

## 2020-2021 Annual Report

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The College of Communication and Information Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee met monthly throughout the 2020-2021 academic year. The DEI Committee contributed to the college in multiple ways over the course of the year.

A significant focus of the DEI Committee over the 2020-2021 year was formalizing the role of the committee and planning for the future. The committee wrote and approved committee by-laws and undertook the process to become a standing committee. The committee wrote a new diversity statement for the College, sought feedback from the College members, and approved a final revised version (see appendix). A core completed goal for the DEI Committee for the 2020-2021 academic year was the completion of a detailed Diversity Strategic Plan for the college. This plan was informed by multiple listening sessions conducted with students in Fall 2020 and multiple individual meetings with alumni, currently faculty and former faculty about the needs of the college. To promote greater involvement in DEI across the college the Project Proposal process was revised to occur on a rolling basis (see appendix) and the Chair of the Committee began providing DEI updates at College Assembly's and regularly as part of a weekly college newsletter.

While events and activities were somewhat curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic the committee held and supported several significant events open to the community over the course of the

academic year. In the Fall of 2020 the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee organized a panel entitled “Exploring our Past and Paving the Way Forward: Women and the Gaming Industry.” This panel approached video games through an intersectional lens and included industry professionals Rebeca Heinemen, Lizzie Killian, and Manuel Malasaña, scholars Shira Chess (University of Georgia) and Kishonna Gray (University of Illinois, Chicago), and a University of Kentucky student and video game streamer Sienna Douglas. This event was live-streamed on Twitch and received over 800 viewers.

In Spring of 2021 the College of Communication and Information invited journalist Wesley Lowery author of *They Can't Kill Us All: The Story of the Struggle for Black Lives* as part of the new Angelo Henderson Endowed Scholarship and Speaker Series. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee supported this effort by helping to promote the event and by running a virtual book club which distributed copies of the book *They Can't Kill Us All* to interested members of the College community and ran a virtual meeting to further discuss the book.

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee also worked to provide pedagogy resources for members of the College, building on feedback we received in our listening sessions. Throughout the year information related to equitable and inclusive pedagogy was distributed in the form of infographics, lists of campus resources, and notifications of webinars and training opportunities. One of these materials, an infographic on equity issues related to teaching during the pandemic was distributed more widely throughout the university.

To further support instructors in Spring of 2021 the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee organized a Friday Forum titled “Inclusive and Equitable Teaching During the Pandemic and Beyond” that focused on the major structures and issues that needed to be considered in order to create a inclusive classroom. In response to the significant increase in experiences trauma among our

students related to both racially motivated violence and the COVID-19 pandemic the event paid particular attention to trauma informed pedagogy.

We further built upon this programming by piloting an inclusive syllabi project (See Appendix) in which faculty members proposed the significant revision of an existing syllabus to diversify the voices being reflected in that syllabus. Faculty involved in the project received professional development towards purchasing resources to support this effort, were directed to resources to support the syllabus revision process, provided versions of the syllabus before and after its revisions, and created bibliography entries for the new readings included to serve as a resource for the College. Three instructors were involved in the first iteration of this project.

Committee members, particularly the College Diversity Officer (Chair of the Committee) and Graduate Student Liaison also supported the College's Diversity mission through outreach and more informal support functions. The College Diversity Officer and Graduate Liaison attended an alumni event to discuss Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts and provide outreach to our alumni. The College Diversity Officer represented the College on a panel conducted by the University of Kentucky's Center for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching entitled "Faculty Roundtable: The practice of inclusion & equity in teaching." Committee members also served on University workstreams that contribute to a larger University Diversity, Equity and Inclusion effort and to serve as a liaison between this University level effort and the College. The College Diversity Officer also participated as a speaker at a Stop Asian Hate Rally partially organized by two College members, including a member of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Committee members have also served the college by consulting on Diversity related projects and external funding requests as well as attending meetings to provide a different perspective on individual unit's DEI related activities and procedures – for example syllabus audits.

The Committee and its members have also worked on making the committee help support

and expand the knowledge base for the college. The Committee met with representatives of the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity for a Q&A session to expand the committee members knowledge of the reporting structure and support system offered and to help committee members serve as resources within their units. The Chair of the Committee attended NCore, the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity virtually in the Summer of 2021. The Chair of the committee also attended events or webinars on topics relevant to DEI, for example teaching after traumatic national events or the equitable evaluation of faculty, and summarized information from these events for unit heads and others who expressed interest in the content. Further education was also achieved in tandem with a Dean's office initiative that gave Academic Impressions access to several individuals on the DEI Committee allowing them to attend events and view panels and webinars about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion topics within a higher ed context.

### Looking Forward

For the following academic year the committee plans to build on what they accomplished in the 2020-2021 in a few key ways.

- We plan to resume in-person events and continue to endeavor to provide a combination of speaking events with pedagogy events whenever possible.
- In late Spring of 2021 the beginning of a series highlighting research conducted in the college related to DEI was proposed to launch Fall 2021
- We plan to share the Diversity Strategic Plan college-wide and begin to implement priorities within it
- We plan to revise and expand the DEI related webpage on the University website to make it more useful and extensive for college members.

Appendix

Approved College Diversity Statement:

“The College of Communication and Information will build a collaborative environment for creativity, curiosity, and excellence grounded in the core values of diversity, justice, and equity. We are enriched by the diversity of cultures, perspectives, and talents in our community. We thrive together when we work to provide an equitable and welcoming experience that respects and empowers the unique contributions and circumstances of students, faculty, and staff from every race and ethnicity, nationality, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, citizenship status, age, veteran status, pregnancy and parenting status, and disability or health status. We are committed to ensuring every member of our College feels welcomed, well-served, and included. Please join us.”

