

ARTF #5- MINUTES

Location: Zoom

Date: February 26, 2021

Time: 12-1.30pm

Attendees: Treena Orchard, Maxwell Smith, Wendy Latimer, Marnie Wedlake, Carla Duarte de Silva, Jacob Taylor, Debbie Rudman, Bukola Sonibare, Elaine D'Agostino, Chizoba Oriuwa, Chika Obetta, Neciula de Paula Carneiro Porto, Larissa Bartlett & Ivan Culum

1. Hello & Approval of Agenda:

Our usual notetaker was unable to attend and Wendy Latimer offered = 😊.

2. Sub-Committee Updates:

Max spoke for the subcommittee on recommendations from the President's ARWG:

We may need to work at the higher level to implement these recommendations and there are some things that our faculty can't move on without more large- scale work at the University level. The group identified two things that could be done with regard to Faculty-level training and related initiatives while we wait for Western's Direction on other recommendations:

- 1) Portal on the Faculty Website – submissions about the topic that are local to the faculty
- 2) Anti-Oppression and Cultural Training – we could lead on this front by designing and implementing training in our own Faculty.

Neciula spoke for the Curriculum/Policy Review Sub-committee:

Some members had a meeting with the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which was a positive meeting and conversations were had about the overlapping activities across campus in terms of anti-racism/EDI endeavours. CTL has training opportunities to help get everyone across campus get up to speed. Some members of the subcommittee will be meeting with Faculty academic counsellors to discuss the policies they use and examine them through a lens of anti-oppression.

Elaine spoke for the Collecting Stories Sub-committee:

They haven't met since the last large group meeting, but she offered some insights about using the FHS app to communicate about our Taskforce to students (action item from our last meeting). Treena met with FHS communications folks and there was some discussion about hosting an event or using the meeting space on the app and maybe using the same format as some other zoom/webinars happening in other areas at the faculty. Carla commented that there has been some discussion about events with creative expression/art, but we need to explore the best place/platform for our purposes. She added that the challenges of time and workload are making the push forward tough right now.

3. Duplication of Activities

There are many different groups across campus doing similar kinds of activities and it would be helpful if we had an inventory of sorts in terms of who is what, what folks need, and what next steps should look like in terms of feeding our work into the work being done by the Senior Advisors and the President's Office.

In our Taskforce, the TRC group has been identified as one of several Faculty level initiatives doing virtually the same thing. What can we do that's unique, what is being duplicated? We can do similar things, but what makes this group unique and how can we support things moving forward without too much work?

There has been a newly established EDI Network at Western – also a comment that if we wait for strategy we still need to do something in the meantime. This EDI Network isn't tasked with making change but sharing initiatives and having discussions. We can also see that EDI work figures prominently in the Strategic Planning exercises happening at Western. There is a comment that we feel a bit in a lull and a time of reflection.

4. FHS Signature Approach: Intellectual empathy

Intellectual Empathy Approach was mentioned as a possible signature approach that could set our work apart. Carla, who spear-headed this idea in the taskforce (and one of her courses), mentioned the possibility of a webinar/training session as a way for our Faculty to get the training that is needed and double as a way to share the news about what our taskforce is doing with Students, who would also be offered the training.

5. Research Assistant

We are moving forward with the hiring of a Research Assistant – hoping to get it posted in the next couple of weeks with a start date of May 1st? More details to come.

6. Leadership Structure for our Taskforce

Treena will be taking a sabbatical beginning in July so we need to explore what our leadership will look like going forward. There is a faculty council meeting coming up and Treena will be sharing there what has been happening with our group. There was a comment made that we consider having a Senior Leader in at least a co-leadership role to signal continued commitment and also have student representation at the leadership level.

7. What Now?

We reflected on the fact that we are feeling a bit stuck/or in a lull, but we also feel a sense of urgency on delivering some concrete actions. If we are feeling both overwhelmed and like we are duplicating work, we have still identified some things here we can move forward with, and

perhaps focussing on a couple key initiatives while we reconcile all the duplication of work is a way forward. One thing suggested: Events/modules/art creativity project – can we move forward with that now?

In the absence of concrete actions and ideas coming centrally at this time, we could ask our Faculty to do foundational anti-racism, anti-oppression training – set a goal that the Faculty commits to having all faculty and staff complete training of this kind by September 1st. From there, we could call out other faculties as a challenge to meet the goal as well. We can message this through Directors and Deans and have them challenge one another.

All people and students especially respond to the concept of “Agents of Change” – so much human capital in our students – there is momentum and with guidance this can be an opportunity for our students to participate – we can design a seminar/webinar series – and be able to meet a commitment to training or an event.

8. Action Items

Identify duplication work across the university and wait for some organization at the broader university level to be able to make key strides on things like the TRC and the Working Group recommendations, In the short/semi-long term, we can begin moving forward with:

- 1) FHS internal challenge: 90%+ of faculty and staff having completed some form of (a) anti-oppression and/or anti-racism training and (b) Indigenous cultural safety training by the beginning of the 2021-2022 academic year.
- 2) FHS external challenge: FHS challenges each of Western's faculties in joining us in completing the above challenge.
- 3) Create an online event for students that would allow us to introduce the taskforce, introduce scholarship on anti-racism and anti-oppression work and maybe the collection of stories, art, creative writing in our faculty.
- 4) Introduce for the 2021-2022 incoming FHS undergraduate student cohort the requirement that they complete (a) anti-oppression and/or anti-racism training and (b) Indigenous cultural safety training during the 2021-2022 academic year. FHS can identify suitable modules/training opportunities that students can show proof of completion. These could also be offered, in conjunction with CTL or the EDI office, throughout the year. These could be operationalized as a requirement in a required first-year course, as a degree requirement (requiring approvals from higher-up), and so forth.

9. Wrap Up & Next Meeting

Everyone agreed that meeting monthly as a group is a good idea and Treena will send a Doodle Poll around shortly.

10. Follow-Up

After our meeting, Treena along with Wendy and Max had a few emails about a way to introduce the training initiatives/challenges. The overarching goal is to ensure that, as an FHS community, we are on the same page when it comes to basic tenets and principles of anti-racism, anti-oppression, and Indigenous cultural safety. Without creating this environment and foundation among our staff, faculty, and students, how can we expect to succeed in our other anti-racism/anti-oppression work that we hope to do as a task force and as a faculty?

As a plan to enact these, we could bring these proposals to the School Directors and the Dean for their input, feedback, and approval. It was suggested that we could make this in a “letter” format from the Anti-Racism Taskforce and sent to the Deans and Directors in FHS. We may be asked to do the leg work of offering options for the training, with support and expertise from folks at CTL, the Equity Office, Dr. Kaniki in the President’s Office, Office of Indigenous Services. Perhaps one of the sub-committees- the TRC one maybe- can be redeployed to do some of this work.

One thing that we should do strategically to shore up support is to pre-emptively identify modules or training opportunities that would 'count' toward faculty and staff training in this area. The first question that directors and senior leadership will have is who will be responsible for running the training, validating external training. If we came up with a list of offerings that would 'count' (perhaps in collaboration with CTL, equity office) and put these in the letter, that would assuage some concerns regarding operationalization.