During the 2014-2015 academic year the Commission on the Status of people of Color (CSPC) planned and sponsored two University-wide programs. A small group of Commission members organized a meet and greet luncheon for new UNH employees of color, held on April 16, 2015. The Commission sent electronic and paper invitations to all employees of color hired within the last two years. About seventy staff and faculty of color and Commission members were able to attend this luncheon which provided an opportunity for faculty and staff of color to get to know one another and build a network of support at UNH. The CSPC was also the primary sponsor of the “Changing the World One Poem at a Time” program as part of the MLK events at UNH. This campus-wide event provided students, faculty, and staff a unique opportunity to hear from a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, Natasha Trethewey along with two UNH faculty members, David Kaye and Delia Konzett. The conversation focused on using the arts as a tool for understanding difference and as a catalyst to explore complex topics such as race and other identities.

CSPC members chose to participate in one of the following working groups: Commission Conversations, Posse Foundation, and Bystander Awareness Program. The Commission Conversations group’s purpose was to work on a sustained dialogue program as well as formulate conversations (once a semester) on current topics. The Posse Foundation group’s purpose was to work on initiating contact with various offices/departments that would potentially be involved with the approval process of implementing this campus program. The Bystander Awareness Program group’s purpose was to work to create a framework and pilot program for a campus bystander awareness program. We had hoped that we would have time built into each Commission meeting for working groups to meet and collaborate since we are all busy in our respective offices/departments. We occasionally had time for this, but most of the groups met outside of Commission meetings. The Posse Foundation group, in particular, started conversations about student services, resources, and support of the recruitment and retention of students of color at UNH. As a result of a larger conversation, there was interest in creating or modifying a current program(s) that would be homegrown and incorporate some of the benefits of a Posse program without going through the Posse Foundation.
Based on requests from members of the CSPC and entities outside of the Commission, the CSPC provided support for several programs and organizations. The CSPC supported student organizations/groups by providing $300 to students from the UNH National Society of Black Engineers to attend their national conference in California; providing support for the Black Family Weekend held in April and sponsored by the Black Student Union and SAFC; and providing financial support for Men of Strength: Diversity, Education and Family (MOS:DEF), a support group for men of color at UNH. The funds went towards an educational trip to New York City which provided member of MOS:DEF an opportunity to meet with UNH alumni of color and experience cultural points of interest within the city such as the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The CSPC provided financial support for the annual Unity Reception sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA). The CSPC also provided support for the OMSA Say What “Selma then and now” program, a community discussion regarding the continuing impact of the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery on the world. The CSPC provided support for the “What Does ‘Black Lives Matter’ Mean to Us at UNH” program in March which was part of the Sidore Lecture Series. UNH faculty and staff along with a faculty member from Phillips Exeter Academy were panelists who spoke about being a black student, faculty and/or staff member at a predominantly white institution. Finally, the CSPC provided support for the program “What it Means to be a Muslim; Here and Now” in March which was co-sponsored by the Muslim Student Association. The keynote speaker for the event was Dr. Mohamed Ibrahim Issa from Dover, NH.

The CSPC joined other Commissions developing a letter to President Huddleston expressing members’ concerns about the release of a report regarding an incident involving the assistant basketball coach, and a second letter to President Huddleston and Jaime Nolan to address concerns about a lack of training for staff and faculty regarding mandatory reporting requirements with regard to sexual harassment and sexual assault. Specifically, members of the Commissions felt that the draft protocol which was issued in response to the “Dear Colleagues Letter” surrounding Title IX lacked guidelines and did not provide procedures for the protection of survivors’ rights. The CSPC provided membership representation on the Advisory Council for Community, Equity and Diversity (formerly the University Council) and on the Awards Review Committee which is looking into building a centralized web presence to house all commission-related awards. The CSPC continued conversations regarding several ongoing areas of concern: evaluating the work of the Commission in terms of intersectionality with international students and NAVITAS; addressing our Commission’s name as it may be problematic to certain groups of underrepresented students who may not identify as a person of color – does this name resonate with
our current student population; and identifying protocols and practical solutions for addressing bias/hurtful comment posts on Yik Yak and other social media outlets.

**Commission Membership:**

Anna Metzger (co-chair), Jessica Fish (co-chair)
Darnell Bosquet-Fleurival, Cliff Brown, Denny Byrne, Lee Calderone, Chloe Cataldo, Todd DeMitchell, Janice Disla, Tammy Gewehr, Shawn Green, Megan Hales, Rachael Kreckmann, Jhennifer Marcal, Kanika Nevers, Loan Phan, Nhien Quach, Robert Richard-Snipes, Sonya Shropshire, Jeanne Sokolowski
Ex-officio members: Sara Miller, Sean McGhee, Donna Marie Sorrentino, Sylvia Foster