INCLUSION COMMITTEE REPORT

2018-2019

In Spring 2018, Dean Liddy facilitated the creation of an iSchool Inclusion Committee. The Committee has four subcommittees:

 I. Teaching/classroom tips: Murali Venkatesh (lead)

II. Safe place to file complaints and seek assistance: Kathy Allen (lead)

III. Council of students/ survey the students: Julie Wallas (lead)

IV. Faculty/staff training: Martha Garcia-Murillo (lead).

As I compile this report from each of the leads, I want to thank them, as well as all of the committee members, for their enthusiasm in thinking about the initiatives and executing them over the course of the semester.

This report presents the activities that were conducted during the Fall 2018 semester. At this point, we also would like to solicit feedback on these initiatives, as well as suggestions for activities for the spring semester.

I.   TEACHING/CLASSROOM TIPS

VALUES SUB-COM INTERIM REPORT/November 2018/Venkatesh

The sub-committee continues to work on several fronts. One of these is through the iSchool Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, where we have established that once a month, for Teaching Tips, we will share ideas about inclusion in teaching.

This semester, this subcommittee was also busy working on a value statement that expands the school's vision and values. The subcommittee will be presenting a draft in the Spring for faculty approval.

I. Values Statement Review

1. Review of the value and mission statements of several U.S. universities and some iSchools, with a view to constructively critiquing our own values. We expect to come out with a draft for review by the faculty, staff, and students in the spring.

2. The group has discussed ways we might increase the visibility of our value commitments and make them a part of daily life at the school, through syllabi and other avenues. We expect to have a short list of proposals for discussion in the spring.

II. Teaching initiative: Bias Literacy Pilot in IST 621 and IST 755

This fall, Prof. Venkatesh designed a pilot on bias literacy for use in his IST 621 (IM introductory class) and IST 755 (IM capstone class). The pilot in both classes spanned parts of three class sessions. Briefly, the pilot involved: (a) a set of three required readings on bias (conscious and unconscious) and the business case for diversity and inclusion, (b) class presentations and discussions of these readings, (c) a class exercise centered on one of the readings (a Harvard case), followed by (d) individual self-reflection and class discussion on instances of bias students may have experienced/perpetrated at the iSchool or elsewhere. This was revelatory and moving, to say the least, and was characterized by high levels of participation in class.

SU's focus on competencies emphasizes awareness and practical skills. The concluding step of the pilot used the Commitment to Change approach in light of this emphasis. This approach has students commit to behavioral changes they will undertake to make in their professional (classes/projects/internships) and personal pursuits. All submissions were anonymous, but students had the option to share their input if they chose. I can report that we have had substantive (and at times moving) discussions in class around three topics: (a) students' experiences in completing the Commitment to Change process and their exposure to the pilot as a whole, (b) challenges, if any, posed by professional and personal environments in following through on their commitments, and (c) suggestions for how the process and the pilot as whole could be implemented in the future.

Responses to, and discussion of, these three topics pointed to the value of the pilot as a primer, as an exercise that sensitized students to bias. Students in both classes were nearly unanimous in recommending that the bias materials be discussed early in the semester, so that students become sensitized *before* they have substantive interactions with peers. Team projects and class interactions were identified as the venues where bias commonly showed itself, and exposure to bias literacy early, students felt, would make for a positive and professional work climate. The takeaway for me is that bias literacy exposure could start as early as orientation (we can frame it as onboarding).

The pilot was useful, but students in IST 755 felt that the coverage could be more extensive than what the pilot covered. Specifically, the class felt that dialogue would be useful for meaningfully engaging the issues at stake, such as knee-jerk defensiveness and paranoia that bias is occurring when, in fact, it may not be intended.

Male students in IST 755 mentioned female gender bias and ageism (equating competency with youth) as two common attitudinal responses they were guilty of. Women students in the same class picked up on norms and stayed out of trouble in interacting with male colleagues in work settings. These points are particularly noteworthy, because we see glimmerings of the macho culture that IT settings are often blamed for in men's attitudes towards their female colleagues and in women's quietist response to these attitudes. These responses by men toward women, and vice versa, may be unconscious, but I fully intend to use the pilot to discuss this issue when I try it again in the fall of 2019.

Lastly, one of the readings in particular was useful in priming conversations in both classes on the proper response when one is a victim of bias. Neither class would be willing to let it go and quietly move on if such an incident were to happen; their overwhelming preference was to call out the perpetrator,

educate him or her about bias, or take other actions to hold him/her accountable. However, the students qualified this response by saying it would depend on the nature of the infraction: they would follow through only if it were serious.

