

COSAM Accountability Committee Meeting Summary

March 23, 2022

In attendance- Kimberly Mulligan, Courtney Leisner, Steph Shepherd, Melissa Halford, Melinda Lanus, Vanessa Falcao, Wendy Hood

1. Department Updates:

- a. **Mathematics and Statistics-** OurSTEMstory, Coded Bias- Humanity vs. Machines, took place on March 16th and 17th. March 16th was a guided discussion of the movie and March 16th was a panel discussion featuring Dr. Christopher Harris (Auburn University), Dr. Jesmin Khan (Tuskegee University), and Dr. Candice Lanus (University of Alabama Huntsville). Over the course of both events, there were 46 attendees.

i. Successes:

1. The panelists were passionate, and the audience was very engaged.
2. Dr. Khan mentioned that she had not considered some of the things that were discussed when she was teaching her class and is planning to incorporate some of these discussions when she teaches.
3. COSAM would like to build mutually beneficial relationships with our counterparts at Tuskegee and we hope that Dr. Khan will be able to assist us in beginning some conversations.
4. Chelsea, an undergraduate in DBS, helped with updating the website, getting information out on social media, etc.

ii. Opportunities for Growth:

1. We would love to see increased participation in these events. We would like for the host committee to have an opportunity to present the event at a faculty meeting and make sure Chairs are encouraging faculty to participate.
2. Melinda had a great suggestion of thinking how each of the professors that teach a subject matter that is closely aligned with the topic can incorporate the event and learning materials into their syllabus and include the event as something that students attend as part of their grade.
3. We could create a PowerPoint that outlines why the event was created (Ashley has done this and it can be adapted) and its implications on the subject matter being discussed
4. We understand that our undergrads cycle out and the technical side can't depend on 1 person. We need to have Chelsea create an OurSTEMstory tutorial for all things that dela with advertisement, social media, that can be shared with the department that is hosting the event.

iii. Geoscience will host OurSTEMstory in the fall.

- b. **Chemistry-** Vanessa Falcao and several students will be visiting 2 schools in Montgomery to discuss careers in chemistry and opportunities available to students in COSAM: Lanier High School for the Women in Science event and Brewbaker Technology Magnet for Tech Time. Both schools have a high population of students from historically excluded groups in STEM

- i. The National Organization of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE) received a grant from the national organization's K-12 outreach fund. They would like to utilize the funds to perform chemistry experiments and talk to students about opportunities in chemistry in local schools, particularly with populations that have been excluded in STEM. They are working with Outreach to setup an event in the fall at either Loachapoka or Opelika schools.
 - c. **Physics-** the DEI committee hosted a faculty meeting to discuss the climate study and start setting goals. There was good attendance and support from the faculty. Their next steps are to meet and start outlining short-, mid-, and long-term goals and plan to have a strategic plan for DEI by the end of the summer.
 - d. **Geoscience-** The DEI committee is planning to evaluate the results of their recent climate study and use the information to revise their DEI goals. They plan to have this done by the end of the summer.
 - i. Steph Shepherd informed the group that they are currently conducting inclusive pedagogy workshops. She also let the group know that she is certified to do consultations and is happy to come speak to groups in COSAM departments.
- 2. **Grad Student Needs-** Grad students have let some faculty members know that they would be interested in having a Conflict Resolution Training, particularly around issues with students due to COVID. Chemistry has created Instructional Division made up of teaching faculty, lab coordinators, research faculty that teach large lecture classes which has assisted graduate students with issues such as this. This group may be able to host some workshops.
 - a. There are issues outside of the lab that graduates students need training in however, they do not take advantage of the resources when they are offered. We need to figure out a way to learn what types of trainings would be of interest to the students and how to encourage them to participate when they are made available. There was a suggestion that GPOs may be the best group to reach out to the students and get feedback.
 - b. Additionally, the COSAM OIED, ADR, and the Dean have been talking about ways to better utilize the time we have with the new graduate students at the beginning of the semester. We would like to create a half-day of workshops that would cover Title IX, research ethics, and mentorship, as well as getting to know your peers.
- 3. **Biological Sciences-** led a discussion to brainstorm how to incorporate DEI into faculty assessments/annual review
 - a. In their department they have values codified but want to figure out how to create explicit expectations for annual reviews. This is supported by their Chair but they just need guidance.
 - i. Where should this go in the dossier?- To make DEI effective in needs to be incorporated into all aspects of the elements that you are being evaluated on, it can't just be included in service (research, teaching, and service).
 - ii. We understand that this will not be the issue that makes or breaks someone's promotion or tenure, but the more it is discussed in these types of meetings by leadership, it will underpin its importance to the department and COSAM.
 - b. DBS has a Qualtrics that they utilize for review; questions regarding contributions to advancing the departments values and commitment to DEI should be included under each heading.

- i. Many faculty are doing things that contribute to DEI without even being aware. We would like to include examples of what that could look like under each heading (such as incorporating active learning into your teaching to accommodate for students that may learn differently).
 - ii. Courtney is asking the members of the committee to provide possible questions and examples of what this could look like.
 - c. Once this is completed by DBS, we would like to see it incorporated into all the COSAM departments and the college-level tenure and promotion committee.
 - d. Additionally, individuals doing this work want to make sure that COSAM leadership understands and values their contributions.
- 4. Upcoming Events:
 - a. **SUCCEED Conference, April 4th**- A career event for graduate students to showcase pathways to non-academic jobs in STEM.
 - b. **Sassaman Lecture, April 4th**- lecture series established to bring distinguished speakers from historically excluded groups, with a focus on women, that will enhance the growth and development of the COSAM community.
 - c. **Tyrone Hayes, April 14th**- From Silent Spring to Silent Night; Distinguished professor who also pinned a letter about what it means to be black in the Ivory Tower

Next Meeting- April 20, 2022: Physics will be presenting.