chose five priorities from the Chancellor’s Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Community to provide recommendations for and advocate for.

See previous notes.

We’ve made progress on three of the five. People were working on the other two. See previous notes.

Updates on the three:

* This committee has a standing meeting with Dean Wallace once every month – this is awesome because it helps advocate for things
* We wrote proposal to expand VU EDGE
	+ **Yay! They’ve used our proposal to find institutional funding to expand VU EDGE**
	+ How much is this for?
* Creating an into or orientation session through the PCC
	+ We managed to secure a slot at orientation to talk about this – goal: break down the stigma of self care
	+ **We’ll have a meeting with the PCC to discuss this meeting with David Sacks and Marcy Melvin**
		- **23rd of May at 3pm**
			* Stacey can attend, maybe Erica too
	+ Rachel Eskridge from Center for Student Wellbeing could be at this meeting as well
* GRE – holistic and best practice training for appropriate use of GRE scores
	+ Goal: Move towards holistic admissions – GRE is only the first step, be careful not to replace this metric with another that discriminates (what caliber school did they come from?)
	+ Committee reached out to many programs to see what other universities did
		- Ali sent a communication summarizing this, she’ll resend in case we can’t find the email
		- We found that it seems like moving away from the GRE wasn’t a big deal for people – it is just a change.
		- Usually this happens department by department, when departments do this, they usually feel proud and the department is energized by this
	+ Committee presented findings to the DGSs by invitation from Dean Wallace
		- There were extremes, but the majority of people seemed to feel that people who are qualified to work at Vanderbilt should get a basic score on the GRE
			* But the research does not support this
			* There can be very very qualified students who don’t get any passable score on the GRE. Departments seem to need to know this data to open their eyes
	+ Also met with Vice Chancellor Hill to present this data and have this conversation as well
		- He asked – “Have they looked at their own experience to see if their students success matches their GRE scores?”
		- Symposium in the Fall
			* Researchers – even here at Vanderbilt
			* Members of departments from other campuses who don’t use GRE
			* Present survey results to get a feel for the resistance
				+ They are drafting these questions now

Meeting Friday May 26th at 9am with Keivan Stassun to work on this – networking and making sure we don’t reinvent the wheel

Ali and Brittany will be able to attend

* + - * + Survey over the summer
			* Meeting with Roger Chalkley at BRET office because they are putting out a lot of data
	+ Dean Wallace doesn’t see an institutional barrier to this, but top down is not the best approach here because departments might feel resentful. So instead going to do department by department approach.
	+ Problem: losing GRE scores might affect our rankings because GRE is used for rankings
		- But! Maybe this will create a bunch of positive publicity, make waves!
* George Hill’s advisory meeting
	+ Working on diversity handbook – get two, one for grad students and one from undergrad
	+ Unconscious bias trainings – people are singing up. Make it mandatory? The more you push it on people the less effective it is.
		- Make it mandatory if you are involved in an incident?
		- Or incentivize it?

End of the year Report! GSC can send it out to all students.

This is the second year of this committee

The first year was really a fact finding year, this year we are starting with advocacy and making things move forward

Participation:

* Mostly we are grad students/post docs in the Graduate School
* We will include professional school students, especially if they are excited to volunteer

**What is next for the Committee?**

* Next semester – committee will probably want to reassess their priorities. The committee can use this priorities document made about the
* We should let people know that race isn’t the only thing this committee thinks about!
* Get committee to jump back on the communication horse ☺ If committee works to improve communications then it will get people involved.
	+ GSC newsletter – send info to Chelsea
	+ Facebook presence – Maybe Stacey can update the Facebook if someone else on the committee can help with content
* Moving GRE stuff forward
	+ Get stories from students on how jumping through the GRE hoop was very difficult
		- Would be good to share on FB?
* Have graduate students detected change in the environment? Since this report has been out for a year. There was a lot of momentum around diversity but the public face has gone away, so people don’t know what is happening with this conversation anymore. Need to gauge the public awareness of this to make sure they are being transparent enough.
* How has the EDIC grant progressed?
* Re-read recommendations
	+ We’ve made some progress on parts of these recommendations, because when we are getting started with each of these we were focusing on entry points to begin making progress, but there is more to this than what we have done. Re-read to make sure we are aware of the full picture.

**Thoughts on Recruitment?**

* Build partnerships with other underrepresented groups on campus?
* Continue to promote the committee so people who want to make change know to volunteer here

A note on the relationship between GSC and the GDI committee:

* Technically this committee is an ad hoc committee under the Student Life Liaison (SLL) of GSC
* However, this committee is more independent than other ad hoc committees. It is run by the students and supported by GSC. The committee plugs into the infrastructure of GSC so they can be more effective.
* The GSC Student Life Liaison has a budget for this committee and can provide funds for other events as needed.