

# MINUTES

August 11, 2023

## Governor's Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council

State of Wisconsin

### Location:

WHEDA Building



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### COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mai Xiong, Chair  
Ruben Hopkins  
Jessica Boling  
Beth Wroblewski  
Dan Hereth  
Adin Palau  
Vanessa McDowell  
Mai J. Lo Lee  
Amy Pechacek  
Melissa Roberts-designee  
Emilie Amundson  
Greg Steinberger  
Elmer Moore Jr.  
Laura Laitinen-Warren  
Gabriela Parra

### COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Que El-Amin  
Markasa Tucker  
Tammy Rivera  
Nisreen Atta  
Dr. Carlton Jenkins  
Percy Brown, Jr.  
Rev. Dr. Alex Gee Jr.  
Robyn Davis  
Dr. LaVar J. Charleston  
Dasheika Kidd  
Shaundel Spivey  
Dr. Odawa White  
James Bond

### GUESTS:

Lt. Governor Sara Rodriguez  
Asst. Deputy Secretary Danielle Williams  
Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld

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### STAFF:

Laurice Lincoln  
De Anna Sellers  
Nicole Bailie  
Suzanne Lidtke  
Michael Rozier  
Christina Bulin  
Deborah Southworth

## **A. CALL TO ORDER**

Madam Chair Xiong called the Governor's Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council (Council) to order at 9:03 am.

### Welcome and Announcements

Elmer Moore Jr. welcomed the council to the new WHEDA building and affirmed WHEDA's commitment to equity and inclusion.

Madam Chair Xiong also welcomed the group to the third quarter Governor's Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council meeting.

Madam Chair Xiong introduced two new council members, Dr. Laura Laitinen-Warren and Gabriela Parra.

Madam Chair Xiong shared an invitation to the council to attend the annual state diversity awards on October 27, 2023. Laurice Lincoln will send out additional information to the council on the diversity awards, including the Virginia Hart Recognition Award.

Madam Chair Xiong also congratulated Mai J. Lo Lee, who was recognized by Insight as a 2023 Women of Influence in the New North Region.

### Roll Call

Madam Chair Xiong conducted roll call and acknowledged that quorum had not been reached and moved on to the remarks.

## **B. STATE OFFICE UPDATES**

Madam Chair Xiong introduced Lt. Governor Sara Rodriguez.

### Lt. Governor Sara Rodriguez Remarks

Lt. Governor Rodriguez expressed her commitment to equity and inclusion and shared an incident that occurred in Watertown that reinforces how important it is to center equity and inclusion work. Lt. Governor Rodriguez shared the importance of the work personally and talked about the progress that's been made. Lt. Governor Rodriguez also noted that the work is far from over and that the work needs to remain a priority. Lt. Governor Rodriguez thanked the council for their work and commitment.

### Department of Administration (DOA) Assistant Deputy Secretary Danielle Williams

Madam Chair Xiong introduced Assistant Deputy Secretary Danielle Williams who announced DOA Secretary Blumenfeld would be joining the council around lunch. Assistant Deputy Secretary Williams provided an update on the work at the Department of Administration, including affinity groups and the IDEAS committee. Assistant Deputy Secretary Williams shared that the IDEAS committee elected new leadership and strategic planning will commence in September. The DOA equity and inclusion planning committee has drafted the EI Strategic Plan and is now soliciting feedback from staff and

stakeholders. DPM recently released the state's compensation plan which includes pay progression and salary equity. In April, DPM launched a new project that re-imagines DPMs structure and processes. DPM is centering the feedback from the council in that project.

Assistant Deputy Secretary Williams shared that August is Black Business Month and a black business roundtable will be held on August 31, 2023. The annual treasury report shows how ARPA money has been used. The report highlights the state's strategies to provide equitable opportunities across the state. Assistant Deputy Secretary Williams encouraged people to share stories on the Badger Bounce Back website.

Madam Chair Xiong thanked Lt. Governor Rodriguez and Assistant Deputy Secretary Danielle Williams for their participation and remarks.

