

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Meeting

Date: April 20, 2022; 10:30 AM

Location: Virtual



Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome & Introductions:

Members Present: Renee Chalmers (Chair), Shawne Farmer, Jennifer Kohn, Nate Mahanes, Sam Penn, Sterling Wilder, Christian Wiscovitch

Members Absent: Ethel Reeves, Cheryl Toler

Staff Present: Traci Blido, Lori Cumbo

Renee welcomed attendees and new members Sam Penn and Ethel Reeves (absent). She promptly started the meeting at 10:33 am. This meeting was recorded via MS Teams.

II. Approval of 2-16-22 Meeting Minutes:

Renee entertained the motion for approval of the 2-16-22 minutes. The motion was made by Jennifer Kohn and seconded by Sterling Wilder. The motion was unanimously approved as presented.

III. Guest Speaker:

Christian introduced William Sutton Jr, CWDP, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant at Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). Mr. Sutton is a member of the DEI Council with DARS which was formed approximately 1.5 years ago, focusing on looking for gaps in DARS services. He explained the Council adopted the "Inclusive Excellence Model" which is a framework designed to integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. The model incorporates diversity efforts into the core of organizational functioning. He further explained the model contains eight dimension which the council broke down, evaluated, and made the determination to focus on education and

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training. Mr. Sutton stated the council was strategizing on “how to create spaces where individuals show up to work” and “how to create safe spaces for people to share”.

Mr. Sutton made the following recommendations to our committee:

- Start with inclusion. Who are the people who are not represented? This should be reflective of the population you serve.
- Be intentional.
- Challenge your understanding of DEI. Stay away from politics.
- How do we leverage our differences?
- Build trust which will allow for the creation of safe spaces.
- Meet everyone where they are.
- Empathize and be understanding.

Mr. Sutton stated he would share information on the Inclusive Excellence Model with us.

Jennifer expressed concern regarding if the model took into consideration individuals with Autism and if the strategies were inclusive to them. Mr. Sutton explained determining how to get everyone to the table should be part of the planning/strategizing efforts of the committee. He reiterated the importance of being intentional with our efforts and that it was a “journey”.

Renee thanked Mr. Sutton for his time and comments.

IV. Open Comments/New Items up for discussion

Jennifer mentioned there was a significant barrier of lack of transportation in rural areas. She gave the example of one of her interns who had the ability to work but did not have transportation to get to and from work. Traci stated the Bedford Area Resource Council has a Transportation Committee and it may benefit for Jennifer to join or come speak at a meeting.

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Lynchburg City Councilman Sterling Wilder added the city has public transportation that accommodates individuals with disabilities. He stated he would relay these concerns at an upcoming GLTC Board meeting.

V. Closing Comments

Jennifer agreed to host the next DEI Committee meeting on 5/18 at Little Otter Flower Farm. This will be an in-person meeting where members will have an opportunity to tour the farm and speak with interns regarding their experiences. Further details to follow.

VI. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 am.