

Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council
Minutes
September 24, 2020

Present – Chassidy Cooper, Felipe Fiuza, Adrianna Guram, Keith Johnson, Mary Jordan, Kim Maturo, Antonio Rusinol, Joe Sherlin, Laura Terry, and Phyllis Thompson.

Not Present –

- I. **Call Meeting to Order** - Chassidy Cooper called the meeting to order.
- II. **Approval of Minutes** – A motion was made by Antonio Rusinol, and seconded, stating, “I move that the minutes of the July 16, 2020 meeting be approved as distributed.” The motion carried. A motion was made by Joe Sherlin, and seconded, stating, “I move that the minutes of the August 18, 2020 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.

Old Business

- III. **Office of Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan** - Chassidy Cooper shared that Keith Johnson has distributed the strategic plan to the faculty senate and university administrators. Keith Johnson stated that the two-year plan is supported by members of the university community. The plan was officially approved at the recent Board of Trustees meeting. Funding to support the plan could be challenging, but Keith Johnson noted that he does not let the budget drive the plan. Outside individuals have been reaching out to him to offer funding for scholarships and programs. He also commented that many goals of the plan have already been accomplished such as developing protest policies and de-escalating training for public safety, an electronic newsletter, a social media presence, developing partnerships outside of campus, and working with departments and colleges on campus to establish equity and inclusion committees. The strategic plan is posted on the Office of Equity and Inclusion website.

New Business

IV. **A. Evaluation of Events**

- a. **Social Media Lunch and Learn Session** - The session lead by Jennifer Barber was attended by 16 individuals from a variety of departments across campus. Her presentation focused on learning about social media, ways to make it more equitable, provided information about the best times to post, and how to collaborate and incorporate inclusive language.

Adrianna Guram suggested contacting some of the conference presenters to come back to lead a lunch and learn session for those who may have missed a conference session

and providing another venue to speak. Chassidy Cooper shared that something is already in the works to bring Ash-Lee Henderson back to campus and the Office of Equity and Inclusion is working on developing a diversity speakers bureau/series. Keith Johnson is working to collaborate with Ballad Health to possibly donate funds to support this and allow us to bring in speakers such as Susan Rice. Felipe Fiuza suggested scheduling a discussion between two or more presenters about one subject so there is dialogue and make it more dynamic.

- b. Becoming an LGBTQ Ally Lunch and Learn Session - The session lead by Stacey Williams and Bethany Novotny had 29 attendees. The question and answer discussion was great. The session evaluations indicated that there is interest to have on-going sessions on this topic. Chassidy Cooper added that safe zone training is available for faculty and staff who desire to learn more and become an LGBTQ+ ally.
 - c. 2nd Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference - Keith Johnson reported that there was an abundance of positive feedback regarding the conference and one response stating there wasn't much about the population of individuals with disabilities. He received telephone calls from panelist Perry Stuckey (Eastman Chemical Co) and Karl Turner (Police Chief Johnson City) who both expressed their desire to continue working with the Office of Equity and Inclusion. Chassidy Cooper added that a highlight of the conference was student participation and having a graduate assistant moderate a session. Joe Sherlin commented that it was a great conference for the campus and the community. It demonstrated how far we've come, but that there is still so much work to do. Phyllis Thompson shared that she felt honored to be part of something equitable and inclusive, professional, and was a powerful experience. Adrianna Guram shared that one of the pros to the virtual conference was the ability to have numerous presenters from outside of the ETSU campus. She added that a con was not having an on-ground opportunity to network with other attendees and the presenters. Keith Johnson added that it's time to be more creative to give everyone a fuller experience and to try things we haven't done before; anything we want to do is possible. Felipe Fiuza stated that he was great to have members from the community such as the mayor and Eastman Chemical Co. as presenters. Having their perspective added to looking at equity and inclusion outside of academia. Felipe Fiuza shared that Keith Johnson's optimism and encouragement are inspirational.
- B. Diversity Champions** - Chassidy Cooper commented that several diversity champions were part of the conference. After reading through the Council bylaws, she noted that council members should be at 15 members, three who should be students. Council members were asked to read the bylaws and consider who should be added as members. Chassidy Cooper shared that Jean Rushing has resigned as a member of the Council and her position will need to be filled as well. Laura Terry recommended Dr. Roger Blackwell and will forward student names to Chassidy Cooper. Felipe Fiuza recommended Dr. Daryl Carter. Chassidy Cooper noted that individuals recommended do need to complete the diversity champion questionnaire which includes students.

C. **Other Discussions** - Phyllis Thompson shared an idea about creating a diversity fellows program where individuals with this status get to work closely with diversity leaders from across the country to learn how to be a more inclusive leaders on campus. Keith Johnson noted that he is working with Dr. Yvette Alex-Assensoh; through a grant he received, to develop the university's inclusive excellence training. Dr. Alex-Assensoh is creating the curriculum, which will be passed on to ETSU. There are 20 faculty and 10 staff members participating in this pilot program.

Keith Johnson shared that he is currently working with Jill Channing in Clemmer College and others across campus to apply for a diversity/equity and inclusion \$4 million grant which is due next year. To accomplish some of the goals within the strategic plan, they can be built into the grant.

Phyllis Thompson shared that the Women's Resource Center was able to retain a graduate assistant for the academic year 2020-2021. Alison Dyer is a human services graduate student who has lots of experience with outreach. She has been working on some campus events and community events such as the women's book club and free menstrual products for women on campus.

- V. **Upcoming Events** - The lunch and learn session titled "Coping With Crisis" scheduled for October 6th will be rescheduled due to the university now being closed that day. Chassidy Cooper will be the featured speaker for Women on Wednesdays, October 7th. Felipe Fiuza shared information about Hispanic Heritage Month in October.
- VI. **Next Meeting Date** – October 22, 2020, 2:30-4:00 pm, via zoom.
- VII. Meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by: **Kim Maturo**