Progress & Activities Report
2016-17 Academic Year
INTRODUCTION

What is the Committee on Diversity & Inclusion?

Diversity and inclusion are central to the mission of the Sanford School of Public Policy. As a leader in the field of public policy studies, the Sanford School has a responsibility to grapple with tough questions related to the major challenges of our time. As recent events have demonstrated, diversity and inclusion are central among them. Following in the path of the Duke University Diversity Task Force (DTF), the Sanford School’s Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) has worked to set and execute an agenda for ensuring that Sanford provides a vibrant intellectual community that embraces and is empowered by diversity. This agenda focuses on improving the school structure and environment, faculty recruitment and retention, and the curriculum.

This year, the Committee continued to build on the previous academic year’s initiatives, and monitored the climate among faculty, staff, and students through the 2016-2017 Sanford Climate Survey. We also devoted considerable attention to maintaining our efforts to provide a community that fosters inclusive excellence in the context of the contemporary social and political landscape.

“Inclusion does not mean extending a hand of ‘welcome’ or ‘hospitality’ to women and underrepresented groups, for this accords these groups the status of guests in someone else’s home. Rather, Duke must aspire proactively to create a culture that values and respects difference as a necessary component of the University. In an inclusive community, members of underrepresented groups are treated as essential members whose presence will transform and reshape the University’s core identity in positive ways.”

(Duke University Diversity Task Force Report, 2016)
A YEAR IN NUMBERS

25

The number of events, activities, and projects the CDI has hosted, completed, or assisted in over the course of the 2016-17 academic year.

88%

Positive opinion of the climate of inclusion at Sanford across staff, faculty, and students.

114%

Increase in student engagement with the CDI’s Diversity & Inclusion climate survey.

30+

Unique visitors to the Sanford Safe Space for a number of reasons, including prayer space, decompression, private discussions, and refuge.

60%

Percentage of faculty we would lose without those who were born in another country, or who's parents or grandparents were born in another country.

70%

Students who’ve had respectful conversations about race and income in their courses.

30

Number of faculty who read and participated in the lunch discussion of Whistling Vivaldi, about how stereotypes can impact the classroom.

25

Number of CDI members, representing faculty, staff, undergraduate, MPP, students, MIDP students, and Ph.D. students.

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MAKING A MEANINGFUL IMPACT

“Sanford’s Committee on Diversity and Inclusion has done superb work and has helped the school become a leader in this important area. Much more good work lies ahead.”

- Kelly Brownell, Dean of the Sanford School of Public Policy

“My career at Duke has fortunately overlapped with the creation of the Sanford Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), which has improved my ability to coordinate with other students as well as faculty and staff to promote inclusion within the Sanford School of Public Policy... I am so excited about what the CDI has been able to do in such a short time period, and I look forward to upcoming initiatives.”

- Laura Bellows, PhD Student

“The CDI helps us all stay aware of our own biases and check them at the door. In my work they are invaluable in consulting on the composition of search committees and issues that come up during searches. The committee and its initial report deserves much credit for many of the changes we’ve implemented to the search process.”

- Judith Kelley, Senior Associate Dean

“Sanford’s CDI has elevated the school’s standard for how folks view and think about diversity and inclusion to a higher level since its inception in 2015. Our community is a better place as a result of the CDI’s existence.”

- David Arrington, Associate Dean for Finance and Administration

“Like never before, this past year challenged us to stand up for our community values, and become more aware of how to be inclusive. I know this challenge will continue to grow in the coming years, and I am gratefully encouraged to have the CDI with us as we move forward.”

- Shelley Stonecipher, Assoc. Director, DeWitt Wallace Center for Media and Democracy

“The safe space was both a needed respite for emotionally stressful current affairs, and also a great space to bounce ideas and explore opportunities to make Sanford a more inclusive and just space. I’m proud to go to a school that offers such a resource.”

