Sheridan DIAP

As a part of its 2016-17 Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, key outcomes of Sheridan’s three main goals are noted below.

1. Develop staff capacity through hiring and professional development to support diversity

Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning: Hiring and Professional Development

- Between September 1, 2016, and May 31, 2017, Sheridan hired four new professional staff, three of whom are from historically underrepresented groups in the field.

- For professional development, all Sheridan staff members attended at least one conference session or on-campus opportunity that squarely addressed diversity and inclusion. Key ideas and materials were presented to other Sheridan staff at its monthly meeting.

- To mentor and collaborate with diverse graduate students, an ELL Graduate Fellow offered a series of workshops on language and culture. The ELL Fellow provided feedback on the experience to the Graduate School in mid- and end-of-year surveys. Further, Sheridan offered an educational development reading group to develop pathways to the profession for five graduate students.

Writing Fellows

- The writing fellows maintained two diversity and inclusion outreach coordinators who facilitated 90-minute workshops during fall and spring retreats, invited a faculty member (Christina Villarreal) to be a guest discussion facilitator on multiple Englishes in the academy, and held open office hours for fellows to consult with them about inclusive pedagogy.

- The fellow professional development committee facilitated a spring professional development series focused on inclusive praxis that featured programming from ELL, SEAS, and the LGBTQ+ Center.

- Diversity and inclusion fellows administered a demographic survey to all active writing fellows in fall 2016. In spring, they met with leaders of student groups formed around identities representative of our demographic gaps in order to open a dialogue and share information about the program.

- 17% of writing fellows active during fall 2016 identified as first-generation college students, and 20% identified as international students. Fall 2016 fellows also identified across six different races/ethnicities: mixed race (29.5%), white/Caucasian (29.5%); Asian (26.8%); black/African American (8.9%); Latinx (3%); native (3%).

Writing Associates

- Associates received ten hours of paid professional development addressing diversity and inclusion: a 60-minute reading discussion on post-colonialism in the writing center, a 60-minute workshop on code-meshing and anti-racist pedagogy in the writing center, a 60-minute ELL workshop, a 4-hour hybrid ELL training, and a 3-hour training on best practices for working with writers.

Academic Tutoring

- Nearly 10% of the tutoring staff are from historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, and 43% are women in STEM.

- Professional development included Assistant Director and peer feedback during mock training sessions, SEAS and BWell workshops, and tutor mid-semester meetings with the Assistant Director to review and discuss anonymous tutee evaluations. Tutors found the BWell workshop highly valuable and shared stress-relieving techniques with tutees. Tutor focus group feedback revealed that tutors feel supported in their work, appreciate the value of their role in the Brown community, and recognize that tutoring is beneficial to their own learning and metacognitive development.

Available at brown.edu/go/SheridanDIAP
English Language Learning

- Professional development was offered to Associates and Fellows. Key findings from post-program surveys included that students appreciated receiving training on resources they can use in their daily work with ELL writers, such as the Corpus for Contemporary American English. There were also requests for additional ELL trainings in the future, with a focus on hearing from and considering the perspectives of a more diverse multilingual population.

2. Develop Sheridan programs to be responsive to campus needs and build campus capacity to support diversity and inclusion in teaching and learning contexts.

Program Development and Strategic Planning

- To inform its strategic plan, Sheridan staff read all Departmental DIAPs and met regularly with the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion. The strategic plan squarely focuses on inclusive teaching as a key goal. Further, for the purposes of providing input into Sheridan’s future services for graduate students, a diverse group of graduate students was recruited to serve on the Sheridan Graduate Student Advisory Committee.

Faculty and TA Programs

- Sheridan embedded principles of inclusive teaching in its New Faculty and New TA Orientations, which were attended by 54 and 136 instructors, respectively. Among faculty and TAs, nearly all (over 90%) indicated that they would bring at least one idea to their teaching, and participants found the session to be very effective (means over 4.0 out of 1=strongly disagree that was effective, 5=strongly agree).

