

*2019-2020 Annual Report: College Diversity & Inclusion Committee*

Chair: Shannon M. Oltmann

Members: Nancy Harrington

Kyra Hunting

Montina Jiang

Hailey Salyers

Nathan Stevens

*ex officio*: Dean Jennifer Greer

The College of Communication and Information Diversity and Inclusion (DI) Committee met monthly throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. The DI Committee contributed to the College in several ways throughout the year.

Last year, the DI Committee decided to fund an event hosted by the Office of Student Advising for the College (see attached flier), called “Different Roads, Same Destination: Job Hunting and Networking in Today’s Diverse Workforce.” This was held in fall 2019. Also, the Diversity Officer met with all of the student advisors together to discuss cultural competency, diversity issues that arise with advising, and how the DI Committee and advising might work together more synergistically.

In fall 2019, we hosted scholars for a panel titled “Finding Our Place: How Black Americans Use Social Media to Carve Out Their Own Niche” (see attached flier). Drs. Andre Brock (Georgia Tech University) and Raven Maragh-Lloyd (Gonzaga University) joined UK’s Dr. DeShana Collett on November 7th to discuss the use and meaning of social media for African-Americans. The guest speakers also met with students to share their paths to studying social media and Blackness. This panel was held to commemorate the 70th anniversary of integration at the University of Kentucky. In conjunction with other university events to commemorate this anniversary, the DI Committee led a College-wide book club that read and discussed Trevor Noah’s book *Born a Crime*.

Our second large event was a series of three workshops in the spring (see attached flier), held in conjunction with the Center for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT). These workshops, titled “Diversifying Teaching” were held in January, February, and March and were open to all current and future faculty, instructors, and graduate students/teaching assistants. They were designed to encourage participants to think deeply and proactively about how to make our syllabi, assignments, and classrooms more diverse and inclusive.

The College’s DI Committee provided funding to support several diversity and inclusion events and programming planned by other units in the University this academic year. One example is the 2019 Feast on Equality, the primary fundraiser for the University of Kentucky LGBTQ\* Center. Due to our financial contribution, four people from the College were able to attend the event, including a student and her girlfriend and two committee members. It was a beautiful evening. Another event was the Lyman T. Johnson banquet, for which we selected two awardees (a student and an alumnus); the Dean and the Diversity Officer also attended the event. As we typically do, the DI Committee funded several College Ambassadors in the 2019-2020 academic year. Finally, we also provided funds for the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSA) to bring a speaker, Austin Channing Brown, to campus; that visit has been postponed (due to COVID-19).

In addition to these formal activities, the DI Committee engaged in less formal, though still valuable, reflection, planning, and outreach efforts within the College. For example, Diversity Officer Shannon Oltmann gave a guest lecture for Dr. Derek Lane for COM 315: Understanding Workplace Communication in a Diverse Society. We collected diversity and inclusion-related language from each of the units of the College (see appendix). As a committee, we have revised the call for diversity-related proposals from our College community, which we

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intend to circulate next year (continuing the trend of soliciting proposals from colleagues on a biannual basis). We brainstormed a variety of ways that our Committee could contribute to the College, a variety of events/ activities that we could support with funding or other resources, and a variety of priorities that we could have. After further reflection and discussion, we decided as a group that our main priorities were to clarify the charge of the committee and to develop better promotional strategies, particularly for student engagement. To these ends, we asked one committee member, Dr. Montana Jiang, to work with her students on these issues. In spring 2020, a student group in ISC 321 conducted a focus group and an online survey to find out what motivates College students to attend diversity-related events. In the summer of 2020, seven students in ISC 341 will develop a strategic communication plan to increase student attendance at the diversity in game development panel.

*Looking Ahead*

We have tentative plans to host a gaming-themed panel or mini-workshop in fall 2020. Committee member Nathan Stevens is working on securing participation from video game designers who design games with diversity themes. This should be an engaging and interesting panel for the entire university, whether it is held virtually or physically co-located. In addition to this event, we will circulate our call for diversity-themed proposals from College staff and faculty. We will also revise and send out the College-wide diversity survey; this is sent biannually to all faculty, staff, and students to gauge attitudes and perceptions of the diversity climate in the College.

