

**WMSWCD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Meeting Summary
November 25, 2020 Noon to 2:00 pm, WMSWCD Zoom meeting**

Attending: Scott Gall (Chair), Randi Razalenti, Renee Magyar, Laura Taylor, Ari DeMarco, Mary Logalbo

Welcome/Check-In/Equity Shares – Laura recommended listening to the Seeing White podcast and wished others could listen to it so she could discuss it with them. It was proposed that we could discuss some episodes at our voluntary DEI discussion meetings after people listen to them. Renee asked about any take-homes from the voluntary DEI discussion meeting yesterday.

Approval of the September 23, 2020 Meeting Summary – correct one typo on the second line of the “DEI Chair Position” section: “... help get this person up to speed...” Approved with this correction.

DEI Chair Position – Scott shared his proposal for how to equitably change leadership on the DEI committee (attached in the agenda). Overall, the committee liked the proposal. Some thoughts and suggestions were made: Should it recommend “up to” two co-chairs rather than requiring two? This might make it hard to transition since there wouldn’t be any overlap. We don’t want to feel limited to require two. Do we want to include the option for people to continue longer than 2 years or do we want to uphold the 2-year term limit? The committee agreed it would be better to be more flexible and allow for longer term of service. Scott wants to check with other former chairs to double check that all responsibilities are listed. Group selection in an equitable way seems better than leadership assigning someone to the position. Add to the process: candidates submit a letter of interest to the committee and then the committee have an anonymous vote. Clarify who is eligible – any permanent staff member, or a current committee member? The committee decided to keep eligibility open to any permanent staff member.

Action item: Scott will make clarifications and edits to the proposal and then send back to the committee for final feedback. Scott will then send out an announcement to staff about the opportunity.

Intentional DEI focus time in employee work plans; amount, recommended structure – The committee reviewed how EMSWCD approaches this: Time (at least 5 hrs/month) dedicated for internal work and small group meetings. Time for programmatic equity work not included. The committee discussed what we thought would make the most sense for us: Work this into existing meetings, for example the voluntary DEI discussion meeting time. Otherwise folks are concerned about capacity and adding yet one more meeting to our schedules. Should we also include programmatic work? Probably this should be separate from personal work, but also needs to be planned for. Perhaps as separate time in staff work plans. We should have more time available for this individual work. Meetings may not be the best approach for everyone. Recommend whatever learning and exploration model works for each person. The structure of scheduling can be flexible for each staff member – eg. allocate less time during busy seasons and more during “down times”. It’s important to organize this with our desired outcomes in mind: More inclusive culture, shared language, sharing info and resources, being more socially aware and sensitive as we develop our programs. We should also get feedback from Leadership Team about their thoughts on desired outcomes.

Closing discussion – We need more input from Leadership Team and all staff. We’re struggling on the accountability piece and work load capacity. We need to sort out personal learning and programing development as interdependent but separate time allocations. Suggested on average 2 to 5 hrs per month, 1% of FTE? Also some amount of time allocated for programmatic work, but that would be more subject to each staff person’s particular seasonal workflow and where they’re at in incorporating equity into their program. Included in programmatic development: applying the equity lens to work plans and budgets (as per LRBP). Intentional invite to outside staff to be involved in the DEI committee either by attending a meeting every once in a while, or reading the minutes.

Action item: Get feedback from leadership team on desired outcomes and accountability. Develop more clear recommendations at January meeting and then send recommendations to Leadership Team for January meeting so they can advise staff to do this as they develop their work plans. Need clarifications from the LRBP core team on how incorporation into programing will roll out.

DEI as performance criteria in employee performance ratings – Needs to be punted back to Jim based on above conversation and recommendations.

Action item: Ask Jim/Leadership Team what they would recommend for this.

Racial Equity Policy Follow-up – Our website refers to our racial equity policy, but it seemed incomplete or unresolved. Not all of our listed goals have been fully fleshed out throughout this past 5 year LRBP time period. Consider pros and cons of having a stand-alone racial equity policy that's separate from the LRBP. It seems like a good idea – it would serve us for a long time, although it would of course need to be updated routinely. Nice to have one succinct document, but so much is incorporated into our LRBP it would be great to pull out from it without reinventing things or duplicating work. Perhaps they can reference each other. With the goal of updating website language, it just needs to point back to the LRBP. We also need to show our progress (regularly updated) on the website. Need to be clear about difference between policy (which is approved by the board) v.s. procedures, etc. Include "Our Racial Equity Policies and Initiatives include the following:" Would be great to have a one stop shop and also what we've actually done. It would also be good to have a more dedicated space to speak to DEI outcomes in our annual report.

Closing discussion – There's already a starting point outlined in our old LRBP and there will be more fleshed out content in the new LRBP. Once that's complete, we could create a separate addendum that summarizes our DEI policy, goals, etc.

Action item: For updating the website, show elements that have been completed (1-2) and progress on those we're still working on (3-7). Add our Principles, Goals. Renee and Mary will collaborate on this.

Future DEI committee meetings/times; change or remain the same? – Tuesday afternoons on a week other than Board meeting weeks (3rd Tuesdays). 2nd Tuesdays 1:00 to 3:00 pm was agreed upon by the group, at least for the next meeting.

Action item: Check with Terri that this works for her.

Next meeting: January 12, 2021, 1 - 3 pm

Action Items – see above.

Acronym Key:

DEI: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

LRBP: Long Range Business Plan

Notes taken by Laura Taylor