Doing the pilot in the two classes has been really instructive. I will be fine tuning it and intend to do it again in AY 2019-20 in IST 621 and 755. The design of the pilot and its content have benefited immensely from resources from the University of Wisconsin's WISELI group and others, from the expertise shared unstintingly by Martha Diede and Marie Garland, from comments from the values sub-committee, and from moral support provided by our own Martha.

II.   SAFE PLACE TO FILE COMPLAINTS AND SEEK ASSISTANCE

This committee focused on three initiatives, and one of these was moved forward.

1. ***iSchool Ombudsmen***: It was decided that having an ombudsman for the iSchool would be inefficient because the University already has one, and we don't want to duplicate efforts. We also decided against having an ombudsmen because the position is effective only if it is truly neutral, and by virtue of its being in-house, it would not be perceived as neutral.

2. ***Student Resource Sheet***: A one-page resource sheet for students to connect with campus resources was developed and is ready to be disseminated.

3. ***Anonymous Dropbox for Students***: It was decided that an anonymous drop box posed a liability, as students could report serious issues concerning mental health, and we would have no way to connect with them.

III.   COUNCIL OF STUDENTS/ SURVEY THE STUDENTS

The subcommittee established a relationship with the student representatives to the BOA. We met with them; then in October they held an open forum. We heard some overall feedback from the students that they would like new food options in the iCafe. We've set a January meeting for our representatives and the director of the cafes.

The subcommittee deployed a survey of students (see Appendix 1).

IV. FACULTY/STAFF TRAINING

There are several initiatives at the university level that the iSchool has been able to take advantage of. This fall, the committee coordinated with the following activities not only to train faculty and staff, but also to encourage greater interaction among all the constituencies in the iSchool.

1. At the beginning of the semester, we took advantage of Dean Konkol's Convocation speech to the iSchool to foster communication among people who do not normally interact. We used several colors stickers to encourage attendees to be in multi-color groups. A simple observation of this activity showed that it is hard for people to break away from their natural groups.

2. *First-year experience training of faculty*. During Faculty Planning Day, the faculty was able to get the same training as those teaching the first-year experience course. It was a three-hour workshop facilitated by Marie Garland and Jeff Mangram, Associate Professor, Teaching and Leadership. The faculty was able to get access to materials on inclusive teaching through Blackboard through the organization called *Teaching Inclusively in the Anchor Course and Beyond.* We will be moving some of those materials to our school's inclusion page. We are hoping to be able to provide this training to more faculty, and in particular, to those teaching online.

3. Considering the high number of faculty members that are being hired this academic year, we worked with Marie Garland, the Executive Director for the Center for Faculty Leadership and Professional Development, to arrange for faculty to receive training in how to conduct interviews. Digital handouts will be send to the entire faculty to help them remember the questions that are, and are not, allowed from a legal perspective

4. We set up "crews" of three or four people with similar interests to encourage greater interaction among faculty, staff, and students who do not normally interact. The groups formed had a common interest but didn't know what it was. It was for them to discover. Those who found their common interest first were given a voucher to have lunch together at the Faculty Center. Sadly, only two groups found their members. We will repeat this activity with slightly different criteria in the spring.

5. We conducted a simple survey of students, staff, and faculty about whether they felt included. We call it the "Windows Project" because it was conducted by asking people to post their answers on the east-side window of the building, in response to the question: "Do you feel included/not included at the iSchool." It became evident that people did not feel comfortable posting their answers to the window; moreover, the display had low visibility. We thus decided to collect answers from faculty at a faculty meeting, from students in classes, and from staff by going to each of their offices and collecting cards anonymously in a sealed box. (See Appendix 2 for the responses)

IV.   FUTURE PLANS

The committee at large meets once a month, with subcommittees meeting on their own when they deem it to be necessary. In the spring, taking advantage of university programming, we had planned for a session about "hot moments in class." Deb Nosky help us secure this training after a meeting with Catherine Newton. Unfortunately due to one of the facilitator's illness it had to be cancelled and we will try to find another opportunity for this to happen

The cards informing students about resources will be deployed.

We will continue to encourage you to share teaching tips for inclusion.

We will repeat the "crew initiative" with some modifications.

We will initiate work on an inclusion page for the iSchool that will include some basic statistics and resources.

If you have any suggestions, let us know; you are always welcome to get involved.

APPENDIX 1

Results of survey conducted with students. Complete responses not edited.

1. ## Do you feel cared about as a student in the iSchool?

Yes 29

Sometimes 5

No 2

2. ## If you could change one thing about the iSchool, what would it be?

