

## **Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee**

### Minutes

November 8, 2019

**Present** – Felipe Fiuza, Adrianna Guram, Keith Johnson, Mary Jordan, Kim Maturo, Jean Rushing, and Phyllis Thompson.

**Not Present** – Antonio Rusinol, Joe Sherlin, Laura Terry

- I. **Approval of Minutes, October 9, 2019 Meeting** – The minutes of the October 9, 2019 meeting were approved as distributed. In keeping with open lines of communication, the approved minutes will be uploaded to the Office of Equity and Inclusion website.
  
- II. **Responding to Event of November 1, 2019** - The committee discussed the posting of numerous signs around campus which included signs being placed over the plaques of the individuals in Borchuck Plaza that commemorate the contributions of the five students who integrated the campus. Dr. Keith Johnson commented that Dr. Brian Noland did release a firm statement on Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Noland indicated that the university will not tolerate this kind of behavior. Some challenges are that there are individuals who say this was freedom of speech. University policy states that postings need to be approved. Dr. Johnson also shared that there have been numerous telephone calls and messages ranging from sincere concern to appalling comments directed towards Dr. Noland and the university. Dr. Johnson filtered and returned calls. He has been looking at how other institutions have responded in similar situations. Discussion among the committee members included that the response from Dr. Noland should have been on the day of the incident; communicating to students, faculty, staff, parents what resources are available to those affected and communicating that the campus is safe is a priority; the impact of the hurt, damage can affect health, resilience; communication should not devalue the incident because it happened on other campuses; social media became primary means of communication; and the potential that more of this type of incident will occur in the future. Dr. Johnson shared that the university will be working on a formal response protocol/policy for handling these types of incidents.
  
- III. **Lunch and Learn** - Ms. Adrianna Guram shared a draft of a Lunch & Learn flyer she is developing for spring 2020. Topics to date include: Implicit Biases, Inclusive Language: Why it Matters? How it Works?, and Sense of Belonging & Mattering. The flyer will be submitted to university relations for approval and available for distribution at the open house. The sessions will held in the multicultural center pending the completion of the Culp Center renovations.

- IV. Open House** - Dr. Johnson shared that advertising for the open house has begun by distributing invites via email to equity and inclusion conference attendees; notice in the Office of the President weekly update; posting on University's master calendar; ad in the East Tennessean; and ad in the Johnson City Press. Ms. Laura Terry will send an invite to students on campus. Disability Services, Women's Studies, Multicultural Center and other areas will be present. Handouts from the Office of Equity and Inclusion will include strategic goals and mission of the Office of Equity and Inclusion.
- V. Bylaws** – The committee reviewed the most recent draft of the bylaws. The committee discussed wordsmithing the verbs under Goals. The second bullet will be changed to read “Promote a campus climate that fosters institutional leadership and oversight.”
- VI. Diversity Champions** - Dr. Johnson stated that one of his efforts is to identify a significantly large number of individuals on campus (around 20) who have a desire to ensure that the right people are hired; that is, there is ample people for search committees to make sure we do a good job searching for candidates. These volunteer individuals would be more of an advisor to a search committee. Dr. Johnson shared that he would work with human resources to develop a training program for these individuals. The training would teach them about best practices for candidate searching in order to yield better results. These diversity champions would become a resource for a search committee to help them identify places to tap into when looking for candidates.

Ms. Mary Jordon added that another place to use diversity champions is in the screening and interviewing process of candidates. Secondly, she stated that there is a need to determine how to make the process attractive for potential candidates so, in particular, diverse candidates they don't get lost or lose interest along the way.

Dr. Johnson shared that he recently attended the SREB recruitment event with other ETSU faculty/staff. Contact was made with over 75 individuals. One individual has applied for a position. Dr. Johnson contacted the department's chair and dean asking to be kept informed of this individuals progress through the possible hiring process.

Dr. Phyllis Thompson commented that when candidates are being interviewed one step in the process could be that they meet with the Office of Equity and Inclusion or one of the diversity champions as part of the process.

Dr. Johnson pointed out that intervening with a candidate can have lasting impact on the quality of faculty/staff hired which in turn impacts the students. Additionally, he would like to develop a mentoring program for those hired to assist them in becoming a successful member of the university. Dr. Johnson asked the committee to forward to him the names of any individuals who they recommend as a diversity champion.

- VII. Next Meeting Date** – December 19, 2019, 10:00am-11:30am

**Respectfully submitted by: Kim Maturo**