

Diversity and Inclusivity Committee Minutes

April 15, 2021

The Diversity and Inclusivity Committee met remotely on April 15, 2021 from 4-6PM

Members present: Melissa Hammann, Barb Dorn, Daniel Ripp, Donnetta Foxx, Heidi Deininger, James Kvalheim, Janessa Katzenberger, Jennifer Braun and McKenna Grau (had to leave at 5PM)

Guest: Amiee Leavy, Rock County YWCA Racial Justice Director.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome

- Melissa called the meeting to order at 4:05PM.
- We held a moment of silence for Daunte Wright.
- DJ had previously agreed to take minutes and Janessa agreed to be timekeeper. Melissa agreed to take minutes until DJ arrived.
- James moved and Barb seconded to approve the minutes of March 18 as presented. Motion passed 9-0.
- Heidi moved and Jen seconded we approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed 9-0.

Agenda Item 2: Social and Racial Justice Work

- **Review March 18 Homework in which we were to review what we planned to do in the next 3-4 weeks to actively serve LGBTQ+ students.** Melissa responded that she had participated in the interview and stakeholder meetings for the new District Administrator. As a board member, it was her duty to do so, but she brought the lens of DEIB with her to these meetings. As a result of the districts increased priority on DEIB, she believes the district hired the most experienced candidate in racial and social justice. Several clarification questions were asked and answered and an excellent discussion was had regarding how the process could have better served racial and social justice goals. Janessa noted that the leadership group of the schools including the Principals and the Activities and Athletic Director were going for training with Welcoming Schools specifically focused on LGBTQ+ students and their families. The goal is to create a climate assessment with Welcoming Schools. Heidi shared a number of initiatives in her company to help marginalized groups, of which 75% of the students in Madison k-12 are so designated. They formed culture teams focusing on four areas and gave examples of onboarding new staff or challenging existing staff to understand the importance of indicating pronoun preference in your communiques within the company. A great example of dedication to DEIB was their search for a BIPOC STEM specialist which resulted in no diverse applicants and they have decided to broaden the search to include, for example, journals that target BIPOC communities. Jen shared about the Day of Silence being April 23 and Daniel organizing it. Daniel described the significance of the event and what they have done to prepare for it.

- **Common Language:** Amiee shared a PowerPoint presentation regarding common language and warned that we would need to finish this at the May 20 meeting at which we will also begin to explore the concept of Tone Policing. Without a common language, we can't assume we are referring to the same issues using the same language: The example used was Ally, in which a person who is not BIPOC can pick and choose when to be an ally, which will erode trust if a person who you're working with observes you, for example, being quiet during a racially offensive joke. In contrast an accomplice to racial justice denotes commitment and is reserved for members of the BIPOC community who cannot pick and choose moments of solidarity.
 1. **Accountability:** Own your stuff. When a mistake is made, own up to it and make reparations. If you don't, you may end up dragging innocent people into the mess.
 2. **Ally:** Someone who makes the commitment and effort to acknowledge and recognize their privilege and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice. Better to be asked up than sat down. Be equitable, just and consistent. In short, be a good human and people who are downtrodden will recognize over time that you are an ally.
 3. **Anti-Blackness:** Resistance or antagonistic toward Black people or their values or objectives. Example: An individual or organization that opposes an initiative that supports themselves AND the Black community because the Black community might gain from said initiative is Anti-Black.
 4. **Anti-Racism:** Work of actively opposing racism by advocating for change in political, economic and social life. It tends to be an individual approach. You don't just say "we aren't racist."
 5. **Black Lives Matter:** Black Lives Matter is an organization founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. According to their webpage, their "mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives."
 6. **Caucusing:** An intentionally created space for those who share an identity to convene for learning, support and connections. It is natural and healthy for groups of students to gather based on their skin color and identity. It's important for the majority groups to remember that salutations and caucusing might look different from what they consider acceptable student behavior.
 7. **Cultural Appropriation:** The theft of cultural elements, including symbols, art, language, customs, etc,- for one's own use, commendation or profit, without understanding, acknowledgement or respect for its value in the original culture.
 8. **Cultural Misappropriation:** When a cultural fixture of a marginalized culture or community is copied, mimicked or recreated by the dominant culture, which does it for profit without gain to the marginalized culture or while at the same time belittling the original cultural expressions by BIPOC people (examples given include textured hair, large lips and abundant backsides).

