**Staff Advisory Committee**

**Saint Louis University**

**Meeting Minutes for Thursday August 27, 2020**

**VIA ZOOM**

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**Members Present:**

Sherry Ashford, Kathy Barbeau, Sara Bauman, Debra Blanquart, Karen Bolinger, Heather Brock, Edith Brown, Alexis Bruce-Staudt, Kristina Bryan, Judi Buncher, Christina Butler, Sheila Byers, Judy Colyott, Mary Cook, Kellie Dalton, Lauren Davis, Toni Dean, Debbie Dill Garvin, Catherine Donaldson, Kathryn Dortch, Mary Drexel, Loretta Edwards, Jennifer Elwyn, Jenni Franey, Tonya Gallina, Sandy Gambill, Susan Ganey, Jan Gannon, Peter Garvin, Lynda Hetlage, Pat Hoffarth, Kristin Hrasky, Anne Imlay, Trevor Juenger, Cheryl Kaufman, Delia King, Mindy Lewis, Kathleen Linnenbrink, Beth Masters, Adrienne McCarthy, Patricia McQueen, Allese McVay, Eric Miller, Deanna Miller, Kirsten Miller, Heidi Moore, Donna Neely, Jennifer Oppermann, Zach Pudlowski, Colleen Schneider, Lori Schultz, Dawn Schwartz, Lizzie Sextro, Evelyn Shields, Sharon Spicer, Sue Stevens, Ian Taylor, Susan Torretta, Tonya Vernon, Ellen Weis, Marcia Weis, Rachel Young

**Guests:**

Daniel Blash, Nancy Childrey, JoAnn Filla-Taylor, Sherry Hahn, Emma Hundermark, Summer Mattina, Thomas Patterson, Judy Pierce, Barb Valentine, Regina Walton, Linghua Xiao

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**Call to Order 12:00 and Reflection:**

From Mya Angelou “It’s time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength”

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**Approval of minutes:**

April minutes done in May (discussion meeting only)

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**Announcements:**

All SAC meeting this year will be held via Zoom.

For more information on diversity and inclusion there was an email sent to SAC members. The first “Navigating White Spaces: Personal and Professional Dialogue” will be held Aug. 27th at 12:30.

Every year, a member of the Staff Advisory Committee is awarded the Joyce Huelsmann Outstanding SAC Member Award. The award was established to honor founding SAC member, Joyce Huelsmann (SLU staff - 1963-2010), and recognizes a member of the Staff Advisory Committee who has best exhibited the qualities necessary for the type of leadership, service and positive spirit that were a hallmark of Joyce Huelsmann and her involvement at Saint Louis University, and more specifically, the Staff Advisory Committee. Her high moral standards, strong work ethic, and personal commitment to leadership through example, integrity, compassion, and respect for all continue to be a cornerstone of the Staff Advisory Committee.

The Academic Year 2020 recipient is Kristin Hrasky.

Kristin is the corresponding secretary in 2019 and again in 2020. She has been very active in SAC, her professionalism and organizational skills have increased SAC efficiency of communication and membership. Kristin is good at technology and keeping information up to date. She pivoted quickly when meeting went 100% online. Sue thanked Kristin for her skills, appreciates her commitment to SAC and asked everyone to give a round of applause that is well deserved.
Please look at the HR bulletin, Childcare and Family resources are listed for information on how to handle the virtual school year. Skillsoft has training recommended by Sue ‘Facing Virtual Team Challenges’, ‘Contributing as a Virtual Team Member’, ‘Bridging the Diversity Gap’ and ‘Your Role in Workplace Diversity’.

**Monthly Spotlight:**  **Dr. Daniel L. Blash**

Introduction given by Sue: Dr. Daniel Blash is the Vice Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Chief Diversity Officer for the School of Medicine and he also serves as an adjunct associate professor of psychiatry.

Prior to joining SLU, Dr. Blash served as the assistant dean of diversity and inclusion at Washington University School of Medicine. Dr. Blash holds a bachelor of arts degree in psychology, a master’s degree in counseling and a PhD in marriage and family therapy. He is a decorated combat veteran of the United States Army. Dr. Blash is a long-time St. Louis resident, an experienced educator with a proven track record of advocacy, diversity and inclusion. He has been a counselor for nearly 2 decades, and his doctoral research focuses on the role of religion and spirituality among underrepresented minorities in the academic environment. He was the writer and/or co-writer of two successful grant initiatives, resulting in 3 diversity and inclusion programs targeting underrepresented minority students. He is the founder of Blash Counseling Associates, a leading counseling agency in the inner city of Old North St. Louis. The agency bridges the gap between mental health and St. Louis’s underrepresented minority communities as well as back packs and school supplies to over 100 students in the area. Dr. Blash speaks conversation German and American Sign Language. He has given presentations and lectures in over 30 states and five countries.

