

**Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council**  
Minutes  
November 17, 2022

**Present** - Chassidy Cooper, Felipe Fiuza, Gladstone Gunn, Adrianna Guram, Keith Johnson, Kim Maturo, Joe Sherlin, Phyllis Thompson, and Rachel Walden

**Not Present** - Amyre Cain, Mary Jordan, Laura Terry, and Jessica Wang

- I. **Call to Order** - Chassidy Cooper called the meeting to order.
- II. **Approval of Minutes** – A motion was made by Felipe Fiuza and seconded stating, “I move that the minutes from the September 22, 2022 and October 20, 2022 meetings be approved as written. The motion carried. In keeping with open lines of communication, the approved minutes will be uploaded to the Office of Equity and Inclusion website.
- III. **Introduction of Bethanie Dye, Coordinator Pride Center** – Members of the advisory council introduces themselves and welcomed Bethanie Dye to the meeting. Bethanie Dye shared that she began working as the Coordinator of the Pride Center in September 2022. Her first semester goal was to ensure that students, faculty, and staff knew the Pride Center existed and that it is a resource if they have questions or are not sure where to go. The Pride Center has hosted a lot of events during the semester, has partnered with other units on campus such as the Women and Gender Resource Center, and will continue to focus and equip itself to support students. Bethanie Dye commented that this position has lent itself to many educational moments and experiences. The Lavender Graduation ceremony is scheduled to take place on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Students from all colleges are invited to attend.

Phyllis Thompson shared that there is a Presbyterian Campus Ministry called UKirk that provides an Open Space for the LGBTQ+ community. Open Space is a safe and anonymous student support group for integrating and celebrating your identity as spiritual/religious and LGBTQ+.

IV. **Old Business**

- A. **Moon Shot** – Keith Johnson provided an update on the Moon Shot initiative. The efforts will concentrate on the following key areas:
  - Leadership and Campus Climate
  - Access and Enrollment
  - Academic Policy and Practice
  - Student Support and Belongingness

The four (of fifteen) best practices the University will initially focus on include:

1. Audit registration holds and revise policies (Academic Policy and Practices)
2. Offer retention grants for in-need students (Academic Policy and Practices)
3. Make student care a coordinated effort (Student Support and Belongingness)

4. Create pathways for transfer student experience (Academic Policy and Practices)

Team leaders will be selected for these four initial areas who will build a team around them. Keith Johnson asked council members to let him know if they are interested in leading or joining one of these teams. Additional information will be provided in January.

The remaining best practices are:

5. Train leaders in effective change management (Leadership and Campus Climate)
6. Provide equity-focused professional development (Leadership and Campus Climate)
7. Conduct campus climate assessments (Leadership and Campus Climate)
8. Expand community-based partnerships (Access and Enrollment)
9. Offer second chances to adult learners (Access and Enrollment)
10. Assess and align math requirements (Academic Policy and Practices)
11. Offer college-level gateway courses (Academic Policy and Practices)
12. Create undergraduate academic degree maps (Academic Policy and Practices)
13. Leverage meta-major to ease student pathways (Academic Policy and Practices)
14. Leverage technology for proactive advising (Student Support and Belongingness)
15. Foster student belongingness (Leadership and Campus Climate)

In addition, starting in January Shaun Harper will lead throughout the year equity-minded training for ETSU and our community college partners. Keith Johnson shared that he would like this to lead to Shaun Harper as one of the keynote speakers for the annual conference.

A proposal is currently being drafted for Eastman Chemical Company to come alongside ETSU in these efforts to be financial support for the community colleges.

A campus climate assessment will also be conducted in late January/early February.

- B. SREB Institute on Teaching and Mentoring** – Chassidy Cooper reported that ETSU received a ten-year recruiting institution participation award at the Institute’s recent event. Chassidy Cooper noted that the recruiting team established contact with over 40 doctoral students as serious candidates for faculty or staff positions at ETSU. The Office of Equity and Inclusion plans to follow up with each of these individuals and connect them to someone at ETSU in the program of interest.

#### **IV. New Business**

- A. BIPOC Support Group** – Chassidy Cooper shared that Khia Hudgins-Smith, Diversity-Focused Clinical Counselor at the Counseling Center will be organizing a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) support group in February 2023 for students. This group will be run out of the Multicultural Center and council members are invited to participate as facilitators and asked to inform students of this group.

## **B. Open Discussion Items**

Felipe Fiuza spoke about some of the barriers international students have regarding vaccination requirements and their ability to cover the cost of these vaccinations. Joe Sherlin shared that there is an international enrollment management group meeting to focus on the transition of prospective students and the support of international students. He will bring this information to the group for review with the health clinic and determine what support could be provided.

Phyllis Thompson noted that someone has reached out to her asking if there was a policy or operating procedure that governed faculty treating other faculty with grace and dignity. She has found progressive disciplinary procedures/guidelines from human resources and a mistreatment policy from the medical school. Keith Johnson commented that during the pandemic extending grace and showing courtesy from the perspective of students was frequently talked about and is something we may need to begin to address. Phyllis Thompson added that the Strong Brain Institute is working on trauma and resilience-informed workplace information, but this information isn't policy or procedure. Keith Johnson added that rather than create a policy we need to start working on how to create an environment where treating others with grace and dignity is part of the culture.

Gladstone Gunn asked about pathways for students to get involved in conversations about syllabi, policies, programs, projects, etc. Keith Johnson shared that student input and assistance are important. Students will be part of the teams in closing the equity gaps. Administrators may think they have a clear idea of student needs and challenges, but it is important to hear directly from the student. Additionally, student involvement in conference planning, inclusive excellence training, contributing to the monthly newsletter and/or quarterly magazine, etc is always welcome.

Adrianna Guram shared that she and Keith Johnson are working with Dr. Robert Owens, Chief Diversity Officer and Charria Campbell, Director of Student Engagement and Intercultural Affairs from Tennessee Technological University to present on black male student retention/success on January 26, 2023. Dr. Owens had initially reached out to Keith Johnson to possibly present at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Equity and Inclusion Conference. Recently Adrianna Guram, Stacy Onks, Keith Johnson, Kevin Brooks, and Nate Tadesse met to discuss expanding on the same topic.

**V. Next Meeting Date** – January 18, 2023, 1:00-2:00 pm, via zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 pm.

**Respectfully submitted by Kim Maturo**