- Kavya Sekar, Master of Public Policy Candidate
IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT AT SANFORD

Brown Bag Discussion Series

Throughout the academic year, the CDI hosted a regular series of Brown Bag Lunch Discussions. Topics included the deaths of Terrence Crutcher and Philando Castile, sexual assault and rape culture, the aftermath of the 2016 election, how to discuss politics over the holidays, wellness and self-care, and traveling while targeted.

An additional Brown Bag was held in conjunction with the Sanford Center for Political Leadership, Innovation and Service (POLIS) to discuss the socio-political and policy making ramifications of current politics.

The Brownell-Whetten Diversity Award

The Brownell-Whetten Diversity and Inclusion Award for outstanding commitment to inclusive excellence recognizes the contributions of faculty, staff, and students to Sanford’s diversity and inclusion efforts. Sanford Senior Associate Dean Judith Kelley was the inaugural recipient.

She has been an active supporter of the CDI and has worked to ensure that the faculty recruitment process incorporates efforts to consider diverse candidates. She also facilitated a faculty discussion of Claude Steele’s book, Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do.
Safe Space Kick-Off Event Series

During the beginning of the Fall 2016 semester, the Sanford CDI hosted a series of three Safe Space kickoff events which were co-sponsored by Duke Recreation and Physical Education, and the Duke University Stores. These events commemorated the grand-unveiling of the Sanford Safe Space, and served to spark a conversation in the school about the term.

The first event was a community forum, where we discussed the national attention given to safe spaces and their relationship to free speech and academic rigor, as well as the importance of these spaces, and why we have a physical one here at Sanford. The second event was a special guest lecture by Dr. Ben Reese, a clinical psychologist and Duke University's Vice President for Institutional Equity. This lecture focused on implicit bias, and included evidence from research on bias in early childhood that shapes decision making.

The final event of the Safe Space kickoff series was a reception to commemorate the opening of the safe space, to reveal the winners of the Safe Space art contest (Judges: David Arrington, Sunny Ladd, and Ade Olayinka), and to present the first Brownell-Whetten Diversity Award.

“Safe spaces are not about censoring discussions or allowing students to skip classes at will. They are about how students at universities...ought to approach their fellows on campus, what group ground rules we can reasonably expect of one another in pursuit of those aspirations, and lastly...how no single person can understand the experiences of everybody around them.”

(The Chronicle Editorial Board, 2016)
Why Do We Have a Safe Space?

Individuals with marginalized identities face a myriad of obstacles in their day-to-day lives, as they must navigate a society ostensibly organized to cater to the needs and preferences of individuals who are members of the dominant cultural archetypes. Because society is structured with a strong bias towards those who possess certain characteristics—many of whom are simply the result of birth or circumstance—those without them can be marginalized and made to feel maligned because of certain aspects of their identities.

When people who have these marginalized identities have experiences or beliefs that are different from those in the dominant culture, it can be difficult for those individuals to share aspects of their reality without fear of being dismissed, minimized, ignored, or retaliated against. For these individuals, spaces that cater to dominant individuals can feel unsafe.

The Sanford Safe Space aims to provide individuals with those marginalized identities a place where they feel free to self-express without fear of judgment, gas-lighting, or perceived repercussions.

What IS a ‘Safe Space’?

A ‘Safe Space’ is a location or environment wherein an individual is made to feel that they are free to self-express without fear of reprisal, judgement, or marginalization. What one could consider to be a “Safe Space” may take on many forms depending on an individual’s needs, and their access to resources that can provide them with that support. More “traditional” safe spaces may include a person’s home, their friend group, or family members.
The CDI worked in conjunction with students Jessica Van Meir and Adam Bullock to explore requests to provide gender-neutral restroom facilities at the Sanford School. During the Spring 2017 semester, two single-occupancy restrooms on the first floor of Rubenstein Hall were converted into gender-neutral facilities, complete with signage. Options are currently being explored for the Sanford Building.