- All certificates embedded principles and practices of inclusive teaching. Feedback was also extremely strong for these programs. For example, in Sheridan’s largest certificate, most participants reported confidence for inclusive teaching (see textbox), and a similar proportion (97%) reported self-efficacy in their capacity to implement strategies that actively engage students. (For perspective, at pre-test, 69% and 52%, respectively, signaled confidence in these areas.)

- Sheridan offered ten workshops in 2016-17 on inclusive teaching, addressing presentations, feedback on writing, discussions, STEM courses, and teaching with sensitive objects. Attendees rated these sessions very favorably (mean of 4.4 on a scale of 1=not at all effective and 5=very effective). Sheridan also began to pilot customized offerings for departments.

English Language Learning

- ELL offered an average of three language and culture workshops each week during the academic year, as well as customized workshop series in two departments with high concentrations of multilingual graduate students. Participant feedback was strong for ELL programs, reflecting increased confidence in navigating linguistic and cultural differences. ELL staff also held over 600 hours of individualized linguistic or cultural support meetings for multilingual members of Brown’s community, including students, visiting scholars, and faculty.

In Sheridan’s largest certificate, nearly all (97%) participants agreed that they now felt confident in their abilities to create an inclusive and respectful learning environment.

Writing Fellows

- The writing fellows course syllabus (English 1190M) was revised to include an explicit focus on cultivating inclusive methods for working with writers. Open-ended responses from the course survey indicate that students noted and valued the revised curriculum:
"I appreciated [the] emphasis on inclusivity and diversity”; “the presentations from … ELL/ESL center and presenters from the LGBTQ Center and the Sarah Doyle Women’s Center were great!"; “I thought the course was divided into different sections very well. We covered so many topics, including inclusivity and English language learning, and how they relate to and affect writing. Readings were also very well-tailored to the different themes.”

• Program evaluations completed by fellows in fall 2016 (24 respondents) indicated that most (88%) fellows reported being “well-prepared to enact inclusive fellowing practices.” Fellows similarly emphasized their appreciation of diversity and inclusion programming in open-ended responses: “I was also exposed to issues of diversity and inclusion in writing that I had never really thought about before, and I now feel much more prepared to work in this role of peer tutor.” Spring 2016 program evaluations (15 respondents) indicated that 100% of fellows reported being “well prepared to enact inclusive fellowing practices.” Additionally, open-ended responses again indicated that diversity and inclusion programming on multiple Englishes in ELL trainings, the spring retreat, and faculty guest lecture were effective: “The idea of multiple Englishes and the ways we as Fellows can validate and nurture them (as well as acknowledge the institutional forces that suppress/marginalize them) has been super important to me and will stay with me as I pursue a career in education.”

Excellence at Brown
• Four primary program outcomes were identified for the program incorporated into informational materials, and accounted for in program assessment mechanisms. To meet these outcomes, the curriculum was revised to include instruction on close reading, peer-facilitated reading discussions, instruction on concrete revision strategies, and the opportunity to select and revise one of three papers.

Assessment
• Two consultations addressed assessment of departmental climate. One humanities department requested feedback on survey items that would be administered with end-of-term course evaluations and received a revised instrument for Spring 2017. A STEM department requested assistance with the analysis and reduction of an instrument designed and administered by students, faculty, and staff in Spring 2016. An executive summary was distributed to the department, a presentation delivered at a faculty meeting, and a request was received for a workshop on inclusive teaching (based on findings for specific groups of students who struggled to find TAs or faculty approachable). The department’s revised survey now includes graduate students, and a full report of findings will be written for distribution by Fall 2017.

• The Sheridan Center also partnered with the Dean of the College and the Undergraduate Council of Students to conduct an action research project on the reasons Brown students attribute to their course drop decisions. These results were disaggregated by demographics.

3. To scale up the reach of the center, develop more robust online resources

In November 2016, the Sheridan Center began distributing web newsletters on topics relating to inclusive teaching. These newsletters are distributed to 621 subscribers. Additionally, Sheridan developed an inclusive teaching section of web resources. These materials received nearly one thousand hits in the past academic year.

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