



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Action Planning Workgroup

January 12, 2022

9:00-10:00 am

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Welcome

Co-chairs Keahi McFadden and Tom Fenske welcomed workgroup members. They may schedule a follow-up session with people who missed today's meeting.

2. Reflect on last week's Organizational Change team learning session

The chairs asked workgroup members to review last week's meeting summary and let us know if we misstated or missed anything.

Keahi and Tom talked about how important it is to keep DEI matters top of mind throughout the week and in our daily work, not just during this meeting. It can be easy to disengage. Last week, we identified some reasons for this, like our task-oriented culture and how DEI-related conversations can be uncomfortable at first. We're trying to change this dynamic together.

Workgroup discussion included comments emphasizing the division's slow progress in DEI matters over time, a perceived unwillingness to take the lead on making change, and a sense that mid-level leaders lack tangible actions and expectations for advancing DEI goals. It was stated that people in our division tend to sit back and wait to see how serious leadership is about an initiative before they are willing to put the effort into making meaningful change.

Keahi appreciates all the discussions, saying they help us start pushing forward for results. Tom thanked everyone for their comments and agreed that it is important not to gloss over our challenges and describe problems in language that may unintentionally hide the true severity of the issue to the casual reader.

3. Small group discussions

Workgroup members split into small groups to continue discussing questions raised in last week's Organizational Change team learning:

- **What does the DFA need to know, do or believe to make progress?**
- **Where is trust and relationship building most important?**

4. Debrief and dialogue with full workgroup

Workgroup members reported back about the conversations in small groups about what the division needs to make progress around DEI matters.

- We need acknowledgement that DEI work is a priority and is a legitimate part of everyone's jobs. It should be clearly defined in position descriptions. Division leaders and our peers need to commit to making progress.
- We need to empower people at all levels to engage with DEI efforts.
- We need a shift in culture, such that when people recognize things like microaggressions or structural barriers, they feel obligated and empowered to speak out without fear of retaliation.
- Management needs to be active participants along with front-line staff, pulling us together, not just observing. Trust needs to be built. Leadership needs to provide a framework that enables the DFA community to do this work together. Important ways they can do this are by modeling vulnerability and humility while committing to taking specific DEI actions.
- There is some concern about explicit opposition to DEI work in pockets of the division. Racist and intolerant behaviors and attitudes are not in alignment with our shared values and should not be allowed in the workplace. Concern about making sure supervisors are held accountable for addressing inappropriate behavior.
- We need to be sure that we are hearing the voices of people who are most impacted by inequities. We need to build trust and center the experiences of people of color across the OSU community, not just within the division.
- The division's DEI efforts need to be both top-down from leadership and bottom-up. We will have better outcomes if we aren't directive to DFA units, but rather invite people to come together to participate and build something collectively.
- We should aggregate and analyze data about the perspectives and attitudes of people in the division to inform a slate of educational activities and recommended actions.
- We should have a deep understanding of the demographics of the division, how search committees make decisions, and how the division's applicant pools for recruitments compare to our goals. Is there a DFA requirement/policy to use search advocates?
- How do we build trust with other organizations and departments, so that the DEI action plan we're creating isn't perceived as a to-do list from above? How do we get buy-in, trust and willingness to participate by employees and managers, rather than making them feel defensive or wrong? We are trying to get people to make progress from their starting point, not judge them about what they are already doing (or not doing).
- Part of building that trust with colleagues will come as members of this workgroup get more comfortable with these concepts, so we can each start talking with our coworkers and teams within our units. Let's practice getting more comfortable and start sharing what we learn with others, even in small ways.
- We need to give people time and space within the workday to have these conversations, to share our backgrounds and experiences. If someone is the only person of color on their team, they may not feel comfortable speaking up; they may not feel confident they will be heard and understood. We should try to provide more opportunities for sharing so everyone can be heard.
 - This connects to an earlier comment about making DEI efforts a part of people's daily work... it might increase people's ability to share experiences regularly, allow people to realize the wide range of different experiences people have, and enable people to take actions to make improvements.

- We need to know what progress and success looks like... How do we know if we are doing something well? How do we ensure we're making positive impacts, not just checking actions off a list?
- Someone shared advice from a DEI professional they know: Focus on equity first, and then the other things fall into place.
- We should have a baseline of vocabulary, like a glossary of terms, so people feel more prepared to have conversations.
- We need everyone to realize there is a lot of work to do, and that it takes time. These conversations are important. We need to make sure we hear all voices, not just the loudest or easiest to hear from. We should not try to move too quickly through our work.

Keahi and Tom thanked everyone for a valuable discussion. There is a lot here that can help shape the action plan we will build.

5. Next steps for the workgroup

The workgroup's next session will be a team learning with the Office of Institutional Diversity about equity. The workgroup will finalize suggested updates to the vice president's charge for this group.

DFA DEI Action Planning Workgroup Members

Teresita Alvarez-Cortez, Acting Assistant Vice President, Strategic Diversity Initiatives, Office of Institutional Diversity (*workgroup advisor*)

Christine Atwood, Administrative & Diversity Manager; Procurement, Contracts & Materials Management

Machelle Bamberger, Hazardous Waste Safety Officer, Environmental Health & Safety

Kirsten Bradley, Project Manager, Enterprise Project Portfolio Management Office

Jonathan Champney, Buyer 2, Facilities Services

Kim Cholewinski, Academic Human Resources Officer, University Human Resources

Todd Cross, Trades Maintenance Coordinator, Facilities Services

Tracy Elmshaeuser, Executive Assistant to the Senior Associate Vice President for Administration

Tom Fenske, Business Center Manager (HSBC, BEBC), Controller's Unit (*workgroup co-chair*)

Keith Foster, Insurance Contract Specialist, Insurance & Risk Management

Anne Gillies, Search Advocate Program Director, University Human Resources

Jessica King, Travel & Expense Support Specialist, Controller's Unit

Mary Macy, Fiscal Coordinator 1 (HSBC), Controller's Unit

Daniel Mahoney, Academic Liaison, University Human Resources

Melissa Medina, Retirement Officer, University Human Resources

Keahi McFadden, Executive Assistant to AVP of University Facilities, Infrastructure & Operations (*workgroup co-chair*)

Christina McKnight, Director, Insurance & Risk Management

Stephen Nelson, Chief Procurement Officer; Procurement, Contracts & Materials Management

Bob Richardson, University Land Use Planning Manager, Capital Planning & Development

Aviva Rivera, Business Center Manager (FOBC, CEOAS), Controller's Unit

Melanie Rose, Manager of DFA Strategic Initiatives (*workgroup administrator*)

Justin Schaffer, Accountant 2 (FOBC), Controller's Unit

Stephanie Smith, Fiscal Coordinator 2 / Travel Administrator, Controller's Unit

Sudie Swader, Fiscal Coordinator 1 (AMBC), Controller's Unit

Jane Waite, Social Justice Education Initiative Director, University Human Resources

Ben Wessel, Director, DFA Information Technology