

Academic Senate DEI Committee | January 19, 2024

Present: Marisa Henderson (Chair), Suresh Balasubramanian, Cathryn Bock, Erica Edwards, Sean Hickey, Shelly Jo Kraft, Feng Lin, Cynthia Merritt, Tamme Quinn-Grzebyk, Erika Robinson, Ali Salamey, Christopher Kelly (Graduate Council Liaison), Pramod Khosla (Policy Committee Liaison)

Absent with Notice: Amber Harrison (AAUP-AFT Liaison), Mark Wenzel (PTF Union Liaison)

Absent: Chris Kliethermes, Nicole Wheeler

Guest: Michael Poterala (Vice President of the Office of General Counsel)

Meeting called to order: 1:03 pm

The minutes from the December 15th meeting were approved with no submitted changes.

The committee was joined by Michael Poterala, Vice President of the Office of General Counsel, to lead discussions on First Amendment and Free Speech in the Academic Context through a legal lens. A few notes from the discussion:

- Mr. Poterala reminded the group that the First Amendment of the United State Constitution restricts government intervention on speech. This restriction applies to government at all levels, such as public universities, with exceptions in the case of libel and slander. However, there are parameters within the speech that can be regulated, such as time, place, or matter and as well as a prevention of disrupted operations.
- Mr. Poterala walked the group through some scenarios that involved universities and how they navigated issues of free speech, including some cases that involved the University of Michigan.
- Mr. Poterala informs the group that faculty members are well positioned to offer educational opportunities, and there are ways to navigate these difficult issues. He has agreed to share some resources with the group to help in our work.

Afterwards, the chair encouraged members to complete the Culture and Climate Survey and share with their colleagues. The survey opens January 24th and runs, tentatively, until the end of February. More information about the current survey, as well as actions resulting from the first survey, are found here: <https://climatestudy.wayne.edu/>.

Next meeting will be February 16th at 1 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 2:16 pm.