

Minutes for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force

30 March 2022, 9:00 AM-10:20 AM EDT

Present: Lexey Bartlett, Leigh Dillard, Tim Helwig, Brent Iarrobino, Katie Mudd, Kassia Krone, and Kayla Ashbrooks

Agenda

1. Work on a draft DEI statement.

Minutes:

We worked together in a Google Doc from the starting point of the draft Kevin wrote (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eI6ZykG2S4PLFcMzwcxwREIabW_5uSMJHGLMMz-8tzI/edit?usp=sharing). The link is view-only, but anyone can download or copy the document to contribute drafting ideas. As we talked, some themes emerged:

- We will want to make sure that there are no time-anchored references that will make the statement out of date or require regular updating.
- Although we have a good history of some DEI practices, we want to make sure that references to them do not come across as defensive or imply that our work is done.
- We want to address DEI initiatives that go beyond inclusion in the literature we highlight through the Common Reader and convention speakers. Some ideas here include a reference to how the pandemic has opened opportunities for inclusion because it has changed how we conceive of events and engagement, especially as new technologies and familiarity with them have increased, thus paving the way for us to be more inclusive than ever by providing greater access to resources and participation through webinars, virtual conferences, etc.; and how Student Leadership opportunities are open to all Society members through the new application process—students do not have to attend Convention to begin participating.

Kayla suggested a good structure for organizing the statement:

1. Importance of DEI and connect to our Society mission (Perhaps begin with a statement that highlights how literature and language are essential to the inclusion of everyone's voices in society?)
2. This is what we are doing/have done—current practices such as selecting Common Reader as an example
3. This is what we will continue doing (maybe reference here growing efforts at inclusion beyond the literature-related efforts we have made and continue to make.)

We will continue to work at drafting a statement, with the aim of having something to place on the website this summer.

Appendix A

And as we continue work, here are some sample pages that we may want to return to:

<http://www.wiu.edu/cas/english/> (Tim's department's page, which has a statement, action plan, and resources at the bottom of the page)

<https://www.psichi.org/page/purpose#.YieABt9MFpQ> (Psychology Honor Society)

<https://www.niu.edu/diversity-inclusion/index.shtml>

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity> (American Library Association subsection in their Issues and Advocacy section—because librarians are awesome :-))