

Diversity Council

Annual Report 2020-2021

The Diversity Council members for 2020-2021 consisted of:

Joseph Orosco, Chair '22	Philosophy
Laurie Bridges '21	OSU Libraries
Amy Davila-Klautzsch '21	TRiO Student Support Services
Dee Denver '21	Integrative Biology
Vanessa Petroj '22	Writing Center
TBA (v. Ray) '22	
Serkan Ates '23	Animal & Rangeland Sciences
Erin Rook '23	OSU-Cascades/Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Student Members:

- Hannah Kutten
- Marin Monteith

Ex-Officio Members:

Difference, Power & Discrimination – Bradley Boovy
Office of Institutional Diversity – Jeff Kenney
Executive Committee Liaison – Erika McCalpine

During the Fall 2020, the Diversity Council took its charge to examine a variety of issues that arose as a result of the national civil disturbances generated by the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police Department in May 2020. In Spring 2020, a student group formed on the Corvallis campus and presented a series of demands to the administration. These demands concerned the decision to develop a new armed police force on the Corvallis campus, as well as demands for new anti-racist education requirements.

- The Diversity Council met with representatives of the student groups, Disarm OSU and We Can Do the Work in October 2020, to listen to their petitions for a different form of public safety and for anti-racist education. The students argued that the decision to create a new armed police force seemed rushed, without much public input, and inadequately justified. Second, they argued that movement for racial justice nationwide should urge OSU to provide a more adequate anti-racist education for all OSU students than that provided by the current general education and first-year entrance requirements. The students told us that they had not received much response from the administration and felt that they had been treated in an unprofessional and patronizing manner by members of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The Diversity Council agreed to further investigate University plans concerning both these demands and to remain in contact with the student groups.
- In November 2020, the Diversity Council met again to discuss the latest development in the creation of the OSU police force and to talk with Dr. Ron Mize from the OSU Ethnic Studies Program. Diversity Council Chair Orosco contacted Vice President Paul Odenthal to ask clarifying questions about the federal requirements for an armed police force on the Corvallis campus, the justification for the projected size of the force, and mechanisms for faculty input in the creation of the force. The impression of the Diversity Council was that the process for creating the police force was well underway and it was not obvious that the administration was interested in having much faculty or public input at that point. The Council did note that it seemed as though the decision to develop this force should have received much more public discussion and focus from the Faculty Senate.

The Diversity Council also invited Dr. Mize to discuss the demands from We Can Do the Work for the creation of a new anti-racist education requirement. The Council wanted to hear the Ethnic Studies program assessment of the possibility of such a

requirement for all OSU undergraduate and graduate students. Dr. Mize found no conflict between the Ethnic Studies program interests and the student demands. However, he made the Council aware of the demands issued by the Ethnic Studies program in 2019 for more robust funding from OSU in order to accomplish its mission. He informed the Council that the Ethnic Studies program had requested to meet with President Alexander about some of these demands, but had not received any response. At the time, the Council also heard from Dr. Bradley Boovey, the interim director of the Difference, Power, and Discrimination (DPD) Program. He concurred with Dr. Mize that there did not seem to be a conflict between DPD and the We Can Do the Work demands and pointed out that budget commitments for DPD from the administration had remained stagnant for some time.

During the Winter 2021 term, the Council convened to continue its discussions.

- In January 2021, Chair Orosco wrote to President Alexander to urge a meeting with the faculty representatives of Ethnic Studies. At the time, he agreed for a meeting in February 2021, and the Council urged the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to signal its support for a constructive engagement. The Council learned that United Academics of Oregon State University, the faculty union, had developed a petition to demand a meeting between Ethnic Studies and the administration and to commit better funding for both Ethnic Studies and the Difference, Power, and Discrimination Program. The Council discussed formally signing the petition as an organization.
- The Council also welcomed a meeting with Dr. Daniel López-Cevallos to hear about a series of conversations involving the Centro Cultural Cesar Chavez Advisory Board, the Office of Institutional Diversity, and the President and Provost's Leadership Council about the possibility of transforming OSU into a Hispanic Serving institution. Dr. López-Cevallos indicated to us that there is sufficient data to show that Latinx students are a growing population statewide and at OSU, but that the university is continually underfunding and eliminating support programs for this demographic. There seemed to be renewed interest in serving this group of students based on indications from President Alexander. The Council agreed that promoting better coordinated support of Latinx faculty and students should be a priority of the Faculty Senate. However, many of these discussions were derailed at the end of the Winter term with the leadership crisis that surrounded President Alexander.

In the Spring term 2021, the Diversity Council met to finalize some of these conversations and to listen to new concerns.

- Council Chair Orosco met with Faculty Senate President Selina Heppell to update her about the Diversity Council discussions. He indicated to her some of the lingering frustration of the Council at what seemed to be inadequate community discussion about the impact of the new police force and urged that there be more faculty representation, particularly from the Council, on the police force advisory committees.
- As to the question of the student demands for anti-racist education requirements, Chair Orosco again expressed the frustration of the Council that it seemed as though diversity and inclusion conversations at OSU are uncoordinated. Discussion about new initiatives were taking place through the Office of Institutional Diversity, the Provost's Task Force on Anti-Racist Education, and the President and Provost Leadership Council, but it was not clear how, or if, any of these bodies were to work with one another, or with the Faculty Senate. The Council was not formally invited to be part of any these discussions, even though several of its members served on one of more of these bodies. However, they all represented other committees or units in doing so.

- The Council also welcomed to a discussion Dr. Marisa Chappell, Faculty Senator for the College of Liberal Arts, who brought concerns about the proceedings of the Baccalaureate Core Committee. The Diversity Council felt that the possible impact on faculty and students of color by the Baccalaureate Core Committee decisions warranted more investigation. Chair Orosco agreed to inform the Faculty Senate President that the Council wanted the Executive Committee to give serious consideration to the petition from the College of Liberal Arts Senators.
- During its last meeting of the Spring term, the Diversity Council voted to endorse, as an organization, the UAOSU Ethnic Studies petition, and urged the Executive Committee to do likewise.

Report Prepared by Joseph Orosco, July 14, 2021