

June 23, 2020

To: Department of Government

From: Jeff Frieden, Chair

Re: Implementation of the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee, as accepted by the faculty of the Department of Government.

In spring 2019, Department of Government faculty accepted the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee. In line with one of those recommendations, on May 4, 2020, I held a town hall meeting to assess progress toward implementation of these recommendations. It was pointed out at the time that a written summary of implementation would be necessary to allow members of the Department to assess the report of progress adequately. A written summary follows, and two documents relating to two of the more important recommendations are appended to this summary.

1. *Creation of a Departmental Title IX Liaison position.* The position of Title IX Liaison was created and has been held since August 2019 by Professor Iain Johnston. I believe that there is a wide consensus that Iain has done an outstanding job on every dimension. Rather than attempt to summarize everything that he has done, I simply append a more detailed report submitted by Iain.

2. *Task force to institute a standing departmental committee to deal with issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion.* This Task Force was created and developed a proposal for a Standing Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The report of the Task Force is appended. It will be voted on by the full faculty in September. In the interim, I intend to appoint an *ad hoc* committee to begin work along these lines, with the expectation that the members of the *ad hoc* committee will be members of the Standing Committee once it is formed.

3. *Gathering of data related to diversity, with appointment of data fellow.* A graduate student has been employed as the department data fellow for this past year. She has been collecting data on recent PhDs from peer institutions to be used in our search processes and has been analyzing internal data on advising, teaching, and admissions to inform efforts on diversity and inclusion. We hope this position will continue in some form in the future. We are also exploring the possibility of having a staff member supplement this work.

4. *Third year graduate adviser.* To facilitate better mentoring during the G3 year, when students transition from courses to fulfilling dissertation-related requirements, including pre-prospectus and prospectus meetings, we have put in place third-year advisers. All students are expected to pair with a faculty member who will advise them on this transition. All G3s in 2019-2020 were successfully paired.

5. *Biennial climate survey.* An *ad hoc* committee published a Department climate survey in February 2019, available at <https://gov.harvard.edu/news/government-department-climate-survey-report>. The next climate survey will be conducted in fall 2020.

There were several additional recommendations which have been implemented. I have held, as recommended, regular town hall meetings – this past academic year, one a semester. I have also held, as noted, a town hall meeting specifically to assess progress toward implementation of CCC recommendations.

An important part of the climate change process was a February forum organized by graduate students that brought to campus four victims of sexual harassment in the Department of Government, who told stories that the Department needed to hear. Although plans have been disrupted by the pandemic, I hope eventually to be able to follow up with the possibility of a (real or virtual) visit to the Department from one or more of the victims/survivors.

We have instituted measures to strengthen the mentorship of new faculty, and we have implemented graduate student inclusion in departmental committees where this is permitted by FAS rules. There were several other recommendations related to the undergraduate program that were unable to be carried through either due to the COVID-19 emergency or to the lack of funding requested from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

## **Report on Title IX Liaison Activities 2019-2020**

Alastair Iain Johnston

May 12, 2020

- A) Title IX Liaison job description
- B) Activities
- C) Next Steps
- D) Reflections

### **A) Title IX Liaison job description**

As a reminder, according to the Climate Change Committee Report the job description for the Title IX Liaison includes the following main points:

The Liaison is:

- “tasked with working to promote a safe and inclusive community for all students, staff, and faculty”
- “a neutral point of contact for students, staff, and faculty within the department, supporting individuals in response to concerns regarding misconduct, discrimination, and general incivility.”

The Liaison should:

- “attend annual comprehensive training provided by the Title IX Office”
- “be encouraged to participate in monthly training provided by the University’s Title IX Office”
- “serve as the Government Department’s liaison to local Title IX officials coordinators.....[develop] a close working relationship with Title IX personnel”
- “disseminate information about Title IX procedures, as well as the various campus resources”
- “serve as an accessible point of contact to whom students, staff, and faculty may turn for information and advice regarding behavior or practices that affect their ability to pursue excellence in teaching and learning regardless of background....In areas beyond sexual and gender-based harassment, the appointee will assist students, staff, and faculty in identifying and accessing support services and/or available departmental and university-wide mechanisms to address concerns raised.”

There is an understanding as well that the Liaison has an ombuds role (as the last bullet suggests), though not a formal one with confidentiality.