CDI member Kate Lohmeyer founded a Pride organization at Sanford during Spring 2017 with the goal of fostering a more inclusive environment and improving the experiences of LGBT students at Sanford. To this end, Sanford Pride has worked very closely with the CDI and the leadership at Sanford to make lasting, meaningful changes to the climate at our school.

Trans 101

The rights of transgender persons and the broader concepts of gender identity and gender expressions have become part of our national conversation in recent years, and conversations can be difficult to engage in, particularly when we may not be very familiar with the issues or the vocabulary.

To help us better understand this vital conversation, Angel Collie from Duke’s Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity provided a ‘Trans 101’ training and primer on transgender issues and gender identity/expression.
In conjunction with Dean Brownell and the Sanford Communications team, the CDI launched the “#PolicyForAll” campaign to demonstrate our school’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. The campaign has included the creation of flyers and placards to display in the building, a large banner that hangs prominently in Fleishmann Commons (pictured above), and the creation of a promotional video featuring a diverse representation of students, faculty, and staff bearing signs that describe aspects of their identity while proclaiming “you are welcome here” to those who would come to Sanford.

A central part of this campaign was a visual demonstration of how critical members of our community are who have immigrated to the United States. Acting on the suggestion of Subhrendu Pattanayak, we took a series of photos illustrating how our faculty would look without those who were born in another country, or those who are 1st or 2nd generation immigrants.

The USC Rossier School of Education emulated the series, crediting Sanford for the inspiration, and others implored their own schools to do the same.
Racial Equity Reading Group

In the fall, Quinton Smith took over the Racial Equity Book Club established by Catherine Admay and Jon Abels, and participants have been reading *Eduardo Bonilla-Silva’s “Racism Without Racists.”* In the coming year, the group will be expanded to include other schools near Sanford.

#StayWokeCinema Film Series

Over the course of the year, there were two film viewings and discussions that focused on the Black experience. In the fall, the documentary “13th” was screened at Sanford, while an excursion out to the Carolina Theater to see “I Am Not Your Negro” was organized in the spring.

Panel Event on Immigration

The CDI hosted a panel discussion titled “Bridges, Walls, and What’s Behind it All: Exploring the Current Rhetoric on Immigration.” The event was free and open to the public and included a powerful roster of experts: Imam Abdullah Antepli, Chief Rep. of Muslim Affairs, Felicia Arriaga, Doctoral Candidate in Sociology, Manoj Mohanan, Assistant Professor of Public Policy, David Schanzter, Director of the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, and Madhu Sharma, Duke Hindu Chaplain.
REACHING OUT TO MAKE A CHANGE

Working Beyond Sanford

Throughout the academic year, the work of the CDI has been held up as an example for the broader Duke community. Committee leadership is represented in the Task Force on Bias & Hate Advisory Committee (helping to shape university-wide policies and practices related to diversity and inclusion) and the Duke University Diversity Leaders Group. The CDI has also assisted other schools at Duke with their own diversity-related groups.

CDI co-sponsored events have included work with the Hindu Student’s Association, as well as Sanford PhD students and the Wilson Lecture Series to bring in UC Berkley professor Ian Haney Lopez to discuss the topic of “Dog Whistle Politics.”

Provost’s Forum on Race, Community, & the Pursuit of Justice

One major event that the CDI helped to organize was titled “Policing Color: Black, Brown and Blue | Provost’s Forum on Race, Community, & the Pursuit of Justice.” This forum explored the intersection of race and policing, bringing together law enforcement officials, academics, activists, and the families of victims from across the country.

A day-long event, the forum consisted of five key sessions: Understanding the Problem, Dissecting Police/Civilian Interactions, Visualizing the Impact of Racial Violence, Obtaining Justice and Balancing Power, and Constructing Solutions.
About Us
The Sanford Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (CDI), established in 2015, strives to create a working and learning environment that lives up to the mission of the Sanford School of Public Policy and includes representatives from a diverse range of Sanford’s communities, including students, staff, faculty and administrators.

Special thanks to Dean Kelly Brownell and all the staff, faculty and students that support these efforts.

Questions? Contact Us!
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