Dr. Blash began by stating in a recent conversation with the dean, they both agreed they never wanted to come out of gate claiming to know everything, or as an institution we are the most diverse and equitable on the planet. A document (shared with the group) describing an exclusive organization, rated at a 1, to a fully inclusive organization, rated as a 6. Currently SLU is a 2 or 2.5. Dr. Blash is hopeful SLU will move up in the chart.

Dr. Blash then shared his ‘sales pitch’ for joining diversity equity and inclusion. He was asked his opinion, but he felt he didn’t know more than his colleagues, and began to ask himself questions about how people felt on campus. As people are on campus longer, how are they valued and how are new employees valued on campus according to age? Accessibility for the able bodied and those who aren’t able bodied, are those needs being met? What is the climate like on campus (awful/oppressive)? Everyone on campus is attempted to be considered and weaknesses in certain groups are attempted to be identified. Dr. Blash stated that for the past 100 years St. Louis diversity has been 97% black or white, a very unique trait. He also brought up the Delmar divide for income level. Dr. Blash wants to be told if someone isn’t being included, if his office is missing something, they need to be told. Dr. Blash had training, including a diversity piece at the beginning of every school year. This training was offensive because it was an agenda, not a conversation that included the opinion of the people involved. This training helped shape Dr. Blash’s plan in future training sessions that he could control.

Dr. Blash continued to share his presentation Powerpoint with a slide titled: What’s the Catch. Dr. Blash shared four bullet points of ideals that are not optional for the SLU community to agree with. They were: - We value each other’ work and our roles – We recognize and value our differences as well as our similarities – We empower ourselves and others – We encourage team work. Diversity, equity and inclusion is a continuum, and everyone can find their place in that continuum.

The 6 areas of focus for Dr. Blash are students, residents and fellows, staff, faculty, dean’s suite and executive leaders, and community engagement. Again, if a group is missing Dr. Blash would like to be
made aware. Dr. Blash pointed out that staff are important, often overlooked and has hired a manager for staff and community engagement; she starts in October. DEI at SLUSOM: Dr. Blash briefly show this slide, it will be gone over more thoroughly after October.

A Diversity Quiz was given by Dr. Blash. 1. True or False: It is a known fact that ethnic racial minorities do not receive the same level of quality healthcare as non-minority Americans. However, when the playing field is level this disparity largely disappears. Answer: False. Disparities exist. A 2016 survey showed that a quarter of medical students think that black people have thicker skin and less sensitive nerve endings. Medical schools aren’t teaching these falsehoods, but aren’t teaching against them. Recently, SLU students complained there were no modeling of diseased skin in black or brown skin in dermatology rotations. 2. Most people living beneath the poverty line in the US are: Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, native American, Asian American. Answer: Caucasian. This is an aggregate question; Caucasians are the largest population and the poverty is an aggregate of this large population. Dr. Blash added that rural Caucasian Americans are underserved because they cannot get grants to address health care issues. 3. In the U.S. women purchase what percentage of all products and services: Answer: 82%. Dr. Bash’s colleagues in pediatrics tell him this is about the same level that women make healthcare decisions for the family. 4. What is currently the largest of these minority group in America? African American, Members of the LBGTQIA+ community, people living with disabilities, Asian Americans. Answer: people living with disabilities. The mental health arena is growing qualifying more people as disabled.

Next slide: Why talk about diversity and inclusion? Because the landscape is changing. This slide showed a map of the U.S. and year by year the map changes showing more diverse areas. This changes and is important because young people flock to areas that are more diverse and this relates to recruitment and retention in the work force. Also, where people want to grow and raise families. The map shifts, but St. Louis hasn’t changed in 100 years.

Next slide: The Changing Face of the Workforce. Generally aged 25-64; young and old alike should be valued for their skill set. A computer model showed that the white workforce will decline by 25% and Hispanics will double and the Hispanic portion will almost triple in the next 40 years in the United States. Business’s will do well to look at the future populations coming into the workforce.

