

MINUTES  
CULTIVATING CULTURES COMMITTEE  
(EQUITY AND INCLUSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE)  
Meeting of July 20, 2022  
TEAMS Meeting

**Members**

Stephanie Banner - Human Resources - ABSENT  
April Blathers - Veterans Benefits/Claims - ABSENT  
Leslie Busby-Amegashie - Veterans Benefits/Grants - ABSENT  
Kevin Hampton - Veterans Museum - Present  
Russ Horton - Veterans Museum - Present  
Jeff Hughes - Veterans Benefits/Cemeteries - Present  
Patrick Meyer - Veterans Homes - Present  
Shannon Miller - Public Affairs - Present  
Matt Niehaus - Enterprise Services – Present  
Kristy Hartke - Veterans Benefits/Cemeteries - ABSENT  
Victoria Simonson - Human Resources - Present  
  
Angela Zilliox - Human Resources – Non-Voting – Present

**Others Present (not all inclusive)**

No public participants

**WDVA Present**

Secretary Mary Kolar

Total Voting Membership present: 7  
Total Attendees: 9

Total Voting Membership: 11  
Necessary for Quorum: 4

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 2:03. Roll was called and a quorum was present.

2. Certification of notice of meeting

The meeting was notified as being properly noticed through the Wisconsin State Journal city desk submission, Wisconsin's Public Meetings Notice website, and WDVA's website.

3. Adoption of Meeting Minutes:

Russ Horton circulated the April meeting minutes via email. No discussion was had.

Motion to adopt: Shannon Miller

Seconded: Matt Niehaus

Motion passed by unanimous vote.

4. Subcommittee chair reports:

*Appreciation:* Russ is acting chair with Jeanne Lind's retirement last month. He reported that they are moving forward with an event either this month or next month to recognize years of service. There will be an informational push to let people know it's for WDVA service only not for all State service. The events will hopefully be at multiple locations so that the whole department can be involved. Dep Sec Bond wants a representative from OOS to personally present 20+ years, less than that Division Administrators probably can. Secretary Kolar included that she welcomed the opportunity to present any and all years of service pins that she can and welcomes the opportunity to travel. Kevin Hampton asked if LTE service would be included in the calculations. Russ reported that they will definitely try to figure that out since it's always a point of discussion. Shannon reported that they held an impromptu joint meeting last week with Fun and Morale since they will work together on the upcoming events.

*Diversity:* Russ reported that they still haven't nominated a replacement for Larry, so Russ is still acting as Chair. They are looking at doing a potluck event to celebrate diversity and again including multiple locations and either video them in or not. The next meeting is tomorrow.

- *Involvement and Input:* Patrick Meyer, Chair, reported that the last few meetings they discussed how to improve involvement and input based on survey results. The subcommittee submitted proposals to Dep Sec Bond for review and received permission to share them at today's meeting. (Kevin would like to thank Patrick for emailing the proposals to him for inclusion in the meeting minutes instead of basing them off of what Kevin could decipher from the discussion).

Employee Input

- Pair an email address meant for employee concerns/suggestions/feedback, with an anonymous entry intranet portal. This portal could be the same one currently directed to Deputy Secretary Bond or a different but similar in nature one.
  - These two points of contact would be directed to the same point of contact. This point may be an individual or small team who would be responsible for collecting the employee input, distributing it out to the appropriate division for response and providing the response to the employee.

- Provide opportunities for in person input by leadership of all levels meeting employees where they are at. With WDVA’s diverse operations spread out throughout the state it is difficult for employees to provide in person input centrally. Due to limited staffing it can even be difficult for employees to leave their work areas for meetings at their locations making the focus of this proposal leadership going to them. This may be a challenge initially during the continuing pandemic, particularly at the Homes.

Acknowledgement and Response to Employee Input

- Provide timely direct response to employees who include their name when providing input.
- Create an intranet collection board where responses to anonymously provided input are posted. This board should be updated on a regular basis, at least quarterly.
- Responses may be an answer to a question, follow up for more information, a statement of where the department is in a process or even just an acknowledgement that the input was received. An answer or solution won’t always be readily available, the key is making sure the employees receive a response and build trust that leadership is hearing them.