- Bring back Quiet Zone
- More study team rooms
- Got rid of Quiet Zone
- More online classes. Most of the electives and mandatory Ischool classes fill up completely. Would be nice to have online classes during fall and spring and especially summer.
- Career Services brings in EY,Deloitee etc a string of consulting companies which is great, but arent we moving more towards Data Sciene? Where are product based companies which are really into Data Science, if an ischooler cannot even apply to such companies then why is he pursuing such a course
- Introducing the "Silence Room" again.(Floor-2)
- "1. Have more UX design and web dev classes. The iSchool mainly prepares students to be consultants. I wish there were more opportunities in UX such as classes and the kinds of companies that are inviting on campus.
- 2. Change the calculus requirement to any passing grade instead of a c or better. I passed the class during my freshman year but I was just told during the beginning of my senior year i have to retake it otherwise i won't graduate. I don't feel that calculus is helping me at all with my career paths in technology. I have made it this far in various technology internships without needing the concepts I learned in calculus.
- Icafe
- course requirements
- More flexibility in dual major
- None that I can think of
- Men's washroom locations.
- Updated Labs for Classes
- sometimes it feels as if you only promote working at one of the "big 5" companies and its hard to get help with internships for other companies
- Nothing major but if we could have softer toilet papers in the restrooms in the iSchool, it will be better.
- Better flexibility in taking courses
- Inclusion of non foreign students at the graduate level
- I wish that the iSchool would better explain all of the concentrations that the students can go into. I think it would be very beneficial to hold workshops that allow the students to learn more

about the different paths they could take and get a run down on what a future in each concentration looks like.

- I wish that the core class were different. I think its difficult that everyone has the same major for everyone. Our major is extremely broad and its often difficult to justify it to potential employers. I feel like I'm exposed to a lot of fields but never gain expertise in any of them. Some course feel unnecessary especially for a dual student.
- We need an auditorium
- More mental health support and more programming for graduate students (I.e., consider our schedules and needs too)
- To be able to get into each class that I want to
- More employers other than big 4. not everyone wants to go into consulting.
- 24 hour access to iSchool students (Entry and exit)
- More resource to help Chinese students with English communication
- More fun activities
- An Excel Certification Course. It was very needed at my internship and I had such minimal experience with it
- The iCafe
- iSchool Cafe
- more attention paid to library students even though we won't go on to make as much money as the other students
- the focus on the intersection of technology with other fields as well as connecting students to other faculty and staff with similar interests
- Allow students to have more free will with their tract - i.e more than one major tailored to what the student wants to do.

3. What is your favorite place to study in the iSchool?
- Quiet Zone
- Team rooms
- Quiet zone
- Bottom floor near the elevators
- It was quiet room but it no longer exists
- Currently it is the lab on first floor of the Hinds Hall, but sometimes it is full which makes us going to library.
- I dont study in the ischool much mainly in bird library, but if i were to do work it would be the nexis room.
- ice box
- Ice box
- ice box
- The Hinds Hall computer labs in the basement since they have dual monitors and it is usually quiet.
- Nexis
- ICE Box, doctoral student lounge

- Everywhere
- Ice-Box
- Icebox
- basement computer labs
- Icebox is the only place to study in the iSchool
- Bird library
- Icebox
- icafe
- Lobby with the high tables
- iCafe
- None, I use bird, there are few places where you can study and talk, and ischool doesn't have much space other than the icafe which needs more seating
- I was just saying yesterday how much I prefer to study in Newhouse...
- Ice box private rooms
- ice box, but there is never space.
- Icebox
- lab
- basement
- Bird Library
- The large computer labs
- would rather study at the library
- Nexis Lab
- iCafe I guess but all the study places kinda suck

4. How does the iSchool culture compare to other colleges on campus?

- Ischool the best
- Very good like a family
- I love the ischool great place full of diversity and great students
- Pretty similar I would say
- Its the best, the professors are school, I can interact with them any time
- Versatility in education(Selecting courses from different areas), and students being part of different social groups
- People compare us to Whitman and NH students. They think we aren't competitive, laid back and always willing to help each other out. They also think we have a great career services. My friends in other schools wish they had trips like what the ischool has. They also think we're really smart and that we're are going to make a lot of money.
- I have been a part of 4 different schools within SU and I feel that the iSchool cares the most about their students and their students future.
- It doesn't even compare. The ischool is the most caring, compassionate place of success which wants the best for students and encourages students to work together and bring each other up rather than tear each other down!
- i feel like we have more resources in the iSchool than any other school

