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TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: ESF Board Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
Dr. Malika Carter, CDO - Liaison

DATE: May 4, 2021

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Charter

Background

Issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion run throughout all policy areas and functions of the SUNY system and ESF, and are inextricably tied to both student success and to the growth and effectiveness of SUNY campuses across New York.

ESF has an obligation to eliminate cultural, institutional, and regulatory discrimination, and to make SUNY an anti-racist model for the rest of the nation. To seize the moment to lead, the ESF Board of Trustees established an ad hoc committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at its January 2021 meeting.

Soon thereafter, the SUNY Board of Trustees, along with SUNY leadership, convened stakeholders from across the system to develop a systemwide action plan to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion, known as SUNY's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan. In January 2021, phase one of the action plan was released outlining a 25-point action plan designed to create a more inclusive, representative SUNY and to achieve equity in student success outcomes.

SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF)

Charter: Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee

Background

An Exceptional ESF aspires to create and maintain a diverse, welcoming, and inclusive campus environment in which difference is valued as a critical element of discovery and learning at a world-

class college. To enrich the student and employee experience, encourage collaboration, facilitate gathering, and expand ESF's presence, a commitment to diversity and inclusion is required.

Toward that end, the ESF Board of Trustees announced the creation of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEI Committee) in January 2021. The Governance Committee of the Board recommended a change to the bylaws in Article III Section 2 to add the new standing committee as follows:

(d) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

i. Review and make recommendations regarding college policies and plans concerning implementation of a campus-wide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) effort in attracting, retaining, and engaging students, faculty, and staff.

The DEI Committee will operate to elevate the campus commitment to diversity and inclusion with the Chief Diversity Officer as College liaison (who directly reports to the President). Subsequent to the Board's action came the formation of a SUNY system DEI Committee, as appointed by the SUNY Board of Trustees.

Mission and Charge

The Committee will consider policy on issues relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the College and within the greater campus community. Where appropriate, the Committee will work in collaboration with other Board Committees and campus organizations, particularly Academic Affairs, Finance and Administration, Research and Economic Development, and Student Life; as well as the President and his/her/their administration.

The DEI Committee will present items to the Board of Trustees regarding the College's diversity initiatives. The College Liaison will communicate with the President and Executive Cabinet any diversity initiatives or recommendations. Augmenting the work of the pre-existing Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee (composed of students, faculty, and staff), the DEI Committee advances the College's appreciation, understanding and respect for all forms of human differences represented in the college community. Additionally, members of this body will play a key role with regard to policies and practices that have an impact on the successful implementation of initiatives.

The Committee's authority and powers are derivative in nature, flowing from the responsibility to create, implement and administer the College's commitment to building and maintaining an inclusive community. To this end, it is the charge of this body to create and maintain a formally structured DEI Committee, establishing membership and operations and action; aid in the creation of actions for diversity; aid in increasing the quantity of talented underrepresented employees and students; and recommend policies, procedures, and best practices related to diversity and inclusion.

The DEI Committee works collaboratively where possible with existing university committees, including but not limited to the Office of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity; Alumni Racial Equity Committee; Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Committee; Undergraduate Student Association; Graduate Student Association; the ESF Women’s Caucus; and Department heads of all college areas.

Members of the Committee are expected to attend each committee meeting, in person or via videoconference. The Committee may invite other individuals, such as SUNY students, faculty, or staff; or experts in diversity, equity, and inclusion, to attend meetings and provide pertinent information, as necessary.

The DEI Committee will convene six times per calendar year, with the expectation that additional meetings may be required to adequately fulfill the obligations and duties of the Committee.

Meeting agendas will be prepared for every meeting and minutes of those meetings will be recorded.

Composition of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

The DEI Committee’s members are knowledgeable and interested in issues of diversity and inclusion and are committed to creating and implementing policies and projects in key areas of ESF’s diversity initiatives. The DEI Committee is composed of members who broadly represent a variety of ESF constituencies.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee shall consist of at least three members of the Board of Trustees, who shall be appointed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees; one or two of whom shall be designated by the Chair of the Board to serve as chair, or co-chair, of the Committee.

The exact remaining member composition of the DEI Committee will be established during the committee founding, but may be altered by the committee by majority vote, guided by the principle that membership of the DEI Committee is representative of a broad variety of university interests and constituents, such as but not limited to:

Voting Members of the Committee – Up to 15

Board of Trustees members – 3

John Bartow, Co- Chair

Linda Brown-Robinson, Co-Chair

Matthew Marko (Confirmed)

Chief Diversity Officer as College Liaison – 1

Dr. Malika Carter (Confirmed)

Student Representatives: Graduate and Undergraduate – 2

Acting Board of Trustees Student Representatives (voting and non-voting members) or one designee each appointed by USA and GSA

Up to four members of the greater community – 4

TBA (Not Confirmed) (i.e. Nicole (Nicky) Hylton-Paterson, Adirondack Diversity Initiative

Marlena Daher-Rahman - SUNY EOC

Eloise Dowdell-Curry - Community Advocate

Dr. Keith Alford - Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer Syracuse University) (Not Confirmed)

Staff members – 3

TBA (Director of Office of International Education or designee) (Not Confirmed)

TBA (University Police Chief or designee – Robert Dugan) (Not Confirmed)

TBA (Paul Hai - Associate Director, Northern Forest Institute) Chair's nominee (Not Confirmed)

(alt. Mark Lichtenstein - Chief of Staff; Matt Millea – Executive Director for Strategic Initiatives)

Faculty members (nominated by Academic Governance) – 2

Faculty Representative: TBA (Not Confirmed)

Faculty Representative: TBA (Not Confirmed)

The presence of a majority of the appointed members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and the act of a majority of the members present shall be the act of the Committee.

Reporting, Recommendations and Actions

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee shall report to the Board of Trustees on its activities and make recommendations for Board action.

Major recommendations of the DEI committee, generally defined actions, activities or initiatives of sufficient size, scope, or breadth as to significantly impact the entire campus community, are forwarded to the Board of Trustees for endorsement.

Terms of Membership

Board of Trustee members of the committee shall serve at the pleasure of the Chair of the Board of Trustees for terms of three years.

ESF employee members of the Committee shall serve two-year, staggered terms within each of the constituent areas. Student appointments are for one academic year. All member terms begin with the first DEI meeting of the academic year. An individual member may serve a maximum of two consecutive full terms.

DEI shall decide on a process for nominations.

Operation

The DEI Committee may have two types of committees within its structure: working groups and ad hoc committees. Working groups are standing committees charged with addressing long-term projects. Ad hoc committees are formed to address narrower issues and are dissolved at the conclusion of the specific project. Persons external to the DEI Committee may be invited to participate in ad hoc committees.

Diversity Advisory Council Relationships and Scope

The DEI Committee is responsible for the formulation and recommendation of university-wide policies and standards for issues relating to diversity in curricular and co-curricular programs, strategic plans and other substantive diversity initiatives, while establishing and maintaining working relationships with existing college bodies. Formal proposals may be made to the DEI Committee from any member of the ESF community and may be presented either for action or planning purposes.