# ROLLING CALL FOR PROPOSALS

College of Communication | Diversity Projects | Faculty & Staff

## Sample Diversity Committee Supported Events

### Ayser Salman Visit

The committee helped support an invited talk by Iraqi immigrant, UK Telecomm graduate, Author, Hollywood producer & editor Ayser Salman. She also met with students in groups.

### Diversity Film Festival

Three day festival including a screening of Hillbilly with Director Ashley York, a screening of Last Gospel of the Pagan Babies, and a competitive screening of short films from students.

### Alumni Panel

Funded and supported a panel discussion of UK graduates discussing career development and job-hunting from diverse perspectives.

### Other Ideas

Others have hosted pot-lucks with traditional food or made brochures to support recruiting or information sharing.

## We want you! To help create great programs and events for our community.

- The College of Communication and Information's Diversity & Inclusion Committee requests proposals for projects promoting diversity & inclusion among students, faculty, and staff.
- Projects should have a budget range between \$500-\$2,000 and be completed by August 31, 2021.
- **We will be accepting proposals for consideration on a rolling basis.** Please submit a proposal via an e-mail attachment (word or pdf) to Kyra Hunting at [kyra.hunting@uky.edu](mailto:kyra.hunting@uky.edu) by the first of the month for consideration by the committee within the same month. (Proposal guidelines are on the next page)
  - Decisions will be made on proposals by the end of the month in which they are submitted.
- Any full-time or part-time faculty or staff in the College of Communication and Information are eligible to propose a project.
- Highest priority will be given to projects addressing issues that emerged in the latest College diversity survey (see the next page).
- But we encourage you to be creative in coming up with ideas. Anything that serves our community is welcome!

## Ideas for Potential

### Diversity and Inclusion Events Proposals

**Events or activities** that start conversations.

**Supporting a student organization's** diversity-related project.

**Pedagogical ideas** such as teaching activities, a seminar or a new course (support for a new course would require evidence of support from the unit head.)

**Collaborative, cross-unit projects** promoting diversity and inclusion are particularly encouraged.

- Projects that address issues raised in the most recent College Diversity Survey will get special consideration. These include:
  - Improving cultural competency and reducing the expression of stereotypes by college members. As well as improved cultural literacy in the classroom.
  - The need for better outreach to BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and international students.
  - The need for more role models and mentors for students that represent different backgrounds and life experiences due to a limited number of BIPOC and LGBTQ+ faculty and staff.
  - The increase in awareness of diversity projects, events and resources.

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### Submission Guidelines

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- A diversity project proposal must contain five sections, as listed below:
  1. **A cover page** that lists a) a title; b) name, position, and e-mail address of the applicant and c) a 75-word abstract of the proposal.
  2. **A project plan of no more than three pages** (12 pt type, single spaced, 1 inch margin) which consists of: a) specific aims, b) background and significance, c) how the proposed project will advance diversity, equity and inclusion within the college, and d) references if needed.
  3. **A detailed budget plan with justifications.** Budgets of funded projects may be reviewed by College budget officers to ensure they meet requirements of non-discretionary funds.
  4. **A brief project timeline** and a plan to publicize the proposed project if an event is involved.
  5. **Additional information** deemed relevant. For example, if money is requested for part of the project who the other partners will be or if supporting a student organization in your proposal the information about that student organization. Information about the applicants own experiences in the area being proposed or with communities/organizations involved in the project is also welcome.

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### Selection Process

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- The criteria that will be used in evaluating a proposal will include:
  - The relevance of the project to issues of justice, equity, inclusion and diversity.
  - The feasibility of the project in the budget and time suggested.
  - The ways in which the project impacts, reaches out to or involves our College community.
  - Strengths and weaknesses of the individual plan.
  - Appropriateness of the budget (i.e. is the money spent to further the project in reasonable ways).

Inclusive Syllabi Project

The College of Communication and Information’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is inviting applications for participants in a project focusing on Diversifying course materials and creating more inclusive syllabi. We are asking for participants who are interested in revising one of their Fall 2021 courses with the goals of Diversity and Inclusion in mind. This project is motivated by conversation with students who’ve indicated that they want to see a wider variety of voices and experiences reflected in their coursework and more content related to diversity and/or cultural competency.

Participants in the project will receive \$500 in Professional Development Funds and will be asked to do the following:

- 1) A one hour virtual training in strategies for Inclusive Syllabus Creation
  - 2) Revise one course to include readings, screenings, guest speakers or materials created by and/or about an under-represented in the academy group (listed below).
- Should attempt to incorporate an increase in content created by and/or discussing at least three of the following groups: under-represented racial and ethnic groups, gender identities, sexual orientations, religious groups, citizenship status, nationalities, socio-economic status, and disability.
  - At minimum 30% of “content” weeks should include one element or piece of content that reflects the above.
- 3) Contribute to a google doc Annotated Bibliography briefly describing readings and screenings encountered during the process that you think may be relevant to Faculty and Graduate Students in the College.

Interested individuals should send a brief 250 word proposal to the Chair of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee ([kyra.hunting@uky.edu](mailto:kyra.hunting@uky.edu)) by **May 10th** indicating your interest and explaining what course you’d like to revise and any particular areas you are interested in exploring in the course. Please reach out with any questions and we look forward to your participation!