

MINUTES

May 14, 2021

Governor's Advisory Council on Equity and Inclusion

State of Wisconsin



Location:

This meeting was held via a Zoom virtual meeting platform.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dawn Crim, Chair
Mai Xiong, Vice Chair
Joaquin Altoro
Emilie Amundson
Nisreen Atta
Victor Barnett
Percy Brown, Jr.
Kevin Carr
Greg Steinberger
Marie Summers
Karen Timberlake
Odawa White
Beth Wroblewski
Shaundel Spivey

Dr. LaVar Charleston
Rev. Dr. Monica Cummins
Robyn Davis
Que El-Amin
Rev. Dr. Alex Gee Jr
Dr. Carlton D Jenkins
Dasheika Kidd
Mary Kolar
Mai J Lo Lee
Vanessa McDowell
Adin Palau
Amy Pechacek
Tammy Rivera

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ruben Hopkins
Jessica Cavazos

Jessica Boiling
Markasa Tucker

STAFF:

Malika Evanco
Laurice Lincoln
Sarah Cheney

DeAnna Sellers
Nicole Bailie
Alisa Nagle

GUESTS:

Flora Csontos, Director of Gubernatorial Appointments
T.R. Williams, Deputy Director of External Affairs
Tondra Davis, Director of Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program
Governor Tony Evers
Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes

A. CALL TO ORDER

Madam Chair Crim welcomed the group and called the Governor's Advisory Council on Equity and Inclusion (Council) to order at 9:00 am. Sarah Cheney confirmed that a quorum was present.

Review meeting agenda, meeting procedure

Madam Chair Crim discussed the agenda and the six documents accompanying the meeting agenda. Madam Chair Crim requested the Council review the agenda, the previous meeting's minutes