Matt Niehaus commented that there already is an app on the front page of the site that allows for employee input submission – which saves work in the future with that existing framework too. Russ mentioned that it’s important to provide as many access points as possible. Perhaps it’s just an information push to let people know it’s there. Patrick reiterated that we don’t need to reinvent the wheel.

*Morale and Fun:*

Shannon reported that they met last week and discussed a cookbook in the works and coordinated with Wellness. The Diversity Pot Luck is a good launch event. For wellness inclusion: “If a recipe calls for 12 cups of butter [Shannon clearly doesn’t cook] that’s probably not terribly health, so here’s an option as a substitute...” Including notes about where the recipe comes from, if it’s part of someone’s ethnic or holiday traditions, etc. while also noting “if allergic to \_\_\_\_ you can substitute \_\_\_\_\_.” The goal is for it to be as inclusive as possible.

First Badger Game is September 3 which is also WDVA’s Veterans Tailgate. There will be a fun competition to vote for your favorite photo about your favorite collegiate sports teams with categories like “A House Divided” and others.

*Wellness:* Victoria Simonson, Chair, reported that the biggest thing they’re working on right now is getting flu clinics set up for fall. Looking at setting something up at Rimrock building but also the Homes and other places that can share information on where they can get it even if it’s not at WDVA’s clinic. Patrick mentioned that the Homes do offer their own clinics so opportunity to cross-promote.

5. WDVA Equity and Inclusion Officer’s Update

Angie Zilliox reported that in our E&I plan one of the items was our new employee orientation and that is currently in the works. Wendy has been working on that and looking at quarterly new hire orientations from all WDVA locations. It would cover everything from complaint process to

familiarization with the museum. Looking to make the orientation more in-depth that it has been to understand what the Agency does.

6. Old Business:

*Employee Survey:*

Russ mentioned that the survey results have been distributed to all the sub-committee heads and hopefully distributed from there. Can be removed from future agendas.

7. New Business:

*CCC Recruiting Message – Who we are and what we do:*

Russ reported that we can continue to work on this. Haven't had a need to send out an email on that but did work on the signature to help people know what we're about. Russ thinks that the orientations that Angie mentioned will be helpful for this too. Angie is working on a newsletter for August. She can include information about certain days designated for recognition but also to include updates from the CCC for employee awareness.

*Election of Committee's Officers:*

*Chair:* Russ Horton was nominated by Kevin Hampton. Matt Niehaus seconded. No other nominations from the floor. Vote passed unanimously.

*Co-Chair:* Shannon took over the remainder of Carla's term. Shannon was nominated by Matt Niehaus, Kevin Hampton seconded. No other nominations noted. Vote passed unanimously.

*Secretary:* Kevin Hampton expressed willingness to serve a second term if necessary, but would prefer not to due to work scheduling bandwidth and other work priorities. Russ Horton nominated Matt Niehaus. Shannon Miller seconded. No other nominations. Vote passed unanimously.

*Proposal of By-Laws Amendment to Article VI, Section 1: Officer's Titles and Terms:*

Russ reported that this draft was circulated via email. The amendment synchronizes the officer elections with the new quarterly meeting schedule of the committee. There was no further discussion. Kevin raised the point of order that the amendment has to be proposed at one meeting and voted on at the next per the by-laws so he made a motion to table the vote until next meeting. It was seconded by Shannon. Motion tabled until next meeting.

8. Public Input:

None

9. Future Agenda items:

Russ noted that the amendment will appear on the next agenda.

Secretary Kolar wanted to thank everyone for their dedication to this committee and the collaboration and enthusiasm for these endeavors. She stressed how important this all is.

#### 10. Adjournment

Russ thanked everyone for meeting. Russ noted that the next meeting is in October.

A motion to adjourn at 2:42 from Matt Niehaus  
Shannon seconded the motion.

Motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Russell Horton, Chair