Next slide: Potential Challenges of Diversity: Challenges of difference in language, beliefs and behaviors leading to misunderstandings and hurt feelings can be navigated by communication, group dynamics, problem solving, decision making and value systems. A big challenge is the age difference in workers, the older group does not have the same mindset as a younger generation.

Next slide: Potential Advantages of Diversity: enhanced work processes, a diverse workforce helping in the fight to decrease healthcare disparity.


Next slide: Leveraging Diversity. Research says if there is a homogenous team they will be fantastic ‘in a box’ but consistent and average. If a team is diverse, but not inclusive, they perform poorly. Diverse teams that have been trained to work together they perform the best. The diverse skill set gives the team advantages.

Next slide: Expanding the Case for Diversity: In 2012 and NIH internal study showed lack of diversity, now they basically state, according to Dr. Blash, if you do not have diversity and aren’t inclusive you won’t get grant money.

Next Slide: Climate of Mutual Respect in the Workplace: same 4 statements as ‘What’s the Catch’ slide. These statements are what Dr. Blash wants implemented as we move forward as stronger teams and then
begin step 2: Unconscious Bias.

Next Dr. Blash shared a video. Sound was lost for a few seconds at the beginning and end of the video as Dr. Blash was on mute. The video was from Youtube entitled: “Don’t Put People in Boxes”.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRwt25M5nGw

Dr. Blash concluded with a slide of his contact information

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and looks forward to meeting with SAC again.

Questions:

1. Will there be a continuous implicit bias training available out of HR in the near future or will Dr. Blash be available to conduct his workshops at other schools within the university? Answer: HR does not provide training but Dr. Blash’s office does provide that training. Step 1 is today’s training: Awareness. Step 2 is Understanding about unconscious bias to Step 3 Commitment which is about speaking up if you hear something that is belittling, Step 4 Action about making out work environment more diverse and inclusive. There are another 8 available.

2. Will a copy of Dr. Blash’s Powerpoint be sent to the membership and is there a listserve for anything offered by Dr. Blash? Answer: yes, in the future, but not right now, probably by the end of the year.

3. Are there programs being considered for those in the SLU white community to understand privilege, supremacy, development of social construct, similar to the YMCA’s Witnessing to Whiteness? Dr. Blash has a 6-page document of initiatives. Witnessing to Whiteness is on this initiative, they are waiting for better trained staff with better language to present it.

Dr. Blash considers diversity training important work so that all groups can rise together and none are pushed down as they all rise up together.

4. Alumni webinars are offered, are staff and faculty going to get these opportunities too? Answer: Yes, the target is staff and faculty. The link was shared with SAC for an upcoming webinar.

Dr. Blash thanked Sue for the invitation and left the meeting.

Sue said announcements and wished everyone a blessed and safe day before logging off Zoom.

**Next Meeting:**
Thursday, September 17th, 2020
12:00 – 1:15 PM
Steve Sanchez: Reaccreditation of the University
Kim Watts: Telehealth information & new Center for Specialized Medicine

**Adjournment:** By Sue Stevens at 1:11 P.M.
Staff Advisory Committees and Representatives – 2020 - 2021

Staff Advisory Executive Committee

Chair – Sue Stevens
Past Chair – vacant
Recording Secretary - Jenni Franey
Corresponding Secretary – Kristin Hrasky
Membership Coordinator – Rachel Young
Treasurer – Kathy Barbeau

Staff Advisory Sub-Committees

By-Laws Committee – Kathy Barbeau, Sue Stevens, Rita Stites
Service/Events Committee
- Food Truck Rally – Stacy Mack

University Committees

Campus Recreation Advisory Committee – Robert Pampel
Grassroots Working Committee – vacant
HLC Re-Accreditation Steering Committee – Rachel Young
Honorary Degrees & Special Recognition Committee – vacant
Medical Ad Hoc – Sue Stevens
Operational Excellence – Project Review Committee – Alexis Bruce-Staudt
Policy Review Committee – Missi White-Luster
Parking Issues – Matt Campbell
President’s Diversity Council – Pamela Jackson
Speech, Expression and Civil Discourse Committee – Anne Imlay, Bob McNair
Tobacco Free Workforce – Ellen Weis
University Leadership Council – Sue Stevens
Workday Transition Committee – vacant

Board of Trustee Committees

Academic Affairs – Sharon Spicer, Yr. 1
Business & Administration – Sue Stevens, Yr. 1
Development – Rhonda Arl, Yr. 2
Marketing and Branding – Kristin Hrasky, Yr. 2
Mission and Identity – Christine Luebbert, Yr. 1