

Dean's Council Agenda (June 8, 2020)

4:00 - 4:45 pm

In the interest of time, no chair updates today. Focus on immediate things to do.

Still planning to make a centralized newsletter - template to go out this week.

Interest in organizing food drive events? We'd like to organize some events that give back to the larger Hyde Park community

Kelsey: OBA starting to open increased dialogue between students & professors. Stuff that happens to students - gets discussed between students, but not between students & professors; or the professors don't know what to do when they hear about an issue.

(faculty diversity is the most obvious issue, also student diversity in recruitment & retention of grad students!)

Geology department at UT Austin includes student reps on the faculty hiring committee, which would be great to have here.

OBA has been receptive to criticism - some changes already

Meytal: share the discussion points for the conversations that start up?
(document that could be shared w other programs to help them initiate conversations w faculty)

Kelsey: One thing that's become clear is a disconnect bw professors who say they feel students can come to them with any issue, students who feel this isn't true.

Victoria: survivor's bias? The PIs who have made it don't understand where the problems are for those who don't make it?

Kelsey: & also calling out the fact that the system has worked for these people but may not be working for others. Workaholic culture in science rewards workaholics - insufficient understanding of how students may be limited in energy or want to spread their energy to other causes than just the research.

Coming back to community events like volunteering at food banks, etc...

Meytal: What resources are needed by these community groups?
Supplies, volunteers, drop-offs?

Nikita: local food depository always looking for non-perishable goods. Right now, because demand is so high, they may be taking other goods too - emailing atm to find out whether taking frozen food, meat, etc.

Greater Chicago Food Depository (downtown) always looking for volunteers. Driving to places (they have vans); help with distribution on-site; also taking goods?

Local depository on Kenwood doesn't seem to need volunteers right now.

Maybe we could facilitate a drop-off of canned goods, etc. on campus.

Melissa Gilliam knows of students already working on food security issues.

Big question: can we use our funds to buy & donate food???

Can buy cleaning supplies for students to use.

Melissa Lindberg: Rules say that we can't donate. University is already a 'charity organization' with very strict rules about donating to other (501-C3?? I missed the number) organizations.

Can only use funds to support student activities. This was clarified recently at a very high level in administration.

Can facilitate activities! Provide for transportation (van/car rentals, etc.), cleaning supplies, etc. But not materials to give away.

Nikita will try to figure out what these organizations need.

Would like 2-3 other people to help out contacting groups - we got a couple volunteers

Will send an email to BSD students after they figure out what is needed.

Other questions: 15th of this month, hypothetically opening up UChicago a bit more.

Self-quarantining required for protesters (2 weeks min.)

What about participating in volunteer activities? Will this require self-quarantining? Will this disincentivize students from protesting or participating??

Melissa L: may be a question for Melissa Gilliam.

Back to conversation about what different programs have been doing:

Sarita: Pritzker held candlelight vigil, MSTP is organizing community dialogues.

Any other programs organizing conversations w students?

Katie A: meeting bw faculty & students in Human Genetics, GGSB last week. Program (department?) will be putting a statement on the website about racism in science, specifically how genetics research has perpetuated racism. May be a follow-up action timeline. Students are organizing a book club for ongoing education about effects of racism in STEM.

(book is called Superior: the return of race to science. Angela Saini.)

Per last meeting's decision that we could spend DC funds on books for reading groups during COVID pandemic, might try to get DC reimbursement for ebooks for students

Lindsay: MPHYS is doing similar things. Met w faculty today, discussed putting statement & action list up on website. Same issue as came up at beginning of meeting: disconnect bw faculty & students. Talking about paired mentorship as well. Possible book club books - Anti-racism ("How to Be an Anti-Racist"??); White Fragility: why it's so hard for white people to talk about race. These are both available through UChicago library - wouldn't need to buy?

Nikita: starting this year, sounds like there will be mandatory faculty diversity training? & all students (at least incoming) will take some training also? From a meeting today with Grad Council leadership & the provost.

Kelsey: this Weds - a movement called "shut down STEM" (day off this Weds to focus on institutional racism). Website is apparently really good for resources!!

<https://www.shutdownstem.com/action>

Might there be a peer-type way of getting this info to PIs who aren't receptive to it from their students? Less power differential.

We can ask our own PIs to share, or our program chairs.

We could reach out to Vicky.

And/or send out as Dean's Council collective.

If we have an email about community actions, let's put this at the top of the email: here's a national campaign that would be a good context for actively working on these issues!

Victoria: have seen some groups (M1s) finding matching donors for things like food drives or student donations. Might be able to find donors on the internet... Someone in the group had a partner who was at a firm that

agreed to match donations. We would need to do some independent legwork, maybe.

Meytal: a friend found a matching donor, but it depends on the individual you find or the policy of the company that agrees to match.

Might want to put a line in the email asking for people who happen to know of opportunities to get us in touch.

Victoria: for Neuro cluster, during coffee hour last week - we started talking about expectations that students have from the faculty. We asked them to make a statement, they did on Friday. A bunch of students came up collectively with a list of action items & sent this to the program chairs. One of the most pressing ones - asking for a response to recent anti-immigration policies. Push for the university to take a strong stand to support current students, be part of national conversation. We will send this list of action items out to Dean's Council - & to other students generally? (View-only)

Another suggestion: an 'art wall' type installation commemorating victims of racist violence. Could be a virtual installation right now. Various types of art - visual, poetry, etc.

Could we do a community mural activity? E.g. for boarded up places in the neighborhood.

For South Loop, there's a community facebook page

Hyde Park chamber of commerce? Hyde Park - Kenwood Community Conference?

- DC vote to fund masks/supplies for student volunteer groups

Make it so that programs could use their own funds for these events; set a budget for the General Fund - \$500 - 1000??

We voted for a \$1000 budget from the General Fund for related expenses. APPROVED