

MINUTES  
CULTIVATING CULTURES COMMITTEE  
(EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE)  
Meeting of October 6, 2021  
TEAMS Meeting

**Members**

Stephanie Banner - Human Resources - ABSENT  
April Blathers - Veterans Benefits/Claims  
Leslie Busby-Amegashie - Veterans Benefits/Grants - ABSENT  
Jeanette Galarza - Veterans Benefits/Claims  
Larry Graves - Veterans Benefits/SAA  
Kevin Hampton - Veterans Museum  
Shantell Henderson - Veterans Benefits/VORP - ABSENT  
Russ Horton - Veterans Museum  
Jeff Hughes - Veterans Benefits/Cemeteries - ABSENT  
Jeanne Lind - Veterans Homes - ABSENT  
Patrick Meyer - Veterans Homes  
Shannon Miller - Public Affairs  
Matt Niehaus - Enterprise Services  
William Ray - Veterans Benefits/Cemeteries  
Linda Reek - Veterans Homes - ABSENT  
Victoria Simonson - Human Resources - ABSENT  
Carla Vigue - Public Affairs  
Angela Zilliox - Human Resources - ABSENT

**Others Present (not all inclusive)**

No public participants

**WDVA Present**

Chief Legal Counsel Chad Koplien

1. Call to order, roll call

The meeting of the Cultivating Cultures Committee – Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee was called to order by Russ Horton at 2:03pm. Roll was called and a quorum was present.

2. Certification of notice of meeting

The meeting was notified as being properly noticed.

3. Adoption of Meeting Minutes:

Russ Horton circulated the August 4 meeting minutes with the meeting reminder and agenda for this meeting. No discussion was had. Kevin Hampton moved to adopt the meeting minutes as published; Shannon Miller seconded; motion passed by unanimous vote.

4. Subcommittee chair reports:

Russ Horton informed the committee that these will be these reports will be the regular standing agenda items and thus subcommittee chairs should be prepared to report or, if unable to attend, designate someone from that sub-committee to report.

*Appreciation:* Russ Horton reported that the subcommittee had met since the last CCC meeting and was looking into different ways to show appreciation, and that Jeanne Lind, Chair had an idea but it was still in the ideation phase and not ready to share just yet.

*Diversity:* Larry Graves, Chair reported that there was no update as the subcommittee had not met since the last CCC meeting, but that they welcome any charges of items to work on that the Office of the Secretary or the CCC might give them.

*Involvement and Input:* Patrick Meyer, Chair reported the need to expand membership of this subcommittee. The sub-committee would like to learn where the barriers or problems are in order to address them in hopes of expanding the subcommittee.

*Morale and Fun:* Shannon Miller, Chair reported that the subcommittee met 2 weeks prior to the committee meeting. The subcommittee will be circulating a C3 survey with all subcommittees to all Department employees for their input. There will be a Baseball Shirt event Friday and shared via the intranet. There were a few submissions from Union Grove and others for the Packers spirit event. Considering a Badger gear event for the Badger/Army Game – also looking for volunteers for the tailgate event.

*Wellness:* No members present able to provide an update.

5. Old Business:

*Increase employee participation:*

Russ Horton reported that the Committee has been charged by Deputy Secretary James Bond to increase employee participation and noted that was intended not just for involvement with this committee, but for all voices in the Department.

Shannon noted that perhaps using ombudsman (ambassadors) would be more affective and approachable than email.

Larry emphasized the need to introduce the idea of participation early on in an employee's time with the Department, integrating CCC into the orientation and onboarding process for new employees. Perhaps the chair should be a participant/presenter at orientation. Larry indicated that this idea was brought up to OOS during the meeting to talk about the mentorship idea and that department leadership is aware and looking to address that but the pandemic had affected that rollout. Carla confirmed that HR has met with OOS to start the process and there is a commitment from department leadership.

Matt commented that the quality of the products and results of this committee's efforts will help illustrate the value of the committee and organically encourage participation.

Russ emphasized that recruitment for subcommittees only is a possibility and not requiring all to commit to participating in the larger CCC meetings, in case that time commitment was a concern.

Patrick mentioned the need to meet employees where they're at; for instance, health care employees have a more difficult time to get away from their duties for a committee meeting much less email which also led to the recommendation to provide physical advertisement (analog/visual) and not just through email.

6. New Business:

*Discussion of proposed bylaws amendment to Article III – Meeting schedule:*

Russ Horton presented the proposed bylaws amendment as circulated with the agenda prior to the meeting.

Kevin Hampton explained the rationale behind the amendment and the process for voting and adoption which requires tabling until the next meeting, implementation begins the meeting following adoption, and the voting quorum needed for adoption.

Chad Koplén indicated that he will review the statutes and consult with OOS and Angie Zilliox to make sure it wouldn't affect compliance. Kevin Hampton indicated that he had already shared this with OOS and Angie and received approval to bring the matter before the committee. Kevin estimated that approval indicated it would not jeopardize statute compliance, but additional opinions and confirmations were always a good idea just in case the matter was not fully considered or reviewed at the time of preview of the amendment.

The motion to table the proposal until the next meeting (as required by the bylaws)

7. Public Input: None

8. Future Agenda items:

Carla proposed that the committee may want to discuss return to work and how to engage employees that are coming back into the office after many months away. Discussion on the opportunities presented by having more employees back in the office will be added to the next agenda. In the meantime, the Involvement & Input Subcommittee and the Moral & Fun Subcommittee can discuss.

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn by Matt Niehaus, Shannon Miller seconded the motion. Motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Russell Horton, Chair