

Diversity Catalyst Committee (DCC) Meeting Minutes December 21, 2021, 4:00-5:00 PM ET

In attendance: Henry Fadamiro, Nina Lyon Bennett, Brian Raison, Cindy Morley, Drenda Williams, Bret Hess, John Dieffenbacher-Krall, Majed El-Dweik, Alton Thompson, Rick Rhodes, David Leibovitz

1. Introductions and opening remarks
 - The DCC elected to meet on a monthly basis in 2021 and Henry thanked the DCC for its continued active engagement throughout the year. It has been a challenging year for all of us personally and professionally, and a challenging year for the entire country.
2. Agenda approval
 - **The agenda was approved unanimously with modification of several announcements from Rick.**
3. Approval of the minutes/notes from November 16, 2021
 - **The DCC minutes of November 16, 2021 were approved unanimously.**
4. Announcements
 - Shannon Archibeque-Engle, Nina Lyon Bennett, and Tracy Dougher were nominated by DCC members to serve on the USDA Equity Committee. We look forward to hearing follow-up from the USDA on these nominations.
 - The DCC sought responses to the call to action by December 15, 2021. The DCC received feedback from seven institutions on actions taken in response to the CTA. The DCC will work to bring these examples of action steps forward to both ESCOP as exemplars and to NIFA for sharing in the NIFA Updates newsletter and on social media.
5. Approval of the 2022 Call for Nominations for National Experiment Station Section Diversity and Inclusion Award
 - The call for nominations would be posted at the beginning of the new year, with a due date of April 1, 2022.
 - One nomination remains in the pool from last year (Mississippi / Alcorn State) and that team will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit in 2022.
 - John asked that an explicit **Equity** component be built into the call for nominations. This would be consistent with the call to action we presented to the ESS Directors.
 - One component that could be addressed under the header of Equity is professional track equity between faculty and admin/professional staff, which is an issue that many institutions face. An example of an action taken: Ohio State Extension has developed a parallel track for “admin and professional staff”.
 - We might also consider adding the term **justice** throughout the document.
 - Substantive revisions to the call for nominations will need to be reviewed and approved by the ESCOP Executive Committee.

- **Rick will present a revised version of the call for nominations to the DCC for comment electronically. If the DCC approves, the call will be presented to the ESCOP Executive Committee on January 20, 2022.**

6. DCC Plan of Work, 2022

- The draft Plan of work was revised to incorporate comments made by the DCC in November. Revisions made since November are outlined below:
 - Support the ESCOP Chair’s diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
 - Identify metrics for assessing progress towards improving diversity, equity, and inclusion at our institutions.
 - Engage regional Executive Directors to identify a champion institution(s) who could serve as an exemplar and as a change leader in areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - Collaborate with NIFA on the presentation of DEI webinars (e.g., “DEI and the NIFA Compliance review process”)
 - Collaborate with ESCOP’s Science and Technology Committee to develop a working definition of and a framework for “Equity in Science.”
- A priority for 2022 will be for us to find meaningful way to engage with Directors. We need to try to increase participation from Directors in DCC calls to action.
- 1862 institutions frequently have high level Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion administrators in their colleges. The DCC should examine how these administrators might be able to work effectively with the stations to drive change.
- The DCC can contribute toward identifying metrics for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the experiment station evaluation process.
- Dedicating ESS resources to creating a “DEI Fellows/Ambassadors” program for Directors may be a means of strengthening the Directors’ direct involvement in DEI initiatives at their institutions.
- It was valuable for the DCC to have an opportunity to weigh in on USDA’s Draft Strategic Goals with Director Carrie Castille and Chief of Staff Bill Hoffman. We would entertain the opportunity to have continuing discussions on these strategic goals and await their rollout and implementation by USDA.
- **The DCC elected unanimously to submit a draft plan of work to ESCOP at its next Chair’s Advisory Committee/Executive Committee meeting on January 20, 2022.**

7. NIFA Update

- NIFA intends to include Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility as an evaluation criterion in its compliance reviews beginning in 2022.

8. Recognition of John Dieffenbacher-Krall (Maine/NERA Representative)

- DCC member John Dieffenbacher-Krall is leaving the University of Maine to serve as the Executive Director of the Wabanaki Alliance, a non-profit organization representing the five indigenous tribal governments in the state of Maine. John will serve as the inaugural Executive Director for the Alliance.

- John was recognized by DCC Chair Henry Fadamiro for his dedication and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and for his contributions to the DCC and the Experiment Station Section.
- John thanked the committee for the opportunity to serve and is proud of the actions taken by the DCC throughout 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm eastern time.