

**Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council**  
Minutes  
June 17, 2020

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

**Not Present** – Mary Jordan, Jean Rushing, and Joe Sherlin

- I. **Call Meeting to Order** - Keith Johnson called the meeting to order.
- II. **Approval of Minutes** – A motion was made by Phyllis Thompson, and seconded, stating “I move that the minutes of the May 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. **Co-chairs Advisory Council** - Keith Johnson announced that Phyllis Thompson has agreed to be a co-chair of the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council.
- IV. **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference** - Chassidy Cooper, Phyllis Thompson, and Adrianna Guram updated the council on the conference planning. Chassidy Cooper noted that the keynote speaker for the virtual conference has not yet been secured, social media sites have posted updates, and the conference planning steering committee is scheduled to meet this week. Adrianna Guram and Phyllis Thompson noted that some of the responsibilities of the logistics subcommittee are now being handled with other subcommittees just by the nature of the conference now being in a virtual environment. Logistics have shifted to how to be in the background so the conference moves smoothly from start to finish with the technology that is being used.

Keith Johnson added that the programming committee led by Amy Johnson is looking for concurrent session speakers as well. He stated that the steering committee recommended several individuals for a keynote speaker and he is awaiting costs for them to present via zoom vs. on-ground. Other speakers wouldn't be ruled out as some of the recommended speakers are quite expensive. Speaker/presenter recommendations from the advisory council include Brian Hemphill, President of Radford University, and authors Ibram Kendi and Jason Reynolds. Keith Johnson hopes to have speakers locked in soon. Students will be invited to attend the conference and some sessions are being designed with students in mind.

**New Business**

- V. **Strategic Plan** - Keith Johnson shared that he and Chassidy Cooper have been working on developing an Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (draft copy attached). The HEED award

criteria have been incorporated into the plan. He noted that the plan is not necessarily limited to just the Office of Equity and Inclusion; that there are things in the plan that require involvement from all colleges and non-academic units. Keith Johnson shared that he would like to develop a mechanism (a worksheet/spreadsheet) that allows the colleges and non-academic units on campus to identify and report their equity and inclusions efforts particularly the ones that align with the Office Equity and Inclusion strategic plan. He will work with the deans, department heads, faculty and staff senate, executive leadership, etc.

Chassidy Cooper stated that the primary focus was developing a plan that aligned with the HEED award, ETSU's strategic plan, and meeting the needs of the faculty, staff, and students. Many conversations and feedback with members of the ETSU community guided the formation of the goals, strategies, and expected outcomes outlined in the plan. Chassidy Cooper asked the council to comment. Adrianna Guram added that being more specific in some areas would help clarify responsibilities. For example, defining what are the first-year experience classes that span the different colleges. Council members, Antonio Rusinol, Felipe Fiuza, and Laura Terry stated that the plan is realistic and ambitious. Phyllis Thompson noted that the plan is raising awareness, that there's not just one way to do equity and inclusion, and that we can learn from each other. Currently, the plan has a one-year timeframe which will likely be increased to allow for planning, implementation, and assessment periods. Keith Johnson pointed out that the HEED award will be a by-product of the plan. Putting this plan in place will change the environment, the climate of the campus. The Office of Equity and Inclusion will be the custodian; i.e., oversee of the plan, be responsible for some of the work, but also work with all areas across campus to implement their equity and inclusion plans, committees, encouraging them to hold themselves accountable, create benchmark data points, promote what they are doing, etc. The document is a living document, on-going feedback is necessary and appreciated.

**VI. Evaluation of Events** - Chassidy Cooper commented that attendance at the lunch and learn sessions is increasing. Advisory council members are encouraged to provide feedback on sessions, suggest topics for sessions, and lead sessions. Antonio Rusinol will do a spring 2021 session on practical debiasing techniques. A fall session titled *Social Media Presence* will be led by Jennifer Barber, Marketing and Social Media Manager, University Relations. Keith Johnson spoke from the perspective of what is legal and what is beneficial for an individual. Although there is freedom of speech, employees have been disciplined because of things they have posted on their social media accounts. Keith Johnson emphasized that individuals should carefully consider the things they post and comment on when using social media. Adrianna Guram suggested we may benefit from asking Michelle Treece (ETSU alum, current adjunct faculty, has a history of anti-racist work, sits on Johnson City school board) to lead a lunch or learn or some other educational outreach.

Chassidy Cooper shared that *The Guided Conversations on Racial Justice in America* sessions had a lot of impact on those who attended. Student attendance was minimal likely due to the summer break. It was a safe space to share perspectives, thoughts, and what can be done next to create a sense of belonging, and the need for diversity training. Adrianna Guram shared that there was a power differential among members in the small groups. Small groups included a mixture of faculty, staff, and students at different levels. Individuals in the groups may not have been able to be as authentic with each other because

of the power dynamic. The assembling of future small break out groups may need to consider this.

**VII. Office Space** - Chassidy Cooper's office space is currently located in the Women's Resource Center, Room 220 in the Campus Center Building.

**VIII. Next Meeting Date** – Thursday, July 16, 2020, 2:30-4:00pm, via zoom.

**IX.** Meeting adjourned at 3:50pm.

**Respectfully submitted by: Kim Maturo**