

# **KU Staff Senate Diversity and Inclusion Year-End Committee Report 2019 – 2020**

## **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 2019-2020 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 Institutional Opportunity & Access and the Ombuds Office to host workshops in summer 2019, including abbreviated versions of Unconscious Bias and Compassionate Communication trainings. Staff Senate members were also invited to attend the “Unpacking Whiteness in the Workplace” workshops (see below). Upcoming DEI related 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.
- 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 and provided feedback to Professional Development on their application process, as well as to Personnel Affairs on their onboarding document.
- Represent staff senate: The committee continues to have a liaison to the Campus Equity Implementation Committee (CEIC) in order share our work with the committee, to stay informed of broader campus initiatives, and identify opportunities for the Staff Senate D&I Committee to contribute to these efforts.
- Support of campus wide initiatives: The Office of Diversity and Equity coordinated with the committee to distribute a survey on food insecurity among faculty and staff. The committee provided a summary report to the office and presented findings to the CEIC. Following the campus strategic plan Visioning Day last fall, the committee examined inclusivity in the planning process and drafted a letter to the Chancellor and Interim Provost encouraging more inclusive approaches to campus strategic planning. The letter was also signed by the International, Sexuality & Gender Diversity, Latinx, Native, and Black Faculty and Staff Councils. There was an immediate response from the Chancellor, Interim Provost and Vice Provost for Diversity & Equity, recognizing the need for broader engagement, and a set of meetings followed to discuss opportunities and share additional concerns with campus leadership.

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 continued to host the "Unpacking Whiteness in the Workplace" workshop series, completing the 3-part series in fall 2019 and delivering the Part 1 workshop in spring 2020 before the remainder of the series was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At that point, total enrollment for the year was 131. As of this report, the program has had a total enrollment of 426 since workshops were first offered in fall 2018, with 258 unique participants representing nearly 60 different campus departments. Earlier in the year, the team hosted a lunchtime discussion series and supported an activity at the Law School employee retreat. In response to discrimination and disproportionate impacts of COVID-19, they also hosted a Zoom call featuring leaders from area organizations that provide support and resources for some of our most vulnerable community members.
- **Welcome Committee:** The goal for this project was 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 coordinated 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. The Professional Development committee's mentoring program also provides an outlet for this activity.
- **Food Insecurity Action Team:** This action team was responsible for collating the results of a May 2019 survey by the Office of Diversity & Equity that examined food insecurity among KU staff. The team generated a short report and recommendations based on approximately 550 responses that was shared with the Campus Equity Implementation Committee in spring 2020. The report revealed that staff are largely unaware of on-campus food assistance programs or are reluctant to use them. In light of these findings, the committee generated an article for the staff senate newsletter to raise awareness of on- and off-campus food assistance available to staff.
- **360-Review Action Team:** This action team has reviewed research on the use of 360-review processes to encourage supervisor accountability. The team also reviewed results of a 2009 supervisor feedback pilot and met with Human Resources in late 2019 to assess the use of myTalent for a campus wide 360-review or upward feedback process. Current institutional resources support 360-review as an optional professional development tool and can't be easily scaled up for campus-wide use. The team is in the process of exploring other options for upward feedback and supervisor accountability.
- **Supervisor Encouragement:** This team examined opportunities for supervisors to support staff's personal and professional development more effectively around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. The team developed a set of recommendations for how supervisors can integrate DEI into professional development, performance goals, and workplace culture. They also developed a list of campus resources that can be shared. This information will be posted on the Staff Senate website. The project will also go to the Personnel committee for a broader look at how supervisors can support staff in other areas.
- **Outreach Committee:** The goal for this committee is to oversee the D&I Committee's web presence on the KU Staff Senate website and explore methods for expanding outreach. Part of this expansion includes developing a recurring newsletter aimed at participants in the Whiteness in the Workplace sessions as a follow-up and resource guide. Currently the Outreach Committee also maintains resources, contact information, and committee minutes on <https://staffsenate.ku.edu/diversity>.