

KU Staff Senate Diversity and Inclusion Year-End Committee Report 2018 – 2019

CO-CHAIRS:

Jeff Severin & Michelle Wilson

STANDING CHARGE(S):

1. Organizes diversity, equity and inclusion training opportunities for committee members and staff senators
2. Collaborates with standing Staff Senate committees and counterparts in Student, Faculty, and University Senate
3. Represents staff senate in campus and regional committees and workshops around diversity, inclusion, and equity
4. Actively works to recruit a diverse and inclusive senate body through outreach and cooperation with relevant campus offices, departments, and organizations
5. Supports and promotes campus-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives

SPECIFIC CHARGE(S):

Create a more inclusive environment for staff at the University of Kansas

PROGRESS

The Staff Senate Diversity & Inclusion Committee met monthly throughout the 2018-2019 academic year and has continued to make progress through a number of action teams that were established to address committee priorities as well as broader Staff Senate initiatives.

Action taken to specifically address our standing charges include:

- Organize training for committee and Staff Senate members: The committee coordinated with the Office of Multicultural Affairs to host workshops in summer 2018, including Social Justice 101 and Microaggressions. For summer 2019, the committee is working on organizing Unconscious Bias and Compassionate Communications workshops. These will again be offered to Staff Senators and committee members. A Safe Zone training was also organized in fall 2018 for Staff Senators, committee members, and Council members.
- Collaborate with Staff Senate committees and counterparts: The Committee serves as a sounding board to other committees to review materials through a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Items from action teams addressing supervisor training and evaluations, as well as a “staff welcome committee” concept have been referred to other committees for broader input.
- Represent staff senate: The committee continues to have a liaison to the Campus Equity Implementation Committee in order to stay informed of broader campus initiatives and identify opportunities for the Staff Senate D&I Committee to contribute to these efforts. Committee Chair Michelle Wilson serves as president of the Black Faculty and Staff Council, and members of the committee participate on this and other Faculty Staff Councils.
- Support of campus wide initiatives: Through communication with the Diversity and Equity office, the committee has provided feedback on campus-wide training opportunities and other questions brought to the committee by D&E. Upcoming events are published in the agenda and meeting summaries and discussed at each meeting. These are also shared with the full Staff Senate each month.

Action Teams addressed a number of items that support our standing charges and our overall goal of creating a more inclusive environment for staff at The University of Kansas:

- Unpacking Whiteness in the Workplace: This action team developed and hosted an "Unpacking Whiteness in the Workplace" workshop series in the fall. This two-part series focused on whiteness and privilege and how they contribute to office cultures that are oppressive to people with marginalized identities. The series was repeated in spring 2019 with the addition of a 3rd component on risk and allyship. A total of 140 individuals participated in Part 1 sessions, 102 participated in Part 2 sessions, and 64 are registered for the Part 3 session offered in May. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many noting that their participation changed the

way they think about race in the workplace and inspired them to work toward creating more inclusive work environments.

- **Staff Resources:** This team reviewed staff resources on the Diversity & Equity website, online orientation materials available through Human Resources, and a community resource guide produced by the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The team developed recommendations for each unit to consider organizing or adding new resources that would improve services and information specific to staff needs.
- **STEP (Supervisory Training for Excellence in Performance):** Similar to Staff Resources, this team reviewed the STEP program, including feedback from past participants, to evaluate for DEI content and needs. The group developed recommendations regarding the course itself, the potential for adding DEI segments or refreshers and requiring training for new supervisors, and barriers for participation that could be addressed to make the course more accessible for all supervisors.
- **Welcome Committee:** The goal for this project is to develop a process for welcoming new staff to KU, specifically those with marginalized identities, and to connect them with resources, affinity councils, and the KU community. The team is coordinating with the Personnel Committee about the project and with Human Resources to get a sense of how many people this would involve and determine when and how information can be distributed. A welcome committee concept is also being considered by Faculty Development (FD), so the team will work with FD to see if there is anything that could be shared between groups
- **D&I Open Meeting:** The D&I Committee held an open meeting on April 2 to gather input from campus on priority DEI issues the committee could address. The Media Production Lab provided live streaming, and the committee worked with a vendor to provide live captioning to make the meeting more accessible for all members of the campus community. Being more inclusive of individuals with disabilities as well as International staff were among key themes discussed. Feedback from the meeting will be incorporated into committee goals for 2019-2020.

In addition to these topics that were identified by the committee as priorities for the year, the D&I Committee worked on Senate-wide initiatives to address staff needs identified by the 2017-2018 Staff Fellows program, which includes:

- **360 Review Process:** An action team is studying the performance evaluation process for supervisors to recommend an option for staff to provide feedback about their supervisors. The team has identified departments to participate in a pilot and continues to explore solutions to challenges that were identified in a previous attempt to evaluate this process.
- **Supervisor Encouragement:** This team is examining opportunities for supervisors to more effectively support staff's personal and professional development around issues of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Possible areas to explore include opportunities to inform supervisors about professional development, encouraging them to host their own professional development, and exploring trainings that may be available to student employees.

Action teams for these and other projects will continue into next year and will be joined by teams focused on new priorities identified through the open meeting and discussions in the first meetings of the new Staff Senate year.