



CCE Diversity Equity Inclusion Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: January 31, 2022

Attendees: Brian Stoltz, Bil Clemons, Kim See, Julie Kornfield, Reina Buenconsejo, Kyle Virgil, Stephanie Threat, Paolina Martinez, Lindsey Malcolm-Piqueux and Elyse Garlock. Visitor: Kim Pham Absent: Scott Cushing.

Item 1: Approval of the Meeting Minutes for Posting

Subitem A: Approval of December 14 Meeting Minutes to be done by e-mail.

Item 2: DEI Moment: Honored bell hooks, author, professor, feminist, and social activist passed away on December 15, 2021.

Item 3: Updates from Committee News:

Subitem A: Campus Climate Survey Update

- The Division level reports on the Campus Climate Survey are in progress and should be completed within the next couple of weeks for distribution.
- Is the plan that you will go around to the divisions to present the findings?
- Yes, I will be asking the Division and DEI Committee Chairs what their preferences are and how they would like me to proceed and that is what we will do. Yes, I will be available as well as my colleague, Joe Ramirez, to present to what audience or audiences you think would make the most sense. We want to make sure that everyone is informed, and that the data is rolled out in a way that are conducive to conversation and positive change, so we will do whatever it is that you need.
- It is something for our committee to think about, whether we would prefer a private meeting with Lindsey first to see where that goes or some other format, which will be on us to decide so you can prompt us when you are ready.

Decision: Present the findings to the CCE

Next Steps: Eventual presentation by CCID per CCE Decision

Item 4: CCE Town Halls and What is Next

Subitem A: Introduction: Kim Pham Host of the CCE Townhall Meetings

- Kim Pham presents the compiled townhall notes.
- The two-part CCE Townhall series was designed to engage the community in reviewing the work that has been done this past year and learn additional ideas on what would be useful for recruiting and retention to keep DEI at the forefront of the CCE Community.

Subitem B: Townhall Notes for the Second Townhall

- Multiple volunteers hosted the various breakout rooms and took notes on the discussions of ideas and thoughts for CCE DEI. Volunteers are always needed.
- The townhall notes are extensive so larger categories are grouped together. Since visitation week is in February, I started with Recruitment and Visitation weekend.
- The in-person visit is March 18, the virtual is in February for those students who have offers of admission.
- In addition, there will be campus wide Caltech Shines Day. It is virtual and in either late March/early April for all students who have been admitted.
- In the Townhall Notes there are three groups:
 1. **Recruitment:** targeting prospective students
 2. **Retention:** targeting graduate students currently enrolled in the division.
 3. **Promotion:** How do we promote what we are doing in the broader community and with Alumni?
- When we set up the categories for last year's Townhall, Promotions was intended to be for the advancement people once they came to Caltech. For example, for faculty it would be tenure, for a postdoc it would be either a faculty position or a job. It would be great to include that note so that we have continuity from year to year. Career advancement will be added. If anyone wants to add anything, please contact Kim Pham.

For a PDF of Kim Pham's Townhall Notes please email egarlock@caltech.edu

▪ **Page 1 Recruitment:**

▪ **Visitation Weekend:**

Item 1. Expanding in person visits to include ChemE and BMB with Chemistry.

- The in-person visits now include Chemistry, ChemE and BMB.

Item 2: Propose revision to the visitation weekend schedule. A better chance for the students to interact with faculty if they get to meet first then tour and science/poster session later. How is the schedule decided?

- Recruiting is different this year, we only have one day to reduce the time students stay in their hotel rooms. See schedule below:
 - 8:00 AM Breakfast, Beckman Mall
 - 8:15 AM Welcome to Caltech, presented by Dennis Dougherty, CCE Chair
 - 8:30 AM Graduate Studies Options' introductions by Option Representatives (BMB, ChemE, Chemistry)
 - 9:30 AM Morning campus and housing tour hosted by CCE graduate students
 - 10:00am Open House - Lab tours and research discussions
 - Noon Lunch, Beckman Mall
 - 1:30 PM Afternoon campus and housing tour hosted by CCE graduate students
 - 2:00-5:00 PM Poster Session hosted by CCE research groups, Beckman Mall
 - 3:00 PM Social with Lime Food Truck
 - 5:00 PM Students depart

Item 3: Ensure affinity groups are active and present for recruiting events. I believe we did that last year. CGSC DEI subcommittee had a table. Is this place for this year?