- The iSchool culture is my favorite and I feel at home when I enter Hinds Hall since I always recognize someone.
- More interesting and innovative classes
- Love it! Open-minded, exploratory, interdisciplinary. Unpretentious, great mix or seriousness and lightheartedness
- Way better (it's collaborative, engaged, and promotes success).
- More practical
- It is the shiz. Quite literally the most modern building on campus
- love it, its so tight knit
- good
- Tightest knit culture compared to intra-uni colleges on campus
- Ischool Undergraduate was much more inclusive and family oriented than the graduate level. Does not feel like a community of one at the graduate level
- By far the greatest culture within the university.
- iSchool students all know one another and are very collaborative.
- Competitive, diverse groups remain within their own cliques and groups working on projects don't get space to work here
- As an LIS student, there is no iSchool culture - at least not one that includes me
- Were more closenit
- We have the best culture. You feel respected as a person not just a student.
- Best
- good
- much closer culture and cared about culture
- DO WE HAVE A CULTURE?
- A small, caring community with advanced study tools
- seems professional
- definetely more welcoming
- there really isn't one

5. What amenities do other colleges on campus have that you wish the iSchool could have?
- More study rooms needed
- More study space more food options at cafe
- There's no devoted room for ischool students to do labs, besides that small room in the basement that's always full
- Ischool is so small, most of my classes are outside of it. I wish ischool classes were actually held in the ischool.
- Library kind of place to study
- The Common Lounge(Whitman's Building), which is more accessible. Currently, most of the people don't know about the Lounge so the resources are left unused. On the other hand, students who are aware of it also don't use it to the core because it is far from the reach of common area.

- Not sure if other schools exactly have this but I think skill building workshops would be great. I haven't taken python and java in a long time and it would be great if there was a workshop once a year or semester to refresh my skills.
- More silent study rooms.
- Better icafe area - comfier seating, better food and coffee. Phone charging stations.
- enough bathrooms on every floor
- Maybe better bathrooms
- Student Tech Center
- Single area where I can store food in fridge, get my utensils, and microwave my food.
- Again, none that I can think of. More so just enhancing existing spaces (example... the iCafe could have better tables that don't shake)."
- More space
- An icebox
- bigger lounge areas (ice box area is pretty small)
- I am curious to know how the space currently occupied by Sidearm Sports will be utilized as they get ready to move to the Tech Garden.
- Cafe that offers a wide variety of eating options
- Although the iSchool does have a cafe it would be great if they sold more options this way students can remain studying within the building!
- I wish that there were better study areas. Less couches and more tables to sit at. I also wish that there was more support for dual-programs because my home college is Newhouse advising in the iSchool is very limited.
- An auditorium
- More big-name outside speakers
- The PhD student offices or lounges should have standing desks! Peer institutions of other doctoral programs actually give a damn about the ergonomic setup of their PhD students. I don't understand why the PhD student offices received new chairs—nobody asked for that. We have been asking for standing desks for a very long time. Please listen to us.
- A fully working cafe and more study rooms
- We need a better cafe. The food in the iCafe is gross and there are no options.
- Lockers.
- More Certification opportunities
- A proper Cafe
- I wish for the iSchool to have a cafe that is stocked with a wider variety of food options.
- faculty spotlights
- Better food. And all the computer labs are also gross - please clean them more. There is so much dust everywhere and the keyboards are so greasy

Responses to the question: Do you feel included/not included at the iSchool?

Feel included because:

- As a new employee, I really have appreciated the community feel and love the relationship between faculty and staff
- This school is small enough to where I don't feel like a number
- I work to keep updated on school events. It's a personal commitment to be engaged
- I feel that I am as included as I want to be
- Active communication on committees, staff of one, faculty of one
- Most staff/ faculty exhibit an honest interest in listening to everyone
- Feels like a big extended family. People are concerned for each other's welfare
- I have the opportunity to interact with students, parents and alumni
- I do not always feel included because events tend to overlap or I am busy. Faculty and staff are so warm and welcoming that I love working here
- The ischool has always welcomed me with open arms. Has always felt like family
- I feel included because everyone is nice
- I love how small my classes are. I used to be in Arts & Sciences and my professors didn't know me personally. While in the iSchool, I'm not just a number and my professors care about my success. My advisor also remembers me and we have a great bond.
- I am in the iSchool for 60% of the day
- I have many student peers
- I have many relationships with professors and staff
- Professors want to help you succeed/see you succeed
- Connections with past alumni
- Career Services cares about you as an individual
- Everyone here is always willing to help
- I feel this school ensures the idea of making their students well rounded. While the main focus is technology, the electives preparing us for the workforce are also extremely beneficial
- I feel that this is the one school where teachers are actually friendly, want the best for you and reach out to make relationships with their students. Also, whenever in group work, the students here are way friendlier
- Everyone is very nice, supportive of others
- As part of NEXIS, I have had the opportunity to meet lots of great faculty and iSchool students
- All the teachers do a good job at involving everyone in class
- Everyone's nice and cares for students education
- It is a small knit community in which I feel welcomed and supported
- I do because even though I am only a minor, I am always included
- Good small community, nice staff/faculty. Much better than A&S

