

**THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND STUDENT LIFE
MINUTES OF MEETING
VOLUME AASL 33**

September 17, 2020

A meeting of the Committee on Academic Affairs and Student Life was held via Zoom at 2:15 p.m. on Thursday, September 17, 2020.

The following members were present: Chair David Han, Vice Chair Alice Pope, President Eric Barron (Ex Officio), Mark Belkowski (Constituent Representative), Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Kathy Bieschke, Bryan Culler, Mark Dambly (Ex Officio), Valerie Detwiler, Chris Hoffman, Provost Nicholas Jones, Zachary McKay (Student Representative), Bill Oldsey, Vice President and Dean Robert Pangborn, Jay Paterno, Anne Riley (Emerita Trustee), Vice President of Student Affairs Damon Sims, Laurie Stanell, Steve Wagman, Sean Walsh (Student Representative), Vice Provost for Educational Equity Marcus Whitehurst, and Mary Beth Williams (Faculty Representative).

A quorum was present.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Han at 2:15 p.m. Chair Han called for a motion for the Committee to approve the *Minutes* of the July 16, 2020 committee meeting. The motion to approve came from Trustee Stanell, and Trustee Wagman then seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chair Han welcomed those in attendance. He noted the oversight of diversity, equity and inclusion issues at Penn State surrounding the strategic direction of the committee has been a priority, and the committee was to hear updates from the Oversight Task Force on Racism, Bias, and Community Safety and the Student Code of Conduct Task Force.

Chair Han introduced Trustee Brandon Short, Chair of the Oversight Task Force on Racism, Bias, and Community Safety. The committee's mission is to serve the University and to provide oversight, to President Barron, as the Task Force assesses the overall effectiveness in achieving the University's goals to address racism. To achieve this, the Task Force will gain information and perspective from the relevant parties so it can support President Barron and provide strategic alternatives that will help him reach Penn State's goals. The Task Force has met weekly since July 8, 2020, each week meeting with leadership from President Barron's key initiatives to share progress and challenges. Each meeting included a member of the university community who was invited to share their thoughts on issues of race and their experience as a member of the Penn State community. The perspectives shared by these individuals have highlighted areas of strengths and areas where the University needs to improve to address racism, bias, and community safety.

The Task Force met with Faculty Senate leadership about development of diversity and inclusion initiatives related to curriculum. The Task Force met with Vice President for Educational Equity Marcus Whitehurst and Associate Provost for Educational Equity Sonia Fernandez, for an overview of the Office of Educational Equity's recent launch of the SharePoint Site Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Resources, which includes curated research and other resources to help students, staff and faculty think more critically about topics related to diversity and inclusion. The Task Force met with the Presidential Select Committee that will make broad recommendations on issues related to educational equity at Penn State, as well as receiving an update from the Task Force on University Policing.

The Task Force met with Charleon Jeffries, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, who provided an overview of the training that Penn State has developed to address the need to recruit, hire, and retain a diverse workforce. The Task Force requested Jeffries develop a one-hour interactive implicit bias training, in which the full board participated on September 14, 2020.

The Task Force received a briefing from Vice President of Strategic Communications Lawrence Lockman on the plan to keep the University informed of the work that is being done to fight racism at Penn State. The Task Force met twice with the Student Code of Conduct Task Force, with Co-chairs Nyla Holland and Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia, who also updated the AASL Committee during this meeting.

The focus of the Task Force moving forward will be to support the President's leadership groups for each of his initiatives and to help push the initiatives forward.

Chair Han introduced Nyla Holland and Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia, Co-chairs of the Student Code of Conduct Task Force. Nyla Holland is a rising senior and also President of the Penn State Black Caucus. She explained how the 24 Task Force members were selected. The first part of their charge was to state the purpose of the Code of Conduct. Second was to determine the appropriate uses of it. Third was to consider the legal restraints to changing or modifying the Code of Conduct. Fourth was to find its strengths and weaknesses. And fifth was ultimately the finished product of recommending changes to the code that align with the university's mission, but also incorporates restorative justice.

Task Force member Kade Crittenden, first year graduate student studying Higher Education Administration, described the methodology used to assess the Penn State Student Code of Conduct and benchmarking Student Codes of Conduct of other universities. The Task Force is also studying the First Amendment to consider the impact of its on Penn State's Student Code of Conduct.

Task Force member Cassandra Nunez is a Millennium Scholar and an Electrical Engineering undergraduate with a minor in World Literature. She stated that student culture must be considered and included when designing a mandated module for students about inclusivity at Penn State.

Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia is Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, stated that the Task Force's recommendations were preliminary. She stated a key part of their mission is about jurisdiction of the Student Code of Conduct. Additional components of the model include restorative justice practices, mandatory reporting requirements to improve transparency, and notification of rights and responsibilities of those bringing a complaint. Wadhia stated they see Phase Two of this project to address implementation and by whom at the University.

Task Force member Danny Shaha, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, stated the Task Force is trying to make recommendations about rights and behaviors that will apply to all students in addition to Title IX.

The floor was then opened to questions and discussion.

The public session of the Committee on Academic Affairs and Student Life was adjourned at 3:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Stevens
Administrative Coordinator
Office of the Board of Trustees