

Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC) Meeting Minutes October 19, 2021, 4:00-5:00 PM ET

In attendance: Henry Fadamiro (Chair), John Dieffenbacher-Krall, Cindy Morley, Brian Raison, Gary Thompson, Nina Lyon-Bennett, Tracy Dougher, Shannon Archibeque-Engle, Drenda Williams, Bret Hess, Rick Rhodes, David Leibovitz

1. Introduction and opening remarks (Henry)
 - Henry recently attended a series of research leadership talks that did not include any acknowledgment of diversity and inclusion.
 - As a group, the DCC should work to ensure that there are multicultural components in all talks and activities related to leadership.
2. Approval of August 17, 2021 DCC notes
 - **The notes from 8/27/2021 were approved unanimously.**
3. ESS Meeting debrief
 - **Dave Leibovitz will check with ESS meeting organizers to see if sessions were recorded.**
 - Nehrwr Abdul Wahid (professional intercultural competency trainer) ran a session during the 2021 ESS Meeting in September entitled “Leadership, Diversity, and You”
 - Take home messages from Nehrwr:
 1. Train with intentionality
 2. Allow data to drive where we are, where we go, what we do and how we do it.
 - Patrick Sullivan (CEO, Oceanit and author, “Intellectual Anarchy”) provided a keynote speech at the ESS Meeting
 - One of Patrick’s primary secrets for creating disruptive innovation is assembling “transdisciplinary, diverse working teams”.
 - Meeting speaker Sharon Nance (USDA NRCS, retired) emphasized the importance of addressing racial justice and equity in working with agricultural systems.
4. DCC strategic direction
 - ESS needs to move forward and continue to keep DCC-related ideas out in front of its membership. How can we increase the level of activity rolled out to the section by the DCC?
 - We could consider a longer format training (similar to what was undertaken by a small segment of the section in March 2017 during the CARET-AHS meeting.) NIFA Director Carrie Castille has expressed interest in a multi-day training for NIFA staff and LGU Directors.
 - Colorado State University is utilizing *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming* by Natasha Bowens for its university-wide read this year.
 - **Perhaps there's space for a similar conversation in AES.**
[\(https://ramsread.colostate.edu/the-book/\)](https://ramsread.colostate.edu/the-book/)
 - John Dieffenbacher Krall works in program compliance at UMaine. John made changes to an internal AES project reporting form which seeks to better balance compliance with inclusion.
 - John edited the University of Maine project justification section. Investigators (she/he/they) need to address how a project will address the research needs of underserved individuals or communities in the state of Maine?

- The form now includes a direct reference to the ESCOP DCC Call to Action
- Faculty have been mostly compliant; there has been some resistance.
- **John's example of re-drafting the project justification form to ask for this qualitative statement is a good example to share with NIFA about an action taken, inspired by the DCC. Drenda Williams can share in a future NIFA update.**
- NIFA drafted new language to be included in all RFAs about "Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access" (see below):
 - *NIFA recognizes research, education, and extension efforts will have the greatest impacts when equity is grounded in our programs. NIFA is committed to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of our programs and encourages individuals from underserved communities to apply to funding opportunities as lead or subaward recipient(s) and to participate in the panel review process to assist in the development of strong networks and collaborations. We encourage applications that engage diverse communities and have broader impacts through research, education, extension, and integrated activities to address current and future challenges.*
- For some, DEI is uncomfortable to talk about, discuss, address...
 - Nina shared that Arkansas Pine Bluff, an HBCU, does not have DEI administrators or staff. There appears to be a notion there isn't a problem with diversity and inclusion in that organization. University leadership needs to think about this from a different perspective.
 - There is an indication that there is a lack of diversity in different dimensions at the university. Dedicating resources to take action and address DEI requires heavy lifting and support from administrators and faculty.
- NIFA is in the process of hiring a Diversity Equity Inclusion and Accessibility Manager on Drenda Williams's staff.
- A consideration for 2022: Conduct the IDI as part of next fall's Join ESS-CES meeting in Baltimore. Many ESS Directors have not yet taken the IDI and the CES has never taken the IDI.
- Brian Raison proposed a quick homework assignment:
 - We must listen so that we can hear stories from others... see potential... and act to (ultimately) make our world a better place.
 - **Google and watch "Crystal Williams potential matters" Stories from the Stage, March 1, 2021: <https://youtu.be/-OdTCazBFo0>**
- We need to change the format of what we submit in compliance reporting and elevate the value of qualitative data.
- We want to give people tools, we are an educational institution, and we want action.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm ET.