

versations started during the DI process. While the final form of these meetings has not been determined, they will likely involve readings and discussions of inclusion topics relevant to the department, and one of their goals will be to normalize conversations about inclusion among all members of the department. These meetings will be prefaced by a “State of Inclusion” event, in which the IC will update the department on its efforts, solicit volunteers to support future IC events, and build community. Additionally, the IC plans to augment the current Potions undergraduate advising process by partnering with a student-led mentoring program to provide their undergraduate mentees with faculty mentors.

At the end of year two, the formal support of the IC through SITAR ended. Nevertheless, the IC members have unanimously agreed to continue operating the IC using the same principles as the DAT.

IV. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The accomplishments of the IC in its first two years are a significant change from previous department efforts to address representation and inclusion. These achievements were made possible by the unique structure and organization of the IC, which we discuss here. We recommend that these factors be taken into consideration if another department or institution tries to create a departmental committee with a DAT-like structure.

Facilitation: The IC benefitted greatly from having facilitators to guide its meetings. The facilitators created agendas to guide the hour-long meetings, which allowed for efficient discussion and planning. Additionally, the facilitators kept thorough meeting notes so all committee members were updated on progress and plans, even if they missed a meeting. Between the bi-weekly meetings, facilitators reminded subgroups working on specific projects to be ready to present their progress at the next whole-committee meeting.

Goals and vision: When the Potions DAT was first created, the IC discussed broad goals, including drafting a vision of how they wanted the department to be. This vision consisted of smaller goals which had associated action items. Achieving these action items were “small wins” that kept the group motivated throughout their first two years. Additionally, goals and activities were regularly revisited to ensure their mutual alignment. Moreover, the focus on goals, rather

than specific solutions, allowed the IC to be open-minded in responding to the top-down DI, so it could leverage this administrative call to further its own work.

Multi-level: Because the IC addresses issues at multiple levels of the department, people from each academic level are members of IC. This provided faculty with perspectives that would not be available if they were working only with other faculty, like most departmental committees. Having student input was helpful in deciding what activities would be most beneficial for improving student experiences and lead to better recruitment and retention of underrepresented students.

Participant Agency: IC was formed out of a desire to improve recruitment, retention, and representation of students in Potions by faculty who were interested in the issue. Additional members shared the same concern. This voluntary, self-selected engagement in the group made it productive because everyone in the group cared about the work they were doing. This commitment was an important motivator for IC members to spend extra time outside of meetings to work on IC-related projects in addition to their other responsibilities. This allowed for multiple tasks to be accomplished in a relatively short amount of time.

V. CONCLUSION

Change is complex; to be successful, it requires cooperation from a large number of stakeholders with various interests. This short case study illustrates how a departmental committee can make progress on addressing a complex issue by DAT-like principles. It also illustrates how departmental efforts can be designed to take advantage of top-down opportunities when they arise, despite the often-perceived mismatch between the priorities of a university’s administration and its faculty. We hope that this example will encourage others to rethink how their department goes about trying to increase inclusion (and address other complex problems).

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