## **B) Activities**

This past academic year involved six clusters of activities

1. Introduced the Department to the position and to me (Sept-Oct 2019).
  - (1) Spoke to all Gov 3000 workshops, to the Approaches class, to the first GSA meeting, at a staff meeting, and at a faculty meeting
2. Training.
  - (1) face-to-face training with University Title IX Office officer;
  - (2) attended monthly Title IX Coordinator training meetings;
  - (3) maintained regular contact with University and GSAS Title IX officers
3. Dissemination of information.
  - (1) wrote content for the Title IX webpage linked to the Department webpage <https://gov.harvard.edu/title-ix-liaison>;
  - (2) provided hardcopy pamphlets/information packets on responsibilities to members of the Department;
  - (3) sent email to faculty clarifying Title IX policies and procedures;
  - (4) summarized and distributed the 2019 Harvard University survey on sexual assault and harassment to provide members of the department an easier-to-read summary of the seriousness of sexual assault and harassment at Harvard.
4. Coordinated with PhD students concerning pregnancy and parenting issues having to do with, among other things, delays in progress and the question of tuition clock. This is Title IX issue that falls under rules concerning discrimination based on pregnancy. Activities included:
  - (1) organizing a meeting between GSAS officers and PhD students interested in, or already starting families to get clarity on funding implications;
  - (2) interacting with a lawyer at the Center for WorkLife Law in Berkeley to help analyze the legal basis under Title IX for greater flexibility in the tuition clock. A number of our PhD students were in contact with the lawyer to help provide information about their own situations;

- (3) sending a memo to faculty about how to best respond to advisees who are pregnant or starting a family.
5. Worked to bring more attention to mental health issues (mainly under the Ombuds role rather than under Title IX).
  - (1) helped organize a work-life panel in the spring 2020 semester attended by a mix of senior and junior faculty and grad students.
6. Helped the Graduate Student Association to develop methods for sending anonymous comments to the sexual assault/harassment External Review Committee, and to the Department in tenure cases.

### **C) Next Steps**

After using this past academic year to get a better sense of the parameters of the job, I would like to focus next year on more structural issues (not to the exclusion of the issues that came up this past year). These include:

- 1) getting a better handle on the details of the sexual assault/harassment problem at Harvard as it may affect our department. The data from the 2018 university-wide survey are not granular down to the Departmental level. I had a lengthy meeting with the Title IX office on the data at the GSAS level. I would like to use similar questions from the university-wide survey to survey the Department sometime before or during the 2020 fall semester.

- 2) On the basis of more detailed analysis of concerns about sexual assault/harassment issues in the Department, focus on two additional questions:

- Implicit bias. There are debates in the literature about its effects on behavior, so how should we best translate this literature into into processes, sensitization, and development of norms etc., in the department for preventive
- Bystander training to empower people to respond immediately to harassment. There is some literature that suggests bystander training is more useful than compulsory training. What is the best way of communicating standard and effective bystander interventions? There is a large literature on this that will have to be tailored to the needs of a Department.

### **D) Reflections**

One preliminary reflection: I think the CCC was right to identify a need for a Title IX presence and an ombuds-like position at the Department level. But there may be a tension between these two roles. Title IX stresses the neutrality of coordinators and officers. They should be empathetic, but they should also be neutral sources of information for those who want to report potential violations of Title IX policy and for those who have been reported, or worry about reporting. The ombuds role, however, is more of an advocacy role, not necessarily a neutral provider of information. To this point, I have personally not felt this tension. But I could imagine a situation where people get use to the Liaison being an advocate on non-Title IX issues only to be surprised/taken aback when the Liaison takes on a position of neutrality on a Title IX issue. I am not sure whether this will be a problem. If it does, then in the future we might want to consider whether Title IX and ombuds should be two separate positions.

It's been a real privilege having the opportunity to work on Title IX issues in the Department. But the activities in the past academic year are only a start, and only a part, of an effort by the Department to repair the damage from our failure to deal with incidences of sexual assault and harassment in the past.

## Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Committee Task Force Report April 2020

The Government Department's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Task Force was created to design and propose an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Standing Committee. This is intended to serve as a permanent standing committee that institutionalizes the Department's commitment to a climate that allows its members to do their best possible work.

Our committee was composed of 11 regular members: 4 ladder faculty, 1 non-ladder faculty, two staff, two graduate students, and two undergraduates, meeting once in the Fall and once in the Spring. The Department Chair, Director of Graduate Studies, and Director of Undergraduate Studies served as ex officio members:

**Eric Beerbohm, Chair** (faculty), Peter Hall (faculty), Torben Iversen (faculty), Daniel Smith (faculty), Leslie Finger (Non-ladder faculty), Karen Kaletka (Staff), Thom Wall (Staff), Fernando Bizarro (graduate student), Chelsea Green (graduate student), Claire Sukumar (undergraduate), Patrick Barham (undergraduate), Department Chair (Jeff Frieden) – ex officio, Director of Graduate Students (Ryan Enos) – ex officio, Director of Undergraduate Studies (Nara Dillon) — ex officio

### Mandate

The Climate Change Committee worked through the 2018-2019 academic year, producing a final report and set of recommendations that the Government Department Accepted in Spring 2019. The CCC recommended “new policies, practices, and institutions that, in our view, should help create a safer, less hierarchical, more inclusive, and thus more productive climate” (3). It then urged the Department to “monitor, evaluate, revise and build upon” its recommendations in the years to come, suggesting three tasks for its imagined standing committee:

1. Monitor progress on CCC initiatives.
2. Assist in the development and implementation of recruitment and retention strategies for underrepresented students, faculty, and staff.
3. Coordinate and disseminate information on university and external resources for students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented backgrounds.

