

Academic Diversity and Inclusion Committee  
Agenda  
April 9, 2024, 1 PM, Shawnee Room

- I. Approval of Minutes from March 5, 2024
- II. Curtis Family Cemetery Clean-Up Day
- III. Supporting Faculty in Teaching Controversial Topics
- IV. Other Discussion
- V. Announcements
  - a. March 9: Coloratura Performance by Cambry Ivory, 6 pm, Rita Blitt Gallery
  - b. WIFI April 19–22, 2024 – WUmester themed tract [www.washburn.edu/wifi](http://www.washburn.edu/wifi)
  - c. April 19-20,24-26, 28: Witch Neese-Gray Theatre
  - d. May 2: Community Celebration in Art and Poetry, 5:30-7:30 p.m., White Concert Hall

Academic Diversity and Inclusion

Committee meeting minutes

March 5, 2024

Erby, Fritch, Havens, Pierson, Dempsey-Swopes, Brice, Collier, Etzel, Murphy, Burdick, Kendall-Morwick, Marks, Mossman, McClendon, Williams, Adebayo, Sellak

- I. Minutes from the meeting of February 13, 2024 were approved.
- II. Welcome & Introductions with Provost John Fritch. ADIC members shared their ideas to advance priority A, #3 of Washburn's new strategic plan—Enable equitable opportunities.
  - a. Keep working with ESL, corrections, and veterans.
  - b. Increase partnerships and understanding student life, educational and training for faculty (Pierson)
  - c. Reimagine intersectional space; provide more money across the board for these opportunities
  - d. Ensure equitable hiring practices
  - e. Provide training for all new faculty and staff regarding belonging
  - f. Advance land acknowledgement program; increase support for Native American and indigenous students
  - g. Provide support for for justice-involved persons after release
  - h. Support among administration for inclusive pedagogy to be the expectation and norm
  - i. Increase number of minority-presenting students in economics and finance courses; more tutoring support
  - j. Increase support for underrepresented students with variable types of abilities
  - k. Increase support for those who are ELL on campus
  - l. Increase need-based financial assistance to support students in studying abroad
  - m. Increase buy-in among STEM faculty regarding CTEL diversity programming
  - n. Increase intersectional space on campus; increased hours for food pantry and library; enhanced efforts to support formerly incarcerated people after reentry to society
  - o. Ensure DEI work is seen as part of everybody's job on campus and that people who do this work are recognized and rewarded
- III. Announcements
  - a. Community in Action Painting Workshop, March 6 @ 4:30, Garvey rooms 16 and 18
  - b. Nikki Giovani, March 7, White Concert Hall.
  - c. Step Show, March 23, 6:30 pm, White Concert Hall. Planning to bring in three groups from the area.
  - d. WIFI April 19–22, 2024 – WUmester themed tract [www.washburn.edu/wifi](http://www.washburn.edu/wifi)

## Recommendations for Supporting Faculty Teaching Controversial Topics

In fulfilling its vision to prepare learners for careers and life, it is imperative that Washburn University faculty integrate discussion and examination of topics some may consider controversial or politically divisive in their teaching. Such integration enriches the education experience and prepares students to become informed, engaged, and responsible members of society.

The Academic Diversity and Inclusion Committee offers the following recommendations to the Washburn administration to help encourage and support such integration of controversial-issues discussion and examination among faculty.

- Proactively frame Washburn classrooms to students, parents, legislators, and the public in general as dynamic sites of rigorous discourse about wide-ranging social and political issues and problems.
- Actively contribute to a campus climate that welcomes discussion of controversial topics and allows students to feel comfortable exploring their opinions and views on contemporary issues and problems without indoctrinating them into a specific set of beliefs.
- Ensure there are professional development opportunities to support faculty in leading students in effectively examining controversial topics and issues. Provide support, resources, and recognition to faculty who take advantage of such opportunities.
- Respond proportionally in explaining and defending faculty members who include controversial topics in their teaching. As much as possible, shield faculty members from having to defend themselves so that these faculty may focus on teaching.
- Be intentional in providing support to faculty members who may find themselves under attack for addressing politically charged topics in their teaching. Connect these faculty to campus police to discuss resources and services regarding their safety and security. Take faculty members' feelings of risk and vulnerability seriously.
- Provide training for faculty evaluators, including department chairs, tenure and promotion committees, and internal grant reviewers, in equitably evaluating materials—including student perception survey data—and contributions of faculty who integrate controversial topics in their teaching.
- Be aware of how a faculty member's perceived gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, and other characteristics may shape responses and reactions to their teaching of controversial topics. For example, women, people of color, and others from marginalized identities are more likely to be criticized or harassed than white men. They are also more likely to be criticized and harassed more aggressively.

## [Academic Diversity and Inclusion Committee](#)



Committee Charge: The [Academic Diversity & Inclusion Committee](#) (ADIC) is charged with providing recommendations for programs, initiatives, and institutional practices that will cultivate a diverse and inclusive academic environment at Washburn.

Committee membership includes representation from across campus, including all academic units. The committee chairperson reports to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

### *Committee Membership Requirements:*

- serve on at least one sub-committee focused on working toward an identified committee goal
- regularly attend committee and sub-committee meetings
- share information with home unit(s) about the committee's efforts and gather feedback from unit(s) about these efforts
- attend at least 3 hours of C-TEL diversity professional development each semester

### *Selected Activities & Efforts since 2018:*

- Proposed new diversity unit taught in all WU 101 classes
- Researched and recommended improvements to faculty recruitment and hiring practices, all of which have been implemented as of 2022.
- Researched and recommended improvements to faculty mentoring program.
- Successfully recommended to the interim president and WUBOR that Washburn adopt Juneteenth as a University holiday.
- Creation of [WUmester](#) initiative and 5 years of successful WUmester programming.
- Assisted in Washburn hosting Michael J. Tilford Conference on Diversity & Multiculturalism in 2022 and 2023.
- Created institutional "terms of reference" for the following terms: diversity, equity inclusion, belonging, and inclusive teaching.
- With assistance from SARR, conducted first retention study of faculty and staff.
- Supported Faculty Affairs Committee in making recommendations regarding tenure and promotion processes considering the disruptions of COVID-19.
- Proposed to faculty that 3 hours of the institutional area in the new system of general education be devoted to a "diversity" requirement. Later refined this requirement to "inclusion and belonging."
- Researched and created Academic Referral Guide to assist faculty in referring students to the many resources across campus.
- Developed African American and African Diaspora Studies minor program.
- Successfully proposed employee affinity groups to university administration.

- Assisted in dissemination and analysis of 2020 climate survey and dissemination of 2023 survey.
- Assisted in recommending CTCL programming under “diversity” pillar.
- Brought concerns related to diversity and inclusion forward to university administration.

#### *2023–2024 Goals & Subcommittees:*

Goal/Subcommittee 1: Coordinate successful WUmester on the topic of Community & Belonging.

Goal/Subcommittee 2: Invest in the DEIB “choir” (those who are already doing DEIB work on campus) to further develop their knowledge and skills and to provide them support and recognition.

Goal/Subcommittee 3: Enhance visibility of DEIB initiatives on campus and engagement with these initiatives.

Goal/Subcommittee 4: Assist CTCL Director and CTCL Coordinator of Inclusive Teaching and Learning in reviewing resources available to assess inclusive teaching practices at Washburn and developing ideas for CTCL programming related to inclusive pedagogies.

Goal/Subcommittee 5: Review current efforts to enhance recruitment and retention of faculty and staff.