**Annual Report of Diversity Committee Activities**

AY 2015-2016

Committee Members: Leah Findlater, Paul Jaeger (chair), Maggie Rodriguez, and Faith Rusk

At the beginning of the year, the Diversity Committee members set 5 goals for the committee:

1. Increase diversity-related web presence (and long term work to have representation at LIS, computing, and other conferences)
2. Examine the Advance survey feedback
3. Expand Curriculum Development initiatives
4. Create Speaker Series - potentially past Partridge Award winners
5. Identify funding sources for undergraduate students to work on diversity-related projects over the summers

Below is a detailed description of the activities in each of these areas and the ways in which the committee anticipates continuing to work on them next year.

*Increasing Web Presence*

Progress was made in expanding the College web presence-related to diversity through several means. With the help of the new College Communications Coordinator, the diversity-related content on the College website has been improved considerably this year in terms of scope, timeliness, and clarity. The iDiversity student group has also continued to build their web presence. And, at the two diversity-focused conferences hosted by the College this year – CIDLIS and the UMD Disability Summit – hashtags served to expand the awareness and impact of the conferences.

The committee unfortunately did not have time to work on strategies for greater presence of the College in promoting our diversity-related ideas and efforts at other conferences.

*Advance Feedback*

Our College was portrayed as an overwhelmingly positive place to work by the Advance survey data, putting the iSchool far ahead of every other unit on campus in positive scores in most categories. The Advance results correlated well to what we know from the College-wide climate assessment studies that have been conducted thus far.

The area of greatest concern by College employees was in the area of family life – child care options, scheduling around family concerns, and general work-life balance. As a result, the committee worked for much of the year on developing a new climate survey for the College (faculty, staff, and students) to learn more about these concerns and the ways in which they might be addressed, which included researching the family-related policies and services at all other Big 10 schools. While many of the answers to these concerns are university-level issues, the committee hopes to begin the dialogue on campus about these issues through what we find within our generally very happy unit.

This survey was to be distributed in April, but we have decided to hold it until the fall semester, as a result of a request from the University-level for units not to conduct internal surveys during the period of the University-wide Gallup study. By the time that ends, it will be too late in the semester for our survey to receive sufficient attention.

*Curriculum Development*

We have been engaged in diversity-focused curriculum development in several ways. A new accessibility design class was created and approved this year. We have begun discussions with the Department of Counseling Higher Education and Special Education (who are leading the creation of the undergraduate Disability Studies minor) to frame the development next year of several new diversity courses that will simultaneously contribute to both the College’s new undergraduate major and the Disability Studies minor. The hope is that the new courses – which we will create next year – will contribute to both programs, encourage student awareness of the College’s major, and result in some students pursuing the two together as major and minor.

The committee has also been working with iDiversity to support and encourage participation in their program to help faculty make existing courses more inclusive in perspective and content. A presentation about the program and its impacts has been given at two conferences this year – the Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference and the DERAIL Conference – by iDiversity officers.

*Speaker Series*

The College now has an ongoing diversity-specific speaker series, which has also served as the College’s contribution to the University-wide Maryland Dialogues initiative. The first two events were conducted in the spring semester of 2016. On March 25, MLS alumni and current librarians for PGCMLS, Eyoel Delessa and Andrea Thomas presented “The Sojourner Truth Project: An Innovation Space.” The event was attended by about 30 people.

The second event in the speaker series was the first Partridge Talk, given by former winners of the James A. Partridge Award for Outstanding African American information Professional. These talks are a joint effort by the College, the Citizens for Maryland Libraries (the non-profit that jointly awards the Partridge Award with the College), and the University Libraries. Janet Sims-Wood presented the first Partridge Talk on April 8, entitled “Researching African American Women’s History.” The talk was attended by about 25 people.

We plan to hold one Partridge Talk every fall and spring semester going forward.

*Undergraduate Support*

With the pending launch of the undergraduate major, the committee would like to identify ways in which interested undergraduate students in the College would have opportunities and support to work on research with faculty members over the summers. Such a program would promote diversity in two ways. First, some funding could be earmarked specifically for students from populations underrepresented in the information fields, serving as a unique method of recruiting and mentoring students. Second, opportunities could also be created for students who wish to work on projects related diversity and inclusion, such as working with Leah or Gregg on learning about the development of new accessible technologies.

One external source of funding has been identified, and the committee will work next year to get procedures established so that faculty members and undergraduate students are aware of these opportunities.