- A plan needs to be implemented so that changes and additions are consistent from year to year.

- The visits are handled by the admissions committee and the option managers since all three are on the same day. I doubt changes or additions reaches the option managers to include them in the next year's visits. Prior to Covid, they have used the schedule from the previous year
- This has been a problem for years, when we are all split up having separate visit weekends it puts a burden on the affinity groups. This one of the reasons, we put together Caltech Shines. To lessen the burden on the affinity groups and CCID does not have the time.
- Caltech Shines is a date dedicated to looking beyond research. We need to make certain that Caltech Shines is well advertised during the recruiting visits
- Caltech Shines is for everyone who has committed. Some will have decided by then, but the invitation will go to everyone.
- One benefit in having a virtual day is that last year we had a DEI video that could be played again.
- How will a prospective student know what diversity sources are available in the department/divisions?
- If it too much, there is this back up day to reinforce their presence. Caltech Shines Is the backup day.
- In the past we invited the chemistry specific groups to Brian's welcome message in the first part of the day are the breakout group's comments envisioning requesting something more than that?
- The townhall group wants specific events so the students can interact with these groups as a more personal intimate event with students.

Item 4: Using healthcare, salaries, guaranteed 1st year housing, emergency/moving funds as recruitment tools.

- This is an overview of what Caltech offers, but I think these are important. Do most students know about the emergency or moving funds? I doubt most grad schools offer 1st year housing, which would be good for recruiting.

Item 5: Introduce content during orientation showing students where to find DEI –related support. (This would be very carefully designed and constantly updated).

- During orientation, how is this handled or is there someone we can ask for the information.
- This is part of the option representative's introduction. Since this is the first time that all three options are presenting together. It is not certain how the presentation is being coordinated. Some of the information is in the talks that are given. Some of these facts are included but not in detail. With these notes, the slides could be updated.
- Who represents Chemical Engineering and BMB? Kostas Giapis for ChemE and Bil Clemons for BMB.
- Would it be helpful to forward this information them? Yes, to all of us, let them know that these were items students were interested in seeing added to the presentations.
- On the schedule the options have one hour total. It will be very tight. Meetings with the faculty will be virtual before the meeting.
- Also, the schedule has CCE graduate students hosting the campus and housing tours and good opportunity to encourage them to talk about how they chose Caltech, if that is possible. Encourage the graduate hosts to detail what their decision process was like in choosing Caltech.

- Also, the fact that there is guaranteed first year housing is important and a big selling point because the Caltech housing cost is much lower than what is available in the surrounding area.
- **Retention of Prospective Students:**
- The other item of importance was retention.

Item 1: Include resources for students who want to switch options during grad school – This is more for students who are here.

Item 2: Expanding transfer programming. How much of this might be more for the recruiting process before application process.

Item 3: Follow up with the students after Future Ignited and Caltech Shines to ensure that they have resources and community of students from similar backgrounds.

- Mainly Caltech Shines has the resources, and this can be revisited for the next committee meeting. Making sure that we advertise and have representation in the volunteer pool for Caltech Shines.

- **Tracking Data**

Item 2: Create exit survey for graduate students as part of graduation requirements.

“What did you wish you knew?” to inform future action items to help retain incoming student.

- The concept is to get more ideas in terms of what the division could improve on when the student has been through the whole program and is leaving.
- In our institutional research office, we administer an institute wide exit survey when people complete their graduation requirements. Would this be more of a division specific one with a focus on improving things within the division? Yes. Is there a way to add division specific questions to that survey? Yes, we would not inundate recent graduates.
- My colleague, Joe, will reach out to each division to create the questions. Who should he contact at CCE, the graduate option representatives?
- Since what students share will vary from science and research to the community aspect of being a graduate student, the option reps would make the most sense.
- Can that information be sent to the DEI Committee and CGSC, which is concerned with making the social aspect of being a grad student better?
- I will move the project forward and get the information to everyone. How often would we get the information?
- For undergraduates, we do it once a year. For graduate students it varies since people often finish in the middle of the year. There is the option of once a term or on rolling basis and then compile the data once per term and pass it back to all in that way. Since we are concerned that we capture the data when people are a captive audience and have the time to fill it out before they start on the next step in their life. Compiling it once a year makes the most sense.
- On an annual basis or something similar is a good idea for the sake of anonymity since typically there are not that many graduates leaving throughout the year. Particularly, in terms of our committee reviewing the data to keep it once a year.
- Great point. Keeping the identity of students anonymous is important.
- A committee member spoke of a pet project that came up in the townhalls. Share stories collected from current students and put into a format, perhaps a video. People willing to share their stories in some fashion. #2 Create opportunities to share stories from current

students to incoming students. Validate common student struggles. How many of these stories will be negative responses?