9. **Individual Racism:** Actions, beliefs or attitudes of an individual that support or perpetuate racism. Examples include telling racist jokes, using racial epithets and avoiding people of color. If you stay around or accept this behavior or others that do, it is a form of collusion.
10. **Institutional Racism:** Refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. These policies may never mention racial groups, but their effect is to advantage whites and oppress and disadvantage BIPOC people. Examples given were “redlining” used in every aspect of home and business ownership and decisions of where to locate hazardous waste disposal sites in communities of color. Specific things school districts should be aware of in this respect include how AP classes are accessed, how 504s and IEPs are assigned, how discipline is handled. When reviewing policies governing these programs, be mindful that if the group population is experiencing something that is not reflected in the student demographics, something is wrong.
11. **Internalized racism:** When a marginalized group suppressed and oppressed by racism supports the supremacy and dominance of the dominating group. It involves 4 elements that are interconnected.
 - A. Decision making: Due to racism, people of color do not have ultimate decision making power over decisions or resources. This is relevant for interactions on all levels from the personal level in which one may second guess making decisions contrary to the dominant culture, interpersonal level in which one may question another’s decision and finally structurally in which the systems in place reward decisions that keep the dominant system.
 - B. Resources: Resources are unequally in the control of white people. When BIPOC folks internalize racism, they feel as if advocacy for use of resources for themselves or in their community is not “serving everybody.”
 - C. Standards: The standard for what is appropriate or normal “fill in the blank” (behavior, dress, food, hairstyle, names, ways of interacting) are white or Eurocentric standards. Everyone should be free to be their authentic selves. What you wear, what you eat, what your name is are not subjects for speculation and ridicule, but frequently have been.
 - D. Naming the problem: Society misnames racism as a problem caused by people of color and blames the disease (emotional, economic and political) on people of color. Internalized racism may result in people of color believing that their group is, for example, more violent without taking into account the many institutions that force the incarceration of poorer, usually BIPOC populations at a higher rate.

12. **Interpersonal Racism:** Once a person brings their private beliefs into their interactions with others, it is expressed as interpersonal racism.
13. **Intersectionality:** Exploring one's multiple identities can help clarify ways in which a person can simultaneously experience privilege and oppression.
14. **Microaggressions:** Everyday verbal, non-verbal and environmental slights, snubs and insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory or negative messages to target persons solely on their marginalized group membership.

This ends the April installation of common language discussions.

For homework, please review the 14 previous definitions in Amiee's PowerPoint and if you still have questions about these terms please ask them on May 20. Also review the remainder of the terms to begin getting a sense for them and this might help understand them next time.

Not as homework but as a way to help, if you are already working with groups in marginalized communities, assume that they have experienced microaggressions. See what you can do to work to eliminate their experience of this hostile environment.

Agenda Item 3: Student Survey

- The survey closed the week ending April 9. It now goes to the consultant for disaggregation and analysis, which takes about a month. The lead team (Jen, Janessa, DJ and others) will evaluate these results beginning in June.
- The Diversity and Inclusivity Committee will dedicate the entire August meeting to evaluating the survey results toward the end of including these student voices into our five year strategic plan.

The next meeting is scheduled May 20 at 4PM. We will spend the bulk of the two hours completing our common language discussion and beginning to address tone policing.

James moved and Janessa seconded motion to adjourn. Motion passed 9-0

Minutes taken and submitted by Melissa Hammann

April 21, 2021

Approved: