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Faculty Council DEI Work with Dr. Brenda Allen [1]

October 23, 2021 by Faculty Council Communications Committee [2]

In the Fall of 2019, Faculty Council approved using some of its funds to work on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and engaged Dr. Brenda J. Allen [3] to lead this work. After surveying the council to identify our needs, for almost two years, Dr. Allen met with the FC committees to revise their charges and operating procedures, conducted a retreat focused on improving shared governance through DEI, and conducted numerous micro-trainings.

Through her work with committees, she helped members directly connect and implement DEI to the practice of their focus areas, and helped them to improve their recruitment strategies. Additionally, with CREE, she and the committee members focused on a comprehensive proposal to recruit, retain, promote, and advance faculty of color at all ranks, including international faculty of color. The committee gathered data from across the CU System, including data showing stark stagnation in numbers of faculty of color over the past two decades and a dearth of faculty of color at the level of Full professor. In addition, they worked to gather information on the challenges navigated by faculty of color at CU. With the appointment of CDO Theodosia Cook, and increased DEI efforts on CU campuses, CREE shifted toward understanding efforts across the CU system and collaborating with CDO Cook on system-wide initiatives. CDO Cook has provided invaluable feedback and is partnering with the committee on efforts to address the recruitment, retention, promotion, and advancement of faculty of color. She also worked with the Communications Committee to draft the FC DEI statement as well as guidelines for interaction. Both of these will be finalized this year and shared with all faculty members on the new website.

Through these processes with Dr. Allen, Faculty Council and several committees made immediate changes to practices and laid the groundwork needed to confront unanticipated challenges as CU strives to be a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. While the FC and its committees still have much work to do, the members are grateful for the time and energy Dr. Allen dedicated to the council's improvement.

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