- People may have both responses. We can determine how we want to present the stories – internal or public. The idea must be anonymous. Tabulate the stories in written word then different people will read them on the video while the background is a contextual scene or imagery related to the stories. It is important to preserve the identity of the storyteller and up to them if they want to be seen.
- With limited time, we will not review all the items. A timeline and action plan to cover what suggestions should be implemented during the year. I can enlist people of CGSC, but anyone interested in having a separate meeting to put together an action plan that would be great.
- An action plan will help organize the recruitment process, so the focus is on what is most effective. I would like to be involved in an action plan.
- **Supporting Grad students/Postdoc throughout the program**
 - **Item #1:** Programming to support students during stressful stages of grad school (e.g., candidacy)
 - One point was the fact that we have different milestones which are stressful for students and contribute to the reason students decide to leave because they do not have support through those stressful times. Many second years are doing candidacy right now. Is there any programming to assist students in getting through the process? it is a solitary process of forming a committee, writing proposals while doing research updates. There were suggestions for a more vigorous support network to assist students during this stressful time. Some form of community support.
 - **Item #2:** Create opportunities to share stories from current students to incoming students. Validate common student struggles. Discussed in Item 2.
 - **Item #3:** Create opportunities to advertise and support careers outside academia, research scientist (e.g., Scientific writing, advocacy, law, medicine, business, etc.) Invite alumni working in the areas.
 - There will be a career panel, in future, along with other programming events.
 - These are critical, one of the biggest fears I had going into this year was that we recruited one of the most diverse classes of all time at Caltech. The fear that if we will fail these students then we mess things up for years to come. This class is probably the most critical to succeed for all time. Since this is their first year, we have time for them to realize how hard it is and let them know they are not alone or having a unique experience because their research project has not taken off yet. The next twelve months will be critical. This needs to be high on our list of priorities, whether it is CGSC or this committee in tandem. It would be great if CGSC would broaden out to include BMB and ChemE as well. It would mean doing more on a divisional level to make certain that students, particularly this year's students know that they are not alone and assist them. We all must help each other through it.
 - I agree that these things are critical. If we decide, as the committee, to provide a space for that support. A great resource would be to segregate these milestones in the form of different directories. You would find different mechanisms of support such as testimonials, tips, and advice from grad students current and alumni about the journey itself (e.g., During my candidacy I had a hard time with X or it was really helpful to know Y and so on.
 - I remember, when I went through my candidacy, I received a "how to write a proposal section" with different parts highlighted. I have used that foundation going forward in my

own research. As DEI we could offer a package of resources that would be both practical and emotional. Some changes happened years ago, but for this class we need to do more.

- CGSC did a candidacy panel and has been helping with how to write a research document and how to write a story. But each research lab approaches research differently.
- There is a range of opinions on how best to approach the process. Some say don't take time off during the candidacy process because your research is why you will get your degree and that is unpopular with everyone.
- I will e-mail Alison to coordinate a meeting with CGSC with the inclusion of BMB and ChemE to set up a series of meetings to work on ways to assist the current class through candidacy.
- As a grad student at another university, my department had a very structured way of doing candidacy. The rules were laid out, were very clear, with no discrepancy in the process between professors. Uniformity gave us confidence in going through the process. At Caltech it is who is on your committee, how serious will it be, who your professor is and whether you will be allowed to do your research. Faculty have different opinions regarding this. But this is considered an educational component and should be structured. We can structure it any way we want to, but there needs to be clear documentation and rules that everyone adheres to. I have students in 3 options, all with different rules for their candidacy process across divisions, which can be frustrating and unfair to the students. Students talk about this very issue all the time. Many students are not sure if they are doing the candidacy process correctly. Structure and uniformity would help. It is probably too late for this year, so we will work toward next year.

Decision: Invite Kim to another committee meeting to complete the presentation

Next Steps: Set up a series of meeting with CGSC, BMB and ChemE.