



NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

Commission on Ethnic Diversity (CED)

General Meeting

Monday, February 6, 2017

12:30-2:00 pm, University Union, Havasupai C

Meet-me line: 523-9119

Co-chairs, Tia Truss (Tia.Truss@nau.edu), Gerald Wood (Gerald.Wood@nau.edu)

Meeting Minutes

1. Introductions

- Gerald Wood called meeting to order at 12:31 p.m.
- Commissioners introduced themselves.

2. President's letter regarding refuge ban

- Commissioners reviewed letter and commissioners contrasted it with a statement written by the president of Harvard.
- Commissioners discussed the letter. The letter speaks to competitiveness, but there is no reference to humans. This is a positive letter, but it does not explain how NAU will support the community. The letter is not specific to services. The Harvard's President letter is more human. There is a difference between being heard and being listened to.
- Commissioners stated, we can invite students who feel discrimination to our spaces. We can be available to students on a personal level. We do not need permission from upper administration. We must build bridges not walls.
- Commissioners discussed coming together with the community and finding spaces to share stories.

3. Black face incident, student code of conduct

- Commissioners discussed the Black face incident which took place at NAU during the Fall 2016 semester. As of yet, the community feels that NAU has not addressed the incident. There have been no apologies or repercussions.
- Commissioners discussed the student code of conduct and violations to the code of conduct. Many people in the NAU community do not know how to report a bias/discrimination incident. We need to train student organizations on how to report bias and discrimination incidents. There is a frustration, because incidents concerning Black face are not against the student code of conduct. We need to address this discrimination at the structural level.

- Commissioners discussed free speech. Is hate speech protected? There are issues of power involved. Codes of conduct are set up for a reason, they protect students, good or bad. Commissioners discussed the legal process. We must ask, was this meant to cause harm? Structurally, NAU does not have protocol in place—why is faculty not trained how to react to such incidents? There is no reason why it has taken so long to address this incident. The important question—how do we frame a response to the incident? You do not frame around legalities. We must ask, what’s the intent? But, many times, you can’t prove intent. Even to legal counsel, you can’t prove intent.
- Commissioners discussed avenues to take: to provide a structural element in the student code of conduct; CED as a recommendation body; educating the community about how to report bias and discrimination incidents.

4. Diversity strategic plan

- Commissioners reviewed first two goals of the diversity strategic plan. Commissioners provided feedback to Dr. Carmen Phelps, NAU’s chief diversity officer. Dr. Phelps discussed the formatting of the document and the extra sessions to draft the plan. Dr. Phelps will send CED co-chairs information about the extra sessions to draft the plan.
- Commissioners posed questions. What does ‘diversity-centered’ mean? Commissioners discussed recruitment strategies—e.g. hiring people of color, bilingual representatives. Commissioners discussed training requirements for faculty and staff. A standard needs to be put in place for annual trainings. Are trainings mandatory? If we do not institutionalize expectations, we maintain the status quo. Commissioners asked, is this plan based on any peer institution models?
- Commissioners discussed the intention of the diversity strategic plan. The plan needs to address community relations. We need to address that student’s look first at NAU’s curriculum and then the faculty makeup. This is what helps recruitment. Commissioners commented that the international student/refugee voice is missing from this document.
- Commissioners commented that diversity must be seen as a resource, beyond only respect and appreciation. Diversity is a strength we draw on. There is a lot of ‘opportunities’ in the plan—but not much specific resources. Where are the incentives?
- Commissioners posed concerns. Throughout the plan, there are not specific, measurable goals. How do we know things ‘increase’ and things better, because of the plan in place?

5. **Announcements** (please send to co-chairs to add to agenda or bring flyers to add to the website)

- Diversity awards dinner, May 2. Applications due April 1, 2017 to CED co-chairs.
- Upcoming CED mixers, February 20, 2017, 12:00 p.m., Native American Cultural Center, Flagstaff Mountain Campus, Northern Arizona University.
- Next meeting Monday, March 6, 2017. Havasupai C, Student Union, Flagstaff Campus. 12:30-2:00 p.m.