

**DEI Taskforce Meeting Minutes**  
Friday, 17 September 2021, 2:00-3:30 CDT

Present: Lexey Bartlett (chair), Katie Mudd, Kassia Waggoner Krone, Tim Helwig, Leigh Dillard, Brett Iarrobino, Kayla Ashbrooks, Kevin Stemmler

1. Movement on Ideas

a. Pride Designs: Katie reports on Pride design items, which are going to be sent to SLs to model. We have to decide on where to put the proceeds. Kassia suggested directing it to the Stemmler/Dennis LGBT& Award. Kevin explains that he and Larry will fund it for 5 years, but then SigmaTD will have to fund it. He suggests 2% for donation to organizations supporting LGBTQIA+ people and issues, and 8% to the future award fund. Tim supports that decision. Leigh also supports a split to do something in the community as well as funding. Kevin also mentions that those funds going to outside organizations would help fulfill our charge.

b. Lexey mentions the Donate button, which Strategic Planning has picked up to create. Kevin mentions a local chapter version, and Leigh mentions that Felicia said that some schools' development foundations might be able to help set up local funds for alumni to donate to as well.

c. Kevin asks about some sponsorships Elfi mentioned for the convention, and whether we could get funding for diverse speakers from organizations like Lambda Literary or the Triangle Review. Leigh mentions one such sponsorship deal with NCTE.

d. I suggest an internship for a student to research and write grant applications to support this kind of programming.

e. Leigh reports on some of the Convention-related ideas we had, specifically the land acknowledgement for Atlanta, which she has delegated to Brett to lead. We also will have stickers for pronouns for the Convention. I ask about technology as a possible substitute for captioning (such as using Zoom to transcribe speakers in real-time), and Brett, Kassia, and others offer to send some other options. Kevin mentions seeing if we have student or faculty members that we could incentivize to serve as sign interpreters.

f. Leigh mentions reaching out to HBCUs in the area to invite more participation in setting up chapters, inducting members, attending convention, etc. I mention that we have in the past offered financial support for local chapters (such as reduced or free registration).

g. We discuss offering any needed accommodations for presenters (and attendees) and making a space for students to request them on the submission form in addition to the registration form.

h. Kassia asks about service dogs at the Atlanta Sheraton and how accessible the hotel will be for them. Leigh says she will check with the hotel.

i. Webinar committee proposal: Since some of the webinars have spun out of Convention programming but are no longer tied to it, we need a committee to coordinate increased programming. Katie mentions that NEHS has moved away from Adobe Connect for their

programming so they can have more interactive events. It might also distribute the workload in terms of developing content and hosting.

**2. Land acknowledgements:** Brett is working on the land acknowledgement for the Convention. Kevin asks about additional racial acknowledgements or actions in connection with the Convention, like some social action such as support for local homeless organizations. Brett asks about whether we have ever discussed having an informal book club on issues of DEI, that we could use to inform our statement drafting and action. (Good idea—something to develop.)

Tim asks about how we arrived at *Dear Martin* as the CR, and Leigh explains how she worked with Nic Stone's agent to choose *Dear Martin*. Kassia asks about the convention bookstore lists and using those to help direct students to diverse reading. Leigh mentions Kevin's explanation on the history of the CR as a source to inspire service projects, which Nic Stone's book would fit into. Kevin mentions follow-up lists of reading suggestions after the convention.

Tim asks about creating awards like Kevin and Larry's award, and Kevin explains that they created a process for setting up awards and for getting chapters to help contribute to creating those awards. Kevin says we might ask chapters to fund awards up to a certain amount, like an endowment, to allow awards to be given each year. Leigh says that might be discouraging for some chapters who would like to contribute but can't.

**DEI Statements:** Looking at the Psi Chi statement page as a model (as a fellow honor society), the diversity of people in images and languages offered on the website are good and something we might consider (Leigh). Kevin also notes that we have a history of this work, so we can draw on our history of speakers and CRs as resources, which might include updates or short Q and As on these issues with our honorary members. Tim shared his English department's statement, which includes references to other groups' statements: <http://www.wiu.edu/cas/english/>.

We decide to form a subcommittee to work on a DEI statement to bring to the whole task force, which will include Lexey, Kevin, Leigh, Kayla, and Kassia.