

CASL Meeting #7 Minutes
February 15, 2024
3:30PM – 4:30PM
Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Lindsay Davis (guest), Daniel DiMassa (chair), Jim Doyle (secretary), Rudra Kafle, Arnold Lane, Jane Li, Rebecca Moody (guest), Adam Powell, Stephen Price, Paul Reilly, Mia Mercado Rodriguez

Call to Order: 3:33PM

1. Stephen Price (graduate) and Mia Mercado Rodriguez (undergraduate) were welcomed as the new student members of CASL.
2. Profs. Lindsay Davis and Rebecca Moody, co-founders of WPI's Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies program, joined the Committee to discuss the campus experience of transgender and nonbinary+ students, their work with the Inclusive Pedagogy research team, and how CASL could support efforts toward increased campus inclusivity.

They began their presentation by reviewing some of the results from the 2023 Enrolled Student Survey. Compared with their cisgender peers, transgender students report that they feel less sense of belonging and community at WPI, have less positive classroom and advising experiences, feel less supported, and are more likely to experience overwhelm. **Only 13% of transgender respondents agreed that student emotional and mental wellbeing is a priority at WPI.** Transgender students also feel less supported by syllabus language inclusivity. So far there is only quantitative data on these questions and no narrative data to help put the survey responses in context.

Discussion moved to the work of the Inclusive Pedagogy research team. The research goals are to bridge the gap between student needs and faculty practices; promote better understanding of inclusivity and the creation of more inclusive curricular and co-curricular environments; and promote equity and student success. Toward these ends the group analyzed 163 1000- and 2000-level WPI course syllabi and surveyed 160 WPI undergraduate students. **Only 9.8% of faculty included pronouns on their syllabi, while 75% of students felt they should be included. 71.3% of students felt inclusivity statements on syllabi are somewhat or very important; 33.7% of faculty included such statements on their syllabi.**

There is a clear gap between student expectations and faculty practices with respect to syllabus inclusivity. It was noted that faculty can have a positive impact on queer students' sense of belonging by making adjustments to their syllabi to reference their

pronouns, incorporate inclusivity statements, follow conscientious citation practices, and include supplementary readings or modules from diverse sources.

Questions arose about how much attention students pay to course syllabi versus other modes of communication (e.g., Canvas announcements). It was noted that students generally prefer a longer, more detailed syllabus.

The research team has conducted workshops on Inclusive Pedagogy with several programs and departments this academic year, with more planned. Faculty interested in gaining access to Syllabus Inclusivity Resources may contact Prof. Lindsay Davis or Prof. Rebecca Moody.

The need to conduct additional research on queer students' experiences and unmet needs (using the Black Student Experience Study as a guide) was discussed. The Committee expressed its support for this work. Options for centralizing and expanding upon current resources for LGBTQIAP+ students were also discussed.

The Committee discussed how it could best support the future work of the Inclusive Pedagogy research team, e.g., by providing resources during new faculty orientation, during the Insight Advising program, or at the annual Just-in-Time advising session.

It was noted that students are noticing and experiencing the impacts of the recent shift toward fewer women in the entering undergraduate classes. This may be a topic for future discussion.

Adjournment: 4:32PM

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Doyle (Secretary)