

June 11, 2020 Committee for Diversity and Inclusion meeting

Present: Joel Llopiz, Gwyneth Packard, Julia Middleton, Leah McRaven, Viviane Menezes, Veronique LaCapra, Julie Huber, Paris Smalls, Aleck Wang, Kayleah Griffen, Stephanie Madsen, Catherine Walker, Julia Westwater

Thank you from Gwyneth to committee re being pulled into the current for the past 10 days. It's a stressful time for all. We need to step back and pace ourselves; we're in it for the long haul, and we've already made a difference. There is friction and tension when change is happening and the status quo is disrupted. Gwyneth suggested a retreat or time to regroup periodically to find peace. And if anyone needs help "sticking it out" reach out and take breaks or step away temporarily if necessary. We're making good progress, but there's a lot ahead of us.

We will try an alternative to WHOI email for communication. Gwyneth will set up a Slack channel for a month. If necessary, we can switch to BaseCamp if Slack isn't fitting our needs.

Gwyneth mentioned the academic numbers from the recent WHOI board meeting. Multiple working groups (Metrics, Academic Recruiting, Messaging) will be involved in this area.

Leah and Veronique went over their progress so far with the Messaging working group. There is a Communi-tea event on June 12; Leah has compiled an antiracism resources list with suggestions for people to do right now. It will be posted to the CDI website. Kayleah said that Chrissy (Hernandez) is working on an antiracism primer; a listening session. Adam (Subhas) will act as moderator. They have a list of resources as well. We need to work on combining and streamlining the resources. For the Communit-tea, Mark Abbott will talk emphasizing the importance of grassroots organizing. Joel will introduce the CDI. Leah listed tasks for the working group: crafting messages to help with common situations; resources for training (short videos); check in that we're engaging all at WHOI – focus on voices that aren't always heard; create a short tagline for diversity and inclusion. Petition? No.

The working groups need to check in with their volunteers and let them know what we've been doing so far.

CDI will put together a short presentation: here's what's brewing; people are doing the work; the groundwork has been laid after decades of inertia. Julia W explained that APO statistics are improving, but it hasn't been communicated well. First because it's statistics of small numbers and second because it looks like we're self-promoting when there's such a long way to go. CDI can promote progress to open the conversations more naturally. CDI can help people understand the roles of various members of senior administration and update people on the progress of initiatives put forward by those members.

CDI membership, working group membership – invite feedback from the community about what is working and other concerns.

Presentations – add to website.

Veronique wants to ask for an update on the presidential search process so far. Gwyneth and Joel will ask for an update (perhaps a zoom meeting so we can ask questions – or maybe email will be quicker).

Communications/CDI meeting – Veronique sent an outline of the principles and Gwyneth made some edits. CDI cannot review everything (and Communications doesn't want us to do that); creating guidelines for them is what would be most helpful.

WHOI Announcements are sometimes sent by anonymously making it hard or impossible to determine who's sending. Julia W spoke to Kathi Benjamin about this and suggested that there be a person's name attached or a Reply to or a web link to identify who sponsored the announcement.

We also need to establish guidelines about CDI for example, what number do we need for a quorum? How to respond to external questions, etc.

We will set a framework for people to feel safe to speak up even if they say something “wrong” - frame the conversation so people can feel comfortable in an uncomfortable situation. A suggested event was a biweekly meeting for people in the learning phase (aren't we all?); an example topic would be what does it mean to defund the police?

It was expressed that some people might not want their photos taken at the march. The response was that it's a public event, and you can assume that your photo might be taken by someone whether it's a WHOI Communications person or just a bystander with a cell phone.

Sometimes it's difficult to message diplomatically; we need to examine emotions. We're all learning; feedback is important.

Over time, we'll get a lot of pushback; we need to support each other. The work is worth it. Transparency is our friend.

We need to get back to WHOI Creative about branding so our announcements are recognizable as coming from the CDI.

Gwyneth to meet with Rick Murray today. She plans to address the following:

- How senior leadership can interact with the CDI
- Opportunities for diversity and inclusion
- CDI to provide input

- How CDI working groups relate to leadership
- Senior leadership presence at D&I events validates the CDI
- Relieve employees and students from underrepresented groups from the burden of representing
- Department initiative in hiring; faculty should be trained by the department – literature to read, etc.
- Rick meet with CDI perhaps in August; also meet with Gwyneth and Joel individually
- Inclusion is as important as representation
- A way to charge time when not working directly on a grant
- Raise funds for diversity and inclusion work; examples would include endowed chair, employee recognition award, diversity fellowships.
- Senior admin should do their own town hall on this subject; our charge is to advise not to do it for them.

We need to work on clarity around messaging; don't label others as "them" – realize who is included in senior leadership (see list from Veronique).

<https://www.who.edu/who-we-are/about-us/leadership/>