- Although I'm a Whitman Student, I felt included in the iSchool during my IST 344 Class
- It emails me of every single opportunity available for students
- We are one of the smallest schools on campus and I believe the professors create a very inclusive environment
- Although I am only an iSchool minor, I feel that there are a lot of resources that I am able to take advantage of
- Professors here are realistic and understand diversity of people. If you want to do something, they help
- Everyone is always willing to give a helping hand always – especially the professors. I actually wish I majored in the iSchool. Whenever students need to go to Whitman, they feel scared. But no one is ever scared to walk into the iSchool. There's a reason for that
- Even though I'm only a minor in the iSchool, I get treated the same as the majors while in class. Can't tell the difference between the majors and minors
- The iSchool specifically strives to include all of its students when related to class. Though it could do more t acknowledge that not all students taking IST classes are iSchool students
- I joined a club in the iSchool
- I feel there is generally a sense of inclusion, that we are all the same just working towards the same goal and that doesn't make anyone better than someone else
- Everyone is visibly happy at the iSchool and it makes me feel good being part of a community where almost everyone is passionate about something
- No one has ever made me feel not welcome – from teachers to students
- As an iSchool minor, I do enjoy getting a wider perspective of what occupations are out there. However, I do at times feel that some of the classes I must take will not be useful to me as a Newhouse major
- I selected both because as a computer science major, I feel like I do not know about a lot of the resources the iSchool has and pertain to me but if I do find out about them, I'm welcomed

Do not feel included:

- Overall, I do feel included but there is a big divide between faculty and staff. Staff are often second class citizens
- I know most staff. I do not know some faculty and feel isolated from most students
- I am able to participate on committees on campus. Sometimes I don't feel included due to certain staff and their cliques and inappropriate office gossip. It makes people inapproachable and hard to talk to.
- I sometimes feel both, I find that being in BeIT, I have found more friends in the iSchool, but in some of my classes, I find myself alone. Also, on the retail road trip, I felt left out and was not speaking with many others because they would ignore me

- I do not feel included in the iSchool because there is not a lot of people who look like me in the school. All staff and professors are all Caucasian. As well as students
- I do not feel included because I only take class here and I'm not an iSchool student
- I do not feel included because I am a Whitman student and I feel like some materials from lectures are tailored towards iSchool students
- I do not feel included because there are not enough activity that I want to visit
- I do not feel included because I feel surrounded by people who don't want to socialize outside of their ethnicity
- I do not feel included as I am still trying to get accepted into the iSchool
- I do not feel included because I'm not a major (I'm a minor). It feels like the events are always focused towards one type of iSchool student
- I do not feel included because I feel very lost in the iSchool because I just transferred into it
- I do not feel included because I'm not a part of the iSchool. I have a minor in Information Technology
- I do not feel included because I am a senior iSchool minor and I didn't join the iSchool until the 2nd semester of my junior year
- I do not feel included because we're all nerds and don't know how to socialize
- I do not feel included because people stick to their friend groups in both big and small classes. Here are welcoming faces but some do exclude those who are quieter
- Sometimes I don't feel included in the iSchool because professors/teachers overlook me. There's never a reaching hand to check on me but I hear about other's experiences that are more positive within the iSchool
- I feel I am alittle left behind because I am not a coder. I'm not skilled in HTML or any of these other platforms others are
- I don't feel included at Syracuse University in general. It is a terrible university for international students. I regret coming here from my country

APPENDIX 3
Members of the Inclusion committee

First Name	Last Name
Kathy	Allen
Blythe	Bennett
Michael	Clarke
Sheila	Clifford-Bova
Margaret	Craft
Shannon	Marrero
Angela	Rieks
Lora	Carlson
Peggy	Takach
Jose	Tavarez
Murali	Venkatesh
Julie	Walas Huynh
Sarah	Weber
Ian	MacInnes
Arden	Kirkland
Rebecca	Schaeffer-Mannion
David Adam	Robusto
Shanyah Vernelle	Saunders
Sue	Corieri
Beth	Patin