

Inclusion/Diversity Advisory Committee
Minutes
April 18, 2019

Present – Filipe De Oliveira Fiuza, Ann Eargle, Adrianna Guram, Keith Johnson, Laura Terry, Joe Sherlin and Phyllis Thompson.

Not Present – Mary Jordan and Antonio Rusinol.

Overview – Review of documents: Job description for Vice President for Equity and Inclusion; and the Equity and Diversity Plan.

- I. **Review of Position Description, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion (revised attached)** – The committee reviewed the draft position description for the Vice President of Equity and Inclusion. The draft description included input submitted by committee members. The committee discussed revisions and additional verbiage. Dr. Thompson shared key attributes that the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) utilizes in their position descriptions for administrative leadership. NADOHE is an institution with a mission of leading higher education toward inclusive excellence through institutional transformation. Upon review, the core areas of: Recruitment & Retention; Campus Climate, Curriculum & Instruction; Research & Inquiry; Intergroup Relations & Discourse; Student/Faculty/Staff Achievement & Success; Leadership Development; Nondiscrimination; Procurement/Supplier Diversity; Institutional Advancement; External Relations; and Strategic Planning & Accountability have been embedded throughout the VP position description with the exception of Procurement/Supplier Diversity. Positions reporting to the VP were not included in the first draft, and Dr. Johnson shared that once diversity has been woven into the fabric of the university and the culture begins to evolve, it is expected that some attributes of the position description may change simply because the climate will naturally begin to change. Before the description is advertised, the units under the purview of the VP as well as a firm budget will be established. Dr. Wilsie Bishop has been charged with appraising the organizational structure of the university and is considering assembling various teams and committees for different areas of review. The equity and inclusion team is already in place and is beginning to align with the bigger vision of the university. The committee members discussed that in order to encourage a greater number of applicants, the second paragraph, second sentence, should include “and/or” verbiage. It was suggested that the statement read, “*The ideal candidate will be a visionary and transformative thought leader, who has demonstrated experience **and/or** influence in achieving positive change in an academic setting in the areas of access, inclusion, multiculturalism, community, economic development, and educational and employment equity for all people.*” Adding **and/or** text, affords a more inclusive statement and may help draw more candidates. Concerning fund raising, Dr. Johnson shared that he has already initiated discussions with Ms. Pam Ritter in relation to collaboration of possible joint ventures. The committee agreed that fund raising efforts, relationship building, and fostering support from external constituents is an unwritten expectation within the realm of a position of this magnitude. Dr. Sherlin shared that currently there is an expectation across the leadership team that leadership folks engage in fund raising as a component of their positions. Dr. Johnson noted that the draft description is the big picture requested by Dr. Noland. The advertised position will be a shortened version with a link to the complete description.
- II. **Review of the Equity and Inclusion Plan** – The Equity and Inclusion Plan (attached) was reviewed and discussed. The following pieces of the plan were discussed in detail:
 - **(2) Evaluations** – The plan proposes evaluations to include an equity and inclusion component for senior administration, deans, chairs, and faculty. The committee agreed that an equity and inclusion component be included for staff evaluations. Staff members are front-line employees who are crucial constituents to the effectiveness of the plan’s success.

- **(3) Develop a template statement regarding VISA sponsorship** – After discussion, the committee agreed that text relating to support of VISA sponsorship be considered as part of standard verbiage on job postings. Dr. Fiuza shared that, potentially, we could miss viable candidates by not including a statement in support of VISA sponsorship. Understanding that sponsorship could be prohibitive due to lack of funding in some colleges/units, Dr. Fiuza shared that in the top HEED Institutions, consideration of VISA sponsorship is noted on job postings and is essential in order to attract and engage the underserved population.
- **(7) Student Success Efforts** – Dr. Johnson and Ms. Stacy Onks are scheduled to meet on May 3, 2019 to discuss the proposal for a mandatory success plan for students who are admitted to the university with ACT scores of less than 15. Dr. Johnson will update the committee on meeting outcomes at the next committee meeting.
- **(8) Identify Diversity Champions** - Diversity champions will be identified for each college/major unit on both campuses – main campus and VA campus. Dr. Johnson shared that he would like to see diversity champions throughout the university who have specified characteristics and a true interest in becoming diversity champions and not chosen because of their rank. Diversity champions will be required to engage in training and currently Dr. Johnson is working with the HR staff, including Mr. Keith Glover, to develop essential training modules. The diversity champion would also have a lead role on search committees within the colleges/units, participate in the diversity training for the campus and the like. Stipends for diversity champions are being considered and along with incentivizing, guidelines and expectations will be implemented. For efficacy, diversity champions will be housed across the campuses in the various colleges/units in lieu of centralization. Field diversity champions would already be familiar with their colleges/units. Tools would be provided such as university funded databases, as well as the SREB database (Southern Regional Education Board) which is already a functioning component. Dr. Johnson shared that Dr. Amy Johnson, Director, Center for Teaching Excellence, is onboard and willing to assist in preparing workshops focused on diversity and inclusion. Ultimately, sustenance for the initiative and its functionality will rest on the support of President Noland.

III. Dr. Damon A. Williams – Dr. Johnson presented a short video presentation by Dr. Damon A. Williams, titled, *“Diversity Plans & Faculty Diversity.”* Dr. Williams is a visionary and inspirational leader and one of the nation’s recognized experts in strategic diversity leadership, youth development, corporate responsibility, educational achievement, social impact, and organizational change. Dr. Williams shared that the key process in creating a departmental diversity plan is that the plan should be designed to achieve meaningful results. Some of the key dynamics built into a plan in order to ensure success are: A clear framework of action; a quantitative goal inside the framework with indicators required for tracking, measuring, and judging success over time; key tactics in place to move the agenda forward; and how these various components are brought to life. Some other keys are financial commitment and the establishment of accountability, i.e., insuring that every search committee goes through training on how to cast a broad net, how to run an inclusive search, insuring against microaggressing candidates during the search process, and the development of resources for allowing additional candidates or early pre-recruitment and cultivation of candidates. Another major tactic identified were financed post-doc opportunities, which can become pathways to tenure-track opportunities and is a tried and true technique in identifying strong candidates who can be nurtured into becoming part of the department. Conferences are also an excellent method of getting faculty involved and empowering them to be able to make a difference thereby increasing the likelihood of attracting a diverse candidate pool and ultimately making a diverse hire. Faculty involvement is also a good way to change the perspective of faculty and the institution as a whole.

Conclusion – Dr. Johnson shared his plan of gridding the Equity and Inclusion Plan to incorporate outcomes, timeframes, etc. When the grid is complete, Dr. Johnson will forward the document to the committee for input.

Next Meeting Date – May 16, 2019, 2-3:30pm, President’s Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted by: J. Ann Eargle