

Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee
Minutes
July 25, 2019

Present – Filipe De Oliveira Fiuza (Zoom), Ann Eargle, Adrianna Guram, Sarah Houck, Keith Johnson, Mary Jordan, Antonio Rusinol, and Phyllis Thompson.

Not Present – Joe Sherlin and Laura Terry.

- I. **Approval of Minutes, June 27, 2019 Meeting** – The minutes of the June 27, 2019 meeting were approved as distributed. In keeping with open lines of communication, the approved minutes will be uploaded to the Equity and Inclusion website.

- II. **Website** – Dr. Johnson shared that during the transition period of the Office of Equity and Diversity, the website included necessary information; office location, office phone number, etc. This period was a temporary interval allowing time for reorganizing, planning, and development of the new structure and purpose of the department. Dr. Johnson announced that the refurbished Office of Equity and Diversity website is now active. The newly developed website, as well as new name for the office, Equity and Inclusion, more effectively identifies the direction, mission, and goals of the office. In his desire to keep communication flowing, Dr. Johnson welcomed deans, via email, to visit the refreshed website with a request to forward inclusive and all-embracing event information, programs, newsworthy articles, etc., to Ms. Eargle, earglea@etsu.edu for posting to the new website. The website will feature, *In the News*, and include submitted information as well as a link to the individual department/unit/college, etc., for additional information. This resource will help to satisfy the goal of expanding awareness of inclusive activities occurring campus wide. Currently, the website notes the names and contact information of committee members. Dr. Johnson requested a short bio from members to include along with the contact information already provided. He asked that bios be forwarded to Ms. Eargle. Dr. Johnson is hopeful that the bios will include unique information about members in lieu of the customary academic verbiage. Within the next few weeks, photos of committee members will also be added to the website. The committee discussed a multitude of ideas for sharing information on the website as well as reporting on upcoming events.

- III. **Mary V. Jordan Endowment** – Dr. Johnson has been working with Ms. Pam Ritter, University Advancement, in relation to the Memo of Understanding for the Mary V. Jordan Scholarship Endowment. The initial quasi-endowment has been established from an initial gift from Ms. Dorothy Grisham as well as a matching gift from Dr. Brian Noland. Subsequent contributions from family and friends including planned gifts will be encouraged. The purpose of the endowment is to provide scholarship assistance to deserving students enrolled at East Tennessee State University.

- IV. **Awards and Recognition** – The Patricia E. Robertson Diversity Leadership Award is supported through the John Davis Memorial Scholarship Endowment for which criteria has already been established. Within the next couple of months, Dr. Johnson plans to meet with Dr. Robertson, custodian of the award, to discuss the potential for further definition of the criteria. Due to historical value, Dr. Johnson solicited Ms. Jordan to join him in the meeting with Dr. Robertson. Two additional scholarship awards, currently under review, are the Mary V. Jordan Scholarship Award presented to an academic college and the Dr. Angela R. Lewis Scholarship Award presented to a department/unit/individual. Criteria for both awards was discussed. The committee agreed that, so as not to eliminate anyone from eligibility of recognition, it will be essential for the nominator to provide clear points of reference for nominees currently working in diversity type positions to intentionally demonstrate how the nominee substantiates diversity and inclusion over and above their common duties. Ongoing support for awards was discussed as well as “types” of recognition. Several suggestions were expressed including a “floating” award with the potential of moving annually from department to department as annual recognition is earned; engaging inclusive grant-funded activities; and various other valuable recommendations were discussed. Dr. Johnson solicited volunteers to serve on an Adhoc Awards/Recognition Committee. Ms. Guram and Dr. Thompson enthusiastically volunteered to serve.

Other committee members, not present at the meeting, are encouraged to serve on the committee as well and should contact Ms. Guram or Dr. Thompson regarding interest. The adhoc committee was charged with developing solid criteria, processes, and procedures for all awards – current and proposed – with particular attention being attributed to inclusivity in relation to integrating university academic and non-academic programs/units and ETSU satellite constituents as well. The awards/recognition proposals from the adhoc committee will be reviewed and discussed at the next committee meeting. Dr. Johnson shared that it is his plan to meet with distinguished community partners, with a like vision for inclusivity, for the purpose of collaboration and to generate supportive funds. The committee also discussed the requisite of a portfolio for presentations, which will serve to initiate conversation and spark the interest of partners.

- V. **Diversity/Inclusion Conference Planning** – Dr. Johnson shared that he met with Dr. Daryl Carter, Chair, Diversity/Inclusion Conference, and discussed the upcoming conference scheduled for September 26-27, 2019. Dr. Carter and the committee have assembled a conference schedule which will be reviewed at their next committee meeting scheduled for July 26, 2019. Dr. Johnson shared that in order for the inclusion initiative to become an ongoing proposition, supportive funds are required. For that reason, Dr. Johnson solicited funding from deans. The intention of the conference, and future conferences, is to share best practices for inclusion, convey new ideas, demonstrate the importance of inclusion to our collective recruiting, retention and graduation rates, as well as the economic impact of being inclusive of all people. Dr. Johnson conveyed to the deans that the conference will illuminate methods that everyone can improve upon in relation to the education and services we provide and the collaborative funding will serve to make an impact in demonstrating collective commitment to inclusion. Involvement from every college will serve to make an impact. A monetary commitment has been received from President Noland securing a solid commitment to the initiative accompanied by an expectation of potential additional funding from other sources. At this time, Dr. Freeman A. Hrabowski, President, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, is being sought as the keynote. Theater Delta is under consideration for an interactive theater performance with the content of two performances currently under review. Contract details will be negotiated very soon. At the conclusion of the inaugural conference, plans and discussion will commence for follow up workshops over the academic year as well as discussion of next year's conference.
- VI. **Campus Diversity Training** – Dr. Johnson and Mr. Keith Glover continue to converse in relation to campus diversity training for faculty and staff. Discussions have also ensued regarding the scope of student training as well. To illustrate the gravity of inclusion, Dr. Johnson and Mr. Glover agree that training scenarios should include factual sequences of events brought forth by faculty, staff and students.
- VII. **Black Lives Matter Incident, 2016** – Dr. Johnson shared that Dr. Noland and he discussed the campus impact of the July 17, 2019 court ruling for Tristan Rettke in relation to the Black Lives Matter campus protest in May 2016. The startup of the academic year, which is quickly approaching, is an opportune time to disseminate a reminder, campus wide, that the type of behavior expressed by Rettke will not be tolerated on any of our campuses. Committee members felt it wise for Dr. Noland to include, in his comment to the campus community, the institution's sanctions against Rettke in an effort to reinforce that unacceptable behavior, in any fashion, would not be tolerated.

Next Meeting Date – August 16, 2019, 10:30-noon, Burgin Dossett, Room 304.

Respectfully submitted by: J. Ann Eargle