Starting with these goals, we propose the creation of a permanent standing committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) dedicated to ensuring that the Department of Government, in its policies, regulations, and ethos, honors the principles put forth by the CCC. In our discussion, we operated from a broad idea of inclusion, with the aspiration of a department where all of its members feel “at home.”

Twenty-five percent of our peer departments (Brown, Columbia, MIT, Stanford, and Yale) already have a standing committee dedicated to climate issues in their department. We hope that our department joins them in adopting this institutional tool.

In our discussions, we considered the composition of the EDI Committee. We weighed attention to representing the range of voices in our department and a size that would lead to a successful functioning unit. To these dual ends, we propose that the EDI Committee be composed of five members, with one representative from senior faculty, junior faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students.

We propose that the EDI Committee serves three broad functions; (1) outreach, (2) oversight, and (3) programming. We'll discuss these in turn. We would stress that this committee shouldn't be seen as the body in the Government Department responsible for attending to community-building and fostering activities conducive to inclusion, diversity and equity. Promoting the climate envisaged by the CCC is a mandate that falls upon all members of the department, and all committees.

## Outreach

The EDI committee should seek data relevant to its mission. We recommend that, early in the Fall, it consults with groups of constituencies of the Government Department. Our Data Fellow currently works with the Chair and Director of Graduate Studies. We suggest that the EDI committee also can also assign data-gathering tasks to this Fellow, e.g., (\*).

Every other Spring, the EDI committee should run the climate survey mandated by the CCC, which will "allow us to identify areas of improvement and areas of need in department climate and, therefore, to understand whether our efforts are having the intended effect" (20). We think transferring this responsibility, currently shouldered by the DGS, makes good sense.

## Oversight

For many years the Graduate Student Association Diversity Committee has played a key role in Graduate Admissions, meeting with the Admissions Committee at its initial meeting to share best practices in the selection process. We see the EDI Committee as complementing these existing efforts by graduate students, extending this efforts to faculty searches at the tenure-track and senior levels.

Our task force considered whether it's essential that a member of the committee should also serve on junior/senior search committees and graduate admissions. Though dual-committee membership may be ideal in some cases, we concluded that this shouldn't be a requirement. This requirement would make it difficult for the Chair to recruit members to serve on admissions/faculty hiring committees *and* the EDI, since one "heavy lift" committee is already a substantial commitment. And we didn't want to convey that EDI membership is a lightweight responsibility — a secondary committee. There was some disagreement how much dual membership on EDI and admissions/search, if and when a faculty member was willing, was beneficial. Some members of our task force thought that the oversight goal is best satisfied by an early consultation with a selection committee, and then a follow-up midway through the process. For instance, in a tenure-track search, the hiring committee may consult with the EDI when they've developed a long-list of candidates.

In the Spring the EDI Committee will write a short report that considers the state of diversity/inclusion in the department. This will help set up the annual town meeting to discuss CCC related aims.

We use the term “oversight” guardedly, since we don’t see the role of the committee as to *enforce* norms but to set up procedures that make inclusion and diversity considerations naturally arise and given the considerable weight they deserve. In this sense, the kind of oversight we are imagining is to help bring about and sustain a normative shift at the department.

## Programming

Third, we envision the EDI committee working with the Government Department Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies to schedule programming that serves the community-building aims set forth in the CCC report. We discussed whether this committee should have earmarked funds (e.g., hours of RA work to help the committee program events with the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of Graduate Studies). A preset budget could signal stronger Department buy-in to the goals of the EDI. Some members thought that the committee should put forth budget requests to the Department Chair, while others thought that the available funds for the EDI should be pre-earmarked each year. These discussions happened before the present pandemic. With the expected fiscal contraction, our committee’s disagreement may be somewhat mooted. All discretionary requests will need to fit within a substantially reduced budget that we expect University Hall to introduce at the end of this fiscal year.

Here we will suggest two natural domains for the EDI Committee to consider programming. First, there are the ongoing efforts to improve our department’s graduate student mentoring. Starting in AY 2019-2020, each sub-field has attempted to develop systems to improve its graduate mentorship. The EDI Committee could serve as a place to share best practices across sub-fields, and introduce programming that cuts across our department’s parts, and other nearby social science departments. The Department’s January 2020 day-long workshop on mentoring is one such example of a cross-cutting event that served the aims and inclusion, diversity and equity.

Second, we could imagine the EDI Committee organizing events that foster the value of inclusion among our undergraduates, no small task in a larger concentration, along with undergraduate advising, a task shared by House life and departments at Harvard. We think that attempts to make undergraduates feel part of our community are part of the purview of this committee, in partnership with the DUS and Curriculum Committee. In particular, this could include programming that helps undergraduates develop skills to foster productive relationships with faculty advisors, as research assistants and thesis writers.

Here we are deliberately leaving considerable latitude in the kind of programming that serves to “shift the culture” -- a phrase that several members raised. The appropriate events that serve the values of this standing committee will necessarily change over time. This is conceived of as a *permanent* standing committee, with a shelf life that stretches to the indefinite future. So we think the particular projects that the committee takes up should be flexible enough to accommodate the new challenges that emerge.