

**Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council**  
Minutes  
February 25, 2021

**Present** – Calvin Claggett, Chassidy Cooper, Felipe Fiuza, Adrianna Guram, Keith Johnson, Mary Jordan, Kim Maturo, Antonio Rusinol, Laura Terry, Phyllis Thompson, and Jessica Wang

**Guest** - Cesar Gracia

**Not Present** – Joe Sherlin

- I. **Call to Order** - Chassidy Cooper called the meeting to order.
- II. **Welcome/Introduction of Chief Cesar Gracia** - Keith Johnson introduced ETSU Chief of Police Cesar Gracia who joined the University in November 2020. Chief Gracia shared that he is an alum of ETSU with 29 years in law enforcement. He worked as a patrol officer, a former special agent with the Tennessee bureau of investigation, ran a law enforcement training academy, and served as the Chief and Dean of Campus Security Operations at Lincoln Memorial University. Chief Gracia comes from a diverse background being born in Puerto Rico. Currently, he is working with ETSU student, Amyre Cain to create a mentoring program specifically designed for minorities. Chief Gracia also shared that he will continue to work with Keith Johnson on de-escalation and cultural diversity training.
- III. **Approval of Minutes** – A motion was made by Felipe Fiuza, and seconded, stating, “I move that the minutes of the January 28, 2021 meeting be approved as distributed.” The motion carried. In keeping with open lines of communication, the approved minutes will be uploaded to the Office of Equity and Inclusion website.
- IV. **Old Business**
  - A. **Appointment of student to Advisory Council** - After review and discussion of the diversity champion application submitted by undergraduate student Amyre Cain, a motion was made by Chassidy Cooper, and seconded, stating, “I moved that Amyre Cain be approved to join the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council”. The motion was unanimously approved via an anonymous electronic poll launched during the meeting.
  - B. **Approval of Revised Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council Bylaws** - After review and discussion of the revised Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council Bylaws, a motion was made by Chassidy Cooper, and seconded, stating “I move that the Equity and Inclusion Council Bylaws be approved as revised.” The motion was unanimously approved via an anonymous electronic poll launched during the meeting.
  - C. **Dr. Patricia Robertson Diversity Leadership Award** - The Dr. Patricia Robertson Diversity Leadership Award nomination criteria was updated into a similar format as

the Mary V. Jordan Inclusive Excellence Award. This creates continuity in awards that come out of equity and inclusion.

Discussions included: will an award be given annually to both an employee and a student; would the student receive a scholarship (it was noted that students need support/scholarships right now); how to ensure student nominees are deserving by implementing a procedure of vetting student nominees by reviewing, for example, their academic and behavioral good standing with the university; should the length of the narrative be limited to 500 words or less; use of the university scholarship deadline of March 1<sup>st</sup> or extend to April 1<sup>st</sup>; establishment of an award selection committee made of individuals from the Office of Equity and Inclusion, Pride Center, and Multicultural Center; an MOU is currently providing funding for this scholarship through the scholarship office. Chassidy Cooper asked Phyllis Thompson and Adrianna Guram to take the lead on further revisions to the nomination criteria and selection process.

V. **New Business**

A. **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference** - Kim Maturo shared that there has been a lot of active planning taking place by the programming/content subcommittee, logistic subcommittee, and student track subcommittee. Mary Jordan, co-chair of the student track subcommittee, noted that the student track is new this year. Keith Johnson is working on securing funding to ensure that all enrolled ETSU students can attend all three days of the conference at no cost. Distribution of “Save the Date” flyers has begun. Registration should open in early May. Adrianna Guram, co-chair of the programming and content subcommittee, shared that there are ten focus areas for content. The subcommittee hopes to provide opportunities for individuals to have ongoing learning and development throughout the year via lunch and learns and other activities using local presenters and faculty/staff. Promoting this ongoing education would be done in the program booklet. Adrianna Guram is hoping to secure some funding for this ongoing learning and development by applying for a SERS grant and a partnership with Ballad Health. A keynote speaker of interest is Dr. Paul Farmer, founder of Partners in Health that does health education and provides health opportunities around the world in the poorest and low-income areas.

B. **Other Discussion** - The Advisory Council discussed the ETSU basketball players kneeling incident that took place on February 15 wherein the players and coaching staff knelt in silent protest during the playing of the national anthem. Keith Johnson shared that he wrote a statement from the Office of Equity and Inclusion which is posted on its website. Several units on campus have also put out statements. He also met with the team to show them support. Keith Johnson noted that that the advisory committee/council was created to advise and make decisions not only for the Office of Equity and Inclusion but for the campus. He encouraged the council to post a formal statement. Chassidy Cooper asked Jessica Wang and Felipe Fiuza to compose a statement from the Advisory Council in support of the students, which will be posted on the Advisory Council’s section of the Office of Equity and Inclusion webpage. Further discussion included a suggestion that a formal listening forum be started where students can come together to be heard; share ideas; discuss actionable steps towards

moving forward; how to keep the momentum moving and to stay focused on making progress; how to help the dominant culture see it from a student’s perspective/minorities perspective; and how feelings don’t become devalued so there is continued growth.

**C. Upcoming Events** - Laura Terry added that the Multicultural Center, Women’s Studies, Africana Studies, and Black Affairs are sponsoring *The Women of Color Museum*, a virtual event. Phyllis Thompson commented that she is looking forward to welcoming Dr. Constanze Weise for the next Women on Wednesday event and Gabby Rivera, known as the Latinx cultural nerd in March.

**D.** Agenda items related to the appointment of additional council members and nomination for membership subcommittee were tabled to the next meeting.

**VI. Next Meeting Date** – March 25, 2021, 1:00-2:00 pm, via zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

**Respectfully submitted by: Kim Maturo**

<b>ACTION Items</b>			
<b>Status</b>	<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
2/25/21	SERS and OER grant proposals for 2021-2022 review	Keith Johnson, Chassidy Cooper, and ORSPA	March 15/March 22; Due to TBR March 25/April 2
12/17/20	Dr. Patricia E. Robertson Diversity Leadership Award; Review award criteria.	Keith Johnson, Chassidy Cooper, Karen Sullivan (Uni. Advancement)	Fall 2021
1/28/21, 2/25/21	Nomination criteria, nomination form, and cover letter will be drafted to present to Pat Robertson	Aдриanna Guram and Phyllis Thompson	
12/17/20	ETSU Staff Woman of the Year Award	ETSU Commission for Women Standing Committee	March/April 2021
1/28/21	Call for nominations went out to the campus community		
12/17/20	Mary V. Jordan Inclusive Excellence Award		
1/28/21	Committee reviewed submission guidelines, nomination form, cover letter		
12/17/20	Development of an Angela Claxton Freeman Award		

12/17/20	Establishment of a Dr. Angela R. Lewis Scholarship	Keith Johnson and Honors College	
12/17/20	HEED Award		
	Voices of Inclusion Award		Due October/November 2021