

ARD Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

May/06/2021 | Zoom

***In Attendance:** Gary Brewer, Kurt Piepenbrink, Tala Awada, Rich Bischoff, Héctor Santiago, Rezaul Mahmood, Patricio Grassini, Maria de Guzman, Richard Wilson*

*Meeting Recording available [here](#).
Meeting opened at 3:02 pm*

Discussion:

Kurt Piepenbrink presented items from the agenda

- **Item 1:** Discussion about having an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion representative for the council. What that might look like, how to go about choosing a representative.

Awada stated the bylaws say that a person should be appointed to promote and represent diversity in IANR but the terminology can be updated, but the essence of it is to have a person to advocate for equity, diversity and inclusion on the committee is still a priority. What is the best way to accomplish this?

Bischoff said there are three principles to apply on a regular basis: 1) Intentionality in all that the committee/organization does, 2) Reflection, and 3) Accountability.

One strategy for finding a representative is to elect someone who is already a member of the Council. Another is to “borrow” someone from somewhere else. This advocate can change from year to year.

Gary was concerned it would put a lot of pressure on a single person. The representative could be partnered with someone in administration so they would not have to carry the full amount of responsibility.

Awada stated it would be good to have the representative be an actual member of the Council, with full voting rights, as opposed to an “outside” person who is brought in for that single role. Piepenbrink agreed.

Maria de Guzman was concerned about possible power imbalance, for example if there was a pre-tenure person chosen as the representative.

Bischoff was concerned about making this a rushed decision: “Without delay, but not today.”

Grassini asked Bischoff about his previous experience with other groups (mostly via search committees) ... what’s the best way to choose advocate? Self-nomination, past history of advocacy, etc.? Gary the person should not be a novice, which would be a challenge for them, but instead have someone who is a past “champion” of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Maria de Guzman pointed out that half the Council would be stepping down soon (Kurt Piepenbrink, Rezaul Mahmood, Maria de Guzman, and Daran Rudnick.) Bischoff said that having the advocate serve the full three years that they would be on the Council would not be ideal, a six to twelve month appointment would be more reasonable (for the role of equity, etc. representative, not as a regular Council member).

Piepenbrink asked for ideas on how to choose the advocate. He would prefer someone on the Council already; it’s important that the chosen person does not have this advocacy as their sole responsibility.

Brewer suggested having more than one person perform this role. This would be beneficial if someone cannot make a meeting. Awada suggested it could be the role of a small subcommittee or two or three members; people who will volunteer to serve.

Awada suggested to table this discussion until the fall. The elections of the new members will be in July, 2021. Piepenbrink, Mahmood, and Rudnick can serve on the Council for second terms.

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Brewer suggested to bring in an outside speaker to join an upcoming Council meeting to give a talk about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

- **Item 2:** Maria de Guzman and Piepenbrink created a brief survey to send to unit heads asking things their units have changed doing things remotely, faculty or student recruitment or communications, seminars, etc. What differences are there between units. The survey never happened... was it pending approval at some point?

Discussion on survey should be tabled for later. Awada said some of the comments she's heard on the survey was that it wasn't clear what the purpose was. Piepenbrink stated he was interested in the data, for if there are differences between units the information could be shared saying, in effect, this unit had good results from this action/change/procedure, perhaps your unit might also find this beneficial.

Awada said we should create some language to justify why the survey is being held, for what purpose, and how the data will be used. She asked Brewer for his experience as a unit head for how to communicate expectations on the survey (which will be sent to unit heads). Brewer suggested they could just ask the departments to respond, and not call it a "survey" at all.

Awada said it has to be clear the survey/request for information is coming from the Council. ARD can send the survey on the Council's behalf, but it has to be clear it's coming from the Council. Brewer suggested it could be a topic on Leadership Council "Does anyone have a success or horror story they'd like to share?" and collect information this way. Awada said the organizers of the Leadership Council can work with ARD to schedule a time during a meeting for Advisory Council members to come in and collect unit head's stories. Brewer suggested that search committees and their chairs may have a different opinion on how things work/don't work. That could be a second level of inquiry. Piepenbrink suggested that questioning the search committees could be at the same meeting with unit heads. Brewer said that an informal personal meeting might allow for better give and take, while de Guzman and Piepenbrink thought a survey would be more useful in allowing respondents to fill out in their own time.

- **Item 3:** Hatch projects, questions about where people can go to get information.

Awada stated the Hatch information is available on the [ARD webpage](#) including an [FAQ](#)

Santiago also stated there used to be PowerPoint presentation that talked about multi-state committees, processes, etc. and there used to be seminars (pre-Covid) that would help faculty that were up for renewal or new faculty to go over the information. Awada said the seminars will hopefully be held again once everyone can be back on campus.

Updates from the Deans

- Tala Awada:
 - Bischoff and Awada were working on a document on best practices for evaluation of research faculty.
 - The deadline for Graduate Student Fellowships is May 7th, 2021.
 - NIFA has now increased its funding from \$500,000 to \$850,000 for foundational grants with the stipulation that one has to partner with a minority-serving institution and to give that institution a minimum of \$150,000. They are working on establishing collaborations with historically black colleges, tribal colleges, minority-serving institutions, etc. If anyone needs connections with those colleges reach out to ARD to be put in touch with contacts from these groups.

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Additional Items

- Piepenbrink asked for volunteers for the new chair and vice-chair from the three Council members who are staying: Richard Wilson, Gary Brewer, and Patricio Grassini. He asked that they email him if interested. A new member of the Council can act as co-chair if necessary. A new chair/co-chair is generally appointed every year.
- Brewer motioned to approve minutes from last meeting (11/17/2020). Awada seconded. Minutes were approved.

Next Meeting – 10/26/2021 | [Zoom](#)

Meeting adjourned at 4:12 pm
Minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Kunce