#### Bureau of Equity and Inclusion (BEI) Director Laurice Lincoln

Madam Chair Xiong introduced Laurice Lincoln, the Director of the Bureau of Equity and Inclusion. Director Lincoln provided an overview of the enterprise programs provided by the Bureau of Equity and Inclusion. Programs include wellness, enterprise mediation, respectful workplace complaint investigations, State of Wisconsin Student Diversity Internship Program (SWSDIP), workforce culture and climate assessments, equity and inclusion strategic planning support and monitoring, equity and inclusion training and staff development, and equity and inclusion workforce data analysis and reporting. Lincoln introduced BEI staff present at the meeting who work on the programs. Lincoln also provided an update on the 2023 SWSDIP program.

Assistant Deputy Secretary Williams recently met with DOA interns and shared some of their experiences. Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Pechacek shared the experiences with the DWD interns. Lt. Governor Rodriguez was curious about competitive pay for interns and Nicole Bailie shared that intern pay ranges by job and is competitive. Director Lincoln noted the increase in participation from students located in the northern part of the state. Department of Safety and Professional Services Secretary Dan Hereth asked if the increase was due to the availability of remote work and Nicole Bailie and Director Lincoln confirmed this was the case. Additional questions from council members included the rate of retention after the internship is over, if interns are hired on at the end of the internship, if interns return to the program, and the diversity of hires. BEI produces an annual SWSDIP report, and that report will be shared with the council. WHEDA president Elmer Moore Jr. praised the SWSDIP program and shared information about the WHEDA internship program. Lt. Governor Rodriguez shared that the legislature would be interested in the urban/rural and disability information of the SWSDIP program. Council members are encouraged to share referrals for the program with Nicole Bailie.

Madam Chair Xiong thanked Director Lincoln for the update.

**C. 15 MINUTE BREAK – RESUMED AT 10:17 AM**

## **D. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Mai J. Lo Lee thanked the subcommittee members for their work and reminded the council of the charge and guiding statement of the Community Engagement Subcommittee. The subcommittee recently met with Casey Brown to learn about the Ho-Chunk healing camp and the Ho-Chunk Heritage and Cultural Center. The subcommittee also learned about the veterans affairs work and keeping the Ho-Chunk language alive throughout the state, since it's almost extinct. The next subcommittee meeting is in September with a representative from the Hmong Cultural Center in La Crosse. Lo Lee asked the council for help with identifying contacts throughout the state to share experiences from across the state.

### DATA AND POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE

Madam Chair Xiong provided the update for the Data and Policy Subcommittee as the new subcommittee chair has not been identified.

### ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

The council welcomed Elmer Moore Jr. as the new chair for the subcommittee. There was no report out at this time. Ruben Hopkins welcomed Elmer Moore Jr. reminded the council about the work of the subcommittee connecting activities to organizations and marketplaces.

Madam Chair Xiong asked if there were any questions about the subcommittee reports. Ruben Hopkins provided an update on the work of the Wisconsin Black Chamber of Commerce.

Questions from the council included data around American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which varies due to federal reporting guidelines. DSPS Secretary Dan Hereth shared that trades exams are now all available in Spanish.

## **E. EQUITY AND INCLUSION SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Director Lincoln led a discussion around equity and inclusion practices, including affirmative action. Director Lincoln shared the definition of affirmative action, along with the advantages and disadvantages of affirmative action. Director Lincoln shared her experience with affirmative action. The council split into small groups and discussed the following topics: the values and beliefs that led to the current perspectives of affirmative action, impact of affirmative action policy, and leading conversations around affirmative action. The council came back together to share the results of the small group discussion.

## **F. IDENTIFY 2024 PRIORITIES**

Madam Chair Xiong outlined the subcommittee meeting schedule for the afternoon and asked subcommittees to identify the calendar year 2024 meeting schedule. Madam Chair

Xiong reminded council members of the need for actionable recommendations focused on the priorities the council selected as an important part of the work. Over the next several months, the subcommittees will continue discussions and review actionable recommendations that will be presented to Governor Evers for consideration. Subcommittee members should plan to have the final recommendations prepared for the November meeting. If subcommittees do not reach consensus on the draft recommendations today, the subcommittee will need to meet again to solidify the recommendations in advance of the November meeting.

### **G. FUTURE MEETING AND CLOSING REMARKS**

The next full council meeting will be November 10, 2023.

### **H. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Madam Chair Xiong then thanked the council for their work.

The next council meeting is Friday, November 10, 2023, from 9 am – 2 pm (virtual).

The Council adjourned at 12:01 pm (quorum was not reached during this meeting).

Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Mai Xiong, Chair  
Governor’s Advisory  
Council on Equity and Inclusion