

2018-2019 Annual Report: College Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Chair: Shannon M. Oltmann

Members: Montina Jiang

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The College of Communication and Information Diversity & Inclusion (DI) Committee met monthly throughout the 2018-2019 academic year. The DI Committee contributed to the College in several ways throughout the year.

In fall 2018, we began reviewing and revising the biannual diversity survey. We revamped questions that were double-barreled or unclear and added some additional questions. The survey was distributed via email link to all College graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, and staff in February 2019. Approximately 200 people completed the survey. Most indicated support for or belief in diversity-affirming statements and, generally, indicated the College is doing well but has some areas for improvement (see the Diversity Survey report for more details).

This year we also solicited the College community for diversity-related proposals (see Appendix A for the call for proposals). The DI Committee received four proposals and, after discussion, decided to provide funding to two proposals. One proposal, submitted by College staff, will fund a panel to discuss diversity-related issues in job seeking; the panel will be held in fall 2019. The second proposal, submitted by College faculty, helped fund a visit from an internationally known UK alumnae, who is a television writer and memoirist; she talked about her book and met with students.

As is typical, funding from the DI Committee was used to help fund the College Ambassador Student Scholarships (\$3000). We consistently support this project as a way to bring more visibility to diverse students within our College.

Perhaps our signature event in this year will be the Kentucky Diversity Film Festival, held over three evening in mid-April. On the first night, we will screen student-submitted short films that have a diversity theme, with the top three films earning prizes. The second night, we will screen *The Last Gospel of the Pagan Babies*, and the third night we will show *Hillbilly*; both of these documentaries are by College alumni and showcase unexpected diverse elements in the Commonwealth.

Other efforts this year include the following: Two members volunteered in the fall for non-partisan voter registration, helping to register approximately 50 individuals from the university community. We began implementing the Inclusive Excellence grant we won from the Office of Institutional Diversity in 2018, by filming around campus and interviewing key personnel across the university about diversity initiatives. These efforts will eventually culminate in some short marketing films that showcase the diversity efforts and successes across UK's campus. The DI Committee also attempted to collaborate with two additional groups. The UK Libraries won a grant to bring a speaker, Dr. Safiya Noble to campus; we volunteered additional funding and communication support (recording the lecture), but the library personnel were unable to find a mutually agreeable time with Dr. Noble. Second, we donated funds to the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSA) to help them bring in a speaker who would focus on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by graduate and professional students of color. This speaker will not visit campus until 2020, however.

In conclusion, we have tried to be broad and collaborative in our diversity efforts, working with different units on the university campus. We have also held true to the charge given to the DI Committee to solicit proposals from the College community and to oversee the distribution and analysis of the diversity survey every other year.

Next year, one of the events we will plan is a panel of speakers to commemorate the 70th anniversary of integration at UK (details still being finalized). We are also working on developing a more systematic approach to a) sending out the call for proposals to the College community; b) responding to university-wide appeals for collaborative funding; c) plans to ensure we fund opportunities that are representative of all units in our College and d) discussions about funding travel, presentations, etc., related to diversity. We would like to develop more standardized procedures for these situations so we are not making ad hoc decisions.

Finally, we want to note that a strength of the DI Committee is its composition: a representative from each unit on campus, from the College leadership team, and from College staff. We will seek to add student representatives for 2019-2020 (we were unsuccessful this year). Each person brings a unique perspective and a passion for diversity to the committee. We look forward to our continued work together.

Addendum: On April 16-18, 2019, we held the (first?) KY Diversity Film Festival. On the 16th, we screened eight student films and gave awards to three of them. The first-place winner happened to be attending with his grandmother, the subject of his film, which made his award even more special. We had about 50 in attendance. The following night, local artist Bob Morgan (a key subject of the film) introduced *The Last Gospel of the Pagan Babies* and provided excellent context, then gave an informal Q&A afterward; about 20 people came to this screening.

Finally, on the 18th, we screened *Hillbilly* by UK alum Ashley York. Over 120 people came to this show. Ashley answered questions after the screening, then many went to the Appalachian Center for a reception. Ashley had lunch with two of our student filmmakers the next day. Overall, this was a very successful event (nearly 200 total participants). Kyra Hunting, in particular, deserves commendation for her efforts in bringing this project to fruition.

**College of Communication and Information
Diversity & Inclusion Committee
Call for Proposals**

Deadline: January 30, 2019 (for spring semester expenditures).

The College Diversity & Inclusion Committee is seeking applications for diversity-related project proposals. Submissions are open to faculty and staff. We encourage collaborative, cross-unit projects promoting diversity and inclusion. Applicants may be a part of more than one submission but may lead only one submission.

Project Scope

We will consider funding projects that meet any of the following criteria:

- address issues raised in the latest College diversity survey: 1) college members expressing stereotypes about different groups of people, 2) poor outreach made to diverse students, 3) lack of diverse faculty, and 4) need to raise awareness of call for diversity projects/actual events. *Projects addressing these issues will receive higher priority in the review process.*
- address the recruitment of members of under-represented faculty, staff, or students (e.g., design brochures/documents that target these populations directly).
- address retention of faculty, staff, or students, with a focus on those in underrepresented groups (e.g., organize career development talk by inviting guest speakers from underrepresented groups).
- promote diversity awareness conversations (e.g., host potluck where everyone brings traditional food/music to share).
- support a project by a student organization in the College that promotes diversity.
- develop a new course or seminar to address a diversity issue. (Support for a new course would require evidence of support from the unit head.)
- develop a teaching project or idea that incorporates diversity and inclusion pedagogy into the CI curriculum.
- conduct a research project that examines issues of diversity (within or across faculty, staff, or student populations) wherein the findings stand to benefit the College of Communication and Information.

Guidelines for proposal submission:

1. Abstract of proposed project (50-75 words).

2. Project plan: Specific aims, background and significance, and a section addressing how the proposed work will advance diversity and inclusivity within the College. Project plan should be no longer than 3 pages (12-point type, single space, 1-inch margins).
3. References (if applicable; does not count toward page limits).
4. Detailed budget and budget justification. (In general, the proposed budget for smaller projects should not exceed \$500; the proposed budget for larger projects should not exceed \$1,500.)
5. A paragraph about the applicant's personal experience with and interest in diversity (e.g., previous experience/encounter with diversity programs/projects) and/or how this proposal would help the applicant meet professional goals.
6. If your proposed project involves an event (e.g., speaker, panel), please explain how you will publicize it.
7. A short project timeline.

*Funded projects should be completed within the given semester (namely, Spring or Summer 2019). We request a final project report by August 31, 2019. Please send your proposals to shannon.oltmann@uky.edu.

Note: Budgets of funded projects may be reviewed by College budget officers to ensure they meet requirements of non-discretionary funds.