

Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC) Minutes
November 16, 2021, 4:00-5:00 PM ET

In attendance: Henry Fadamiro (Chair), Brian Raison (Ohio State), Cindy Morley (SAAESD), Tala Awada (Nebraska), Bret Hess (WAAESD), Drenda Williams (USDA NIFA), Shannon Archibeque-Engle (Colorado State), John Dieffenbacher-Krall (Maine), Nina Lyon Bennett (Arkansas Pine Bluff), Majed El-Dweik (Lincoln), Rick Rhodes (NERA, Executive Vice-Chair), David Leibovitz (NERA)

1. Introductions and opening remarks

- Henry remarked that topics related to Diversity and Inclusion are appearing more frequently in other meeting forums. The DCC's activities are helpful in keeping these topics as priority discussion areas.

2. Approval of the agenda

- Henry suggested inserting a discussion to recap the previous year's activities, consider what we accomplished, and think about what we need to work on in the upcoming year.
- John recommended inclusion of a discussion about the USDA Equity Commission and its Subcommittee on Agriculture.
- **The agenda with amendments listed above was approved unanimously.**

3. Approval of October 19, 2021 notes

- **The notes of October 19, 2021 were approved unanimously.**

4. USDA Equity Commission and its Subcommittee on Agriculture

- The commission was established in October 2021 and is seeking new members.
- Rick drafted a nomination for Shannon Archibeque-Engle (DCC member/Colorado State) to serve on the Equity Commission.
 - Shannon has a rare combination of professional expertise in diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice; and a direct connection to agriculture.
 - Shannon is the beneficiary of USDA Grant programs and is familiar with USDA policies, practices, and its structure.
 - The USDA Equity Commission is seeking a specific set of expertise, and Shannon has expertise in many of those areas.
- John suggested we revise our 2021-22 POW to include monitoring of the USDA Equity Commission, its priority, and its plan as it develops.
- The DCC elected to consider two more nominations for fellow committee members: Nina Lyon Bennett (Arkansas Pine Bluff) and Tracy Dougher (Montana State). These two additional nominations should be submitted by someone other than Rick.
- **Rick Rhodes will check with Nina and Bret Hess will check with Tracy to see if they are willing to be nominated. The prospective nominations would be submitted as follows:**
 - **Shannon Archibeque-Engle (Rick Rhodes to submit)**
 - **Nina Lyon Bennett (Henry Fadamiro to submit)**
 - **Tracy Dougher (Bret Hess to submit)**

5. Recap of 2020-21 activities

- DCC shifted to from a quarterly meeting schedule as planned to a more frequent, monthly meeting schedule.
- DCC issued two calls for nomination for its annual ESS Awards program (individual and group nominee).
- DCC intends to create a webinar series based on input from the 2020 call to action.
- Directors were engaged once per quarter on activities associated with the DCC.

6. DCC strategic direction for the next FY

- A draft DCC Plan of Work for 2021-22 was enclosed with today's meeting materials.
- The POW states that the DCC will "Assist directors in integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion as an essential component of all programs." – *To what extent can we actively assist?*
 - It's important to keep diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice at the forefront... The DCC should arrange for the ESS to engage regularly with activities about diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.
- John Dieffenbacher-Krall suggested that the regional Executive Directors identify a champion institution(s) who can be engaged as change leaders in areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- NIFA would be interested in collaborating on a webinar that is relevant to the ESS (e.g. "DEI and the NIFA Compliance review process").
- Identifying the metrics and holding people accountable is a means for Directors to serve as change agents for DEI. Appointment of an Assistant Dean/Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion does not necessarily fix DEI. Further, this type of position should not be an "add on".
- Bret suggested that in the upcoming year, the DCC should work toward a common definition of Equity in Science for presentation to ESS.
- The draft POW will be left open for revisions/additions between now and the next DCC meeting.
- **The next DCC meeting will be focused on completing the draft POW.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 pm ET.