

Diversity & Inclusion WG

March 12, 2020

1-3pm

Attendees = 33

Agenda:

Call to order and Introductions

Needs & Deeds- David Buggs

- Deeds:
 - NC Wildlife Resources Commission: created a partnership for inclusion, identified 3 primary goals and actions → went to director for approval and support
 - Did department survey (anonymous) and found out there is a great underreporting of harassment issues, etc; primary goals identified would help address this ongoing issue
 - The Relevancy Road Map is a tool to help accomplish these goals
 - Discussion: maybe look at sharing the survey questions and how it was deployed so other state agencies can look to mirror that
 - Unconscious Bias → a new workshop that the Management Assistance Team provides to state agencies. Reach out to AFWA's MAT Team for more information, on their website
 - Greg (ODFW)- Reaching out to students of color to recruit; sometimes you need to reach outside your normal area of comfort to find these new people
 - Elsa (USFWS)- have a new Diversity & Inclusion implementation plan; recently approved
 - Three pillars to the plan: (1) Recruiting & hiring, (2) Barriers analysis, and (3) Employee engagement
 - Jen (NvDOW)- Infant at Work policy = allows people (men & women) to bring children to work for their first year → allows people to come back to work more quickly if desired; turned an old office into a nursing room; it's been implemented for about 6mo and has received positive reviews; makes people feel welcome and that the organization is family friendly
 - TWS – put together a Code of Conduct to be adhered to during conferences with the goal of making new members feel more welcome
 - TXPW- create/drafted an agency wide value system; this opened up a conversation to start addresses these issues
 - TXPW- drafted a Diversity & Inclusion Goals document for each division; lesson learned is that pictures used are important → 'If I can't see me, it's not going to be me'; images must be inclusive

- Needs
 - Gordon (NEAFWA) – how do meetings/group respond to requests from members who are not allowed to travel to a particular state/city/venue (for religious regions, or other reason)?
 - Discussion: open up a conversation with those groups/people
 - Do we need to send a survey after a major meeting/conference to see if the Diversity & Inclusion needs were met?
 - Should be part of a follow-up survey post-conference...maybe approach Cindy Delany with well thought out question or two to add to the conference.
[ACTION] – Susan Steffen, Michele Dudash, Michelle Doerr will work on this
 - Newsletter- looking at creating a newsletter to help share this energy and engages those folks who want to be at these meetings or part of this conversation but are unable to.
 - Would need a commitment from people to help make this happen [ACTION]
 - Ideally this would be about 1x/mo; need to send Patty/Deb (AFWA) materials to put this newsletter together → Jen Newmark [ACTION] will work on a format to aid the request for material
 - David (TXPW) – wants to put on a plenary session on Diversity & Inclusion; will be bringing that request to the attention of the directors again [ACTION]- David Buggs
 - It's on everyone's radar; just need to elevate it to the next level so everyone can understand the 'Why'
 - NOTE: There is no tribal representation at these meetings → this needs to change

Relevancy Roadmap

- Roadmap was adopted at the AFWA Annual Meeting- Sept 2019
- 19 barriers that were lumped in to 5 categories; there is instructions on how to easily use the Relevancy Roadmap for your agency
- Diversity & Inclusion in part of the roadmap and can assist in breaking down these barriers identified
- There have been a number of agencies and organizations that are being pro-active in addressing many of these issues
- WMI, through their MSCG, will be looking for states for pilot testing of the roadmap
- WMI under their multi-state grant will be taking the Roadmap online and creating repository of successes and lessons learned with use of the relevancy road map
- A living document that will be updated as needed; the sharing of stories is needed to update the documents as best as possible (successes and failures)
- What role (if any) should AFWA have in coordinating relevancy implementation? [discussion]
 - Have a committee/working groups specifically dedicated to the implementation of the relevancy roadmap
 - Affects agency culture and capacity; there may be multiple existing committees where this could find a home
 - Perhaps need to identify a committee that would focus on this, but not have it be exclusively their responsibility as it touches many committees

- A support system needs to be put in place to help state agencies implement the relevancy roadmap; many states don't have the infrastructure or capacity at this point in time
- Perhaps have this as a standing item on all/most AFWA committees to keep the needle moving on this project, not have a stand-alone committee or working group
- If there is a committee created → have one of the goals be for them to find a way to incorporate it into every committee
- Perhaps look at creating a President's Task Force instead of standing up a committee
 - A way to get a diverse set of people talking about this and working to move the needle on this project
- If diversity & inclusion is a large part of the new AFWA strategic plan, it might be easier to get this included into the committee structure, especially when updating the committee workplans and make sure integrated → would need guidance
- If we get this on the Executive Committee's agenda, we can ask them for guidance as to how they would like to see this move forward

Creating a non-traditional University Partnership- Julie Wicker (TXPW)

- There are a lot of benefits to diversity → create more perspectives for problem solving, have greater productivity
- There is currently a large gap in our agencies and significant lack of representation
- Finding that our application base is not diverse = problem
- Went to University that already have a diverse student body for some recruitment
 - Developed relationships with those schools
- Partnership Elements
 - Develop a wildlife research project (urban)
 - Make changes to the curriculum
 - Collaborate with TPWD staff and university staff
 - Create a dedicated internship program
- TPWD staff provided media training to help students (and professors) learn how to present themselves and prevent potential conflicts, how to talk to the public, etc.
- Some lessons learned: it's important to pick a project that can be done by first time researchers; mentoring is very important (both faculty and students); importance of networking and understanding funding sources, etc.; nurturing is important and it may take a while to see desired results

Best Practices Document

- Interview questions → are the questions we ask fair
 - Example: do you hunt or fish? The better questions might be- do you feel comfortable in an agency that promotes hunting/fishing; are you comfortable talking about hunting/fishing, etc
 - Asking to send Jen Newmark examples of guidelines or best practices for interview questions [ACTION]