

## Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC) Notes

### June 15, 2021, 4:00 pm ET

In attendance: Drenda Williams, Tala Awada, Brian Raison, Chris Hamilton, Shannon Archibeque-Engle, Nina Lyon Bennett, Bret Hess, John Dieffenbacher-Krall, Gary Thompson, Rick Rhodes, David Leibovitz

1. Approval of the agenda
  - **The agenda was approved by unanimous acclamation.**
2. Approval of minutes, 5/26/2021
  - **The minutes of 5/26 were approved by unanimous acclamation.**
3. Update on interim actions, ESS Meeting in Olympic Valley, CA
  - In May, John Dieffenbacher-Krall brought up the offensive meaning of the word “squaw” to indigenous tribes across North America. Women of the Washoe tribe in the Olympic Valley, CA area have issued a statement on the derogatory meaning of the word squaw.
  - The ESS meeting is being promoted as being held in Olympic Valley, CA as opposed to Squaw Valley (the resort’s current name). Resort representatives indicated they are currently in the process of changing the venue’s name.
  - ESS meeting organizers (WAAESD and University of Nevada, Reno) are in contact with the Director of the Washoe tribal historical preservation office, Darrel Cruz. Either Director Cruz or a Washoe Elder have committed to joining the ESS meeting to welcome attendees and describe the local history of the Olympic Valley area.
  - **This summer, the Western region (WAAESD) will engage in a virtual session entitled “How will we address access, equity and inclusion with focus on native peoples of our region?”**
    - **DCC Members are all invited to attend.**
    - **Meeting website:** <https://ucanr.edu/sites/wregionsummer2020/>
    - **Registration link:** <https://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=33769>
4. Update and call for input on barriers to USDA programs
  - USDA-NIFA wants to start reaching beyond its existing stakeholders and identifying barriers to exposure to USDA programs.
  - Match is a barrier – inability to absorb reductions in ICR and afford matching requirements is a barrier to participation in many NIFA programs.
  - Nina served on the National Teaching Awards committee and noted that evaluation of diversity, equity, and inclusion was only included parenthetically.
  - RFA rubrics should ask if applicants are using a deficit model for approaching communities or if applicants are considerate of how communities want to be approached.
  - Regarding customer service: Recently Nina reached out to NIFA seeking further explanation on an element of an RFA and received a cut-and-pasted reply only including text directly from the RFA, which was not helpful.
  - NIFA’s Project CAFÉ needs to identify appropriate points of contact for LGUs across the system.

- NIFA is encouraged to cater its messaging to customers at all expertise levels of grant management.
- Follow-up on input from NIFA Listening Sessions would be valuable. LGUs appreciate the sessions but would like to hear that the input is valued and acknowledged.

#### 5. DCC Call to Action (v3, shared prior to the meeting)

- The CTA is intended to be shared with ESCOP in July and then the full ESS body in September 2021.
- John wants to be sure the CTA has the appropriate stature and urgency for the Experiment Station Section. John suggested some language to include in the CTA:
  - *Land grant institutions and agricultural experiment stations have a duty to understand how they have benefitted from racial injustice and to ensure their programs and services do not perpetuate systems of oppression and injustice. We challenge ourselves to not simply strive to become non-racist but commit to an active anti-racist agenda in all aspects of our work.*
- Shannon cautioned the DCC – we need to be sure we are “all in” on this statement if it is included in the CTA. “Anti-racist” cannot be used as a buzz word, it needs to be supported consistently by our positions and our actions.
- There is at least one state which is banning participation in “divisive” training related to diversity, equity, and inclusion – this could be the cause of some controversy in the wake of issuing this CTA.
- Bret was supportive of the added language and alluded to some questions that came up at the last ESS Planning Committee meeting: If not us (Directors), then who will take action and advocate for change? Why should we not take the lead on this? If we are going to make a difference, we need to start somewhere.
- The CTA could be a forum through which Directors can share activities they are engaged in related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Gary suggested we tailor the CTA language to be more proactive and use less of a passive tone as framed by the long “background” statement up front. We should issue this as a challenge or charge to the Directors. The language suggested by John should be moved up front to the beginning of the document.
  - **The change in language was approved unanimously by the committee and the suggested language from John Dieffenbacher-Krall was moved to the beginning of the document.**
- **A motion was introduced to approve the following:**
  - **The DCC CTA as amended today will be shared with the ESCOP Chair’s Advisory Committee at its meeting on June 17 and then with ESCOP at its July 2021 business meeting. The document will be presented as more than an agenda brief – this is a challenge to the Directors.**
  - **The motion was approved with unanimous acclamation.**

#### 6. Other items

- Juneteenth (June 19 holiday celebrating the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States) has been named a holiday in Maine and a paid holiday in the city of Providence, RI.

The meeting adjourned at 4:59 PM ET.