CEDI Leadership Board Meeting Minutes
October 17th, 2019

Present: Rhemi Abrams-Fuller, Christopher Dallager, Elise Eslinger (Advisor), Carolyn Fure-Slocum, Nina King ‘22, Jen McMurray, Suad Mohamed ‘23, Al Montero, Éva Pósfay, Steve Richardson, Laura Riehle-Merrill, Prathi Seneviratne, Miiko Taylor, Jayla Williams ‘21 (secretary), Trey Williams, Brisa Zubia

Visitors: Joe Baggot (Associate Dean), Shosh Dworsky (Chaplain’s Office) and Lon Hutchinson ’19 (Ed Associate in FOCUS), Julia Strand (Assistant Professor)

I. Acceptance of 10/3/19 Minutes

- The meeting minutes from the October 3, 2019 were accepted

II. Reflections on 2016 Low-Income, First Generation (LIFG) Student Report

General Observations

Examining the Low Income First Generation (LIFG) student experience is a component of CEDI’s charge this year. To help frame CEDI’s work, the co-chairs of the 2016 Dean of Students-commissioned Working Group on this topic were asked to come speak with CEDI about their group’s observations, as well as recent and planned efforts to address LIFG concerns.

Assistant Professor of Psychology Julia Strand and Associate Dean of Students Joe Baggot, reflected on the Working Group’s actions and findings:

- Student focus groups and surveys were used to assess the climate and experiences for LIFG students
- It was eye-opening to see how different student experiences are based on students’ backgrounds
- There is a need to serve LIFG students and educate faculty about these students. Challenges often translate into academic issues for LIFG students, which makes it more important for faculty members to know about this population
- Community, sense of belonging, and social experiences are all imperative for LIFG students’ lives on campus, as is a sense of support from the College.
- The Working Group discovered that there was not a lot of awareness on campus of LIFG students among the general community and across the LIFG community. The Working Group emphasized the importance of students and faculty understanding how many LIFG students there are on campus.

Subsequent Progress in Addressing Issues

- Carleton has taken steps during NSW (in the Carls Talk program) to aid in the exposure of the LIFG experience on campus. There is an importance to the process of making the community aware of the different backgrounds of students on campus.
The Social Identity Wheel was also used to share information about the LIFG population. It invited NSW groups to share identities and experiences with their peers.

The TRIO office is a resource for students and families who identify as LIFG. Students created a resource (which is now a bit dated and incomplete) to help their peers understand the hidden costs involved in life as a student on Carleton’s campus.

A need was expressed to develop a college-run and maintained list of resources (including ways to address costs) to help students. It would be important to distribute this list to faculty, advisors, and incoming students.

In this vein, there is also a need for the broader community to understand the resources available for LIFG students. In the past, resources on campus were perhaps less visible and scattered. This has improved but could be better.

LIFG students need a community where they can talk to others who relate to them, including peers and LIFG faculty and staff.

III. Questions. Discussion re: LIFG Aspect of the CEDI Charge

- Trey Williams pointed out that TRIO has on its website a list of resources on campus, and students and families beyond TRIO participants are welcome to utilize this list.

- There is a need for students to have support and skills they can use beyond Carleton, as well, and Trey shared some examples of financial literacy and other skills and resources LIFG students have been encouraged to learn while on campus.

- The Student Life-sponsored Winter Wardrobe also helps to provide students with resources.

- What do we do with the 72% of LIFG students who aren’t served through through TRIO? We need to know who they are
  - Students do not know their support systems
  - We need to remember that first generation does not necessarily equal economically disadvantaged
  - Focus on seniors and try to learn what resources they wish they’d had.
  - Sometimes the answer isn’t to throw money at the problem; it’s about being present and empathizing
  - TRIO is creating a first gen directory for faculty and staff that will be out in the beginning of next week

- There is an importance to make faculty more aware of hidden costs as well as psychological barriers. A little awareness can go a long way. Julia Strand shared her own story of deciding, after coming to understand LIFG issues better, to move away from asking students in her courses to purchase an expensive textbook to instead providing a series of articles to cover the relevant topics.

- There are faculty members who want to mentor first gen students, but they do not always know who they are

- There were faculty and administrators who shared their first gen status during New Student Week, and this helped students see that they are not alone. We want to continue to be sensitive to the fact that some students may not be comfortable identifying as LIFG.

- Has LIFG issues come up in the OCS Office?
  - Airplane tickets
Next Steps for CEDI for LIFG

CEDI is considering ideas for how to make the Carleton community more aware of this issue and how to better connect students with resources on this topic.

- The resources list from 2016 is basic and needs to be updated
- The TRIO page on financial literacy is mostly up to date, and it has tutorials and terminology.
- We may be able to learn more about what it’s important to address through outreach to alumni with experiences of being LIFG students

A subcommittee was appointed to think more deeply about this issue and consider ideas for how CEDI might proceed with engaging with this topic. Volunteers for this subcommittee: Brisa, Miiko (convener of the first meeting), Prathi, Al, and Trey

IV. Periodic Reports from Liaisons/Representatives — none this time

V. CSA Liaison Report

- Talked about Carleton’s divestment
- The CSA issued a new survey to first year students to see what percentage of students favor divestment

VI. What Happened Since We Last Met

- Winter Wardrobe opens next Tuesday in Sayles 252 (a more discreet location than in Great Space). Students can go without signing up. Once students take clothing, they get to keep it.
- Carleton Cupboard will open over winter break; contributions are being accepted soon.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:08 pm