The Diversity Officer had planned to attend the 2020 National Conference on Race and Ethnicity (NCORE) in May 2020, with funding provided by the Dean's office. However, that

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conference was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. Future diversity-related conference attendance and/or training for the Diversity Officer and other members of the DI Committee would be beneficial.

Finally, receiving a formal charge from the Dean that specifies (a) the primary constituents of the Committee and (b) the primary goals or responsibilities of the Committee would be beneficial as we plan to more formally structure our activities. The Committee will draft a diversity plan in 2020-2021 on the basis of this charge.

**2019-2020 Diversity & Inclusion budget:**

Diversity Committee Budget								
Beginning Budget, July 1				\$	10,000.00			
Fund Balance Addition from Previous Fiscal Year				\$	8,009.00			
Balance Available				\$	18,009.00			
Less:								
UKBGPSA Austin Brown April 2020		\$	1,500.00			Budget Transfer (Event Did Not Occur)		
Airfare – Official Guest Expense (Andre Brock)		\$	463.85					
Feast on Equality Table Sponsor		\$	1,000.00			Reduction of Fund Balance Return - Pd from Dean's Discretionary		
Trevor Noah Books (7/27/19)		\$	116.87					
UK NABJ Convention Travel Support		\$	1,221.22			Supplemented by JAM Funding		
Shannon Oltmann – NCORE Conference		\$	1,033.67			Airfare pending credit for Future Flight		
Student Ambassador Scholarships		\$	3,600.00					
Schyler Simpson - Forum for Recruiting and Retention		\$	717.35					
Shannon Oltmann – 70th Anniversary of UK Integration		\$	1,263.18					
Diversity Event Lunch 3/12/2020		\$	195.50					
UK Procurement & Waste Fees		\$	16.64					
				\$	11,128.28			
Net Uncommitted Balance				\$	6,880.72			

## Appendix 1: Diversity & Inclusion Language from Each Unit

### Department of Communication:

There is no mention of diversity and inclusion in its department rules; however, it has the College's diversity and inclusion statement in its recommended syllabus language.

### Department of Integrated Strategic Communication:

Chair's outward duties:

g. The chair shall coordinate the department's action plan in accordance with the College's affirmative action policy. The chair will also appoint an ISC faculty member to serve on the diversity committee of the College of Communication and Information.

Committee on Student Success and Diversity:

c. The committee shall advise the faculty on ways to attract and retain a diverse student population, faculty, and staff.

### School of Information Science:

#### **Diversity Committee**

- a. **Function:** The Diversity Committee is concerned with promoting diversity and inclusion throughout the School as well as monitoring progress on diversity related goals as identified in the School Diversity Plan (see Appendix X). The committee advises the School Council regarding diversity issues and is responsible for: (1) Defining diversity, (2) Recommending strategies for accomplishing diversity goals and objectives to the School Council, (3) Identifying major problems and/or opportunities affecting school regarding diversity, and (4) Monitoring the extent to which the school achieves its diversity goals and objectives.
- b. **Membership:** Three members of the faculty.

## Appendix X: Diversity Plan for the School of Information Science

### **Executive Summary**

The University of Kentucky is committed to creating a diverse, multicultural community of scholars and learners. It strives to be a model, for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, of a truly diverse society that celebrates human differences, promotes fairness and equity in policies and practices, and upholds basic principles of social justice. It is within this framework that The School of Information Science has conducted a dedicated and on-going program to make diversity central to its curriculum, activities and staffing. It also is committed to educating its students about the value of diversity to them, the university, and greater society; and through this plan, the school works toward these goals.

### School of Journalism and Media:

#### **Executive summary**

The School of Journalism and Telecommunications was found to be out of compliance with this standard in our last review. We took the site visit team's recommendations to heart and worked to embed diversity more fully throughout our curriculum while also pledging to offer at least one section of our stand-alone diversity course each semester. When the Journalism

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curriculum was revised, the diversity course moved from being an elective option within a group of three courses to being a requirement for all Journalism majors. We have also increased our international focus during the review period. Our minority enrollment exceeds that of the university; while we have not been able to make any full-time hires in Journalism, we have worked to increase the diversity of our part-time faculty.

*Note: Both the School of Information Science and the School of Journalism and Media had longer documents, but for the sake of brevity only the executive summaries are included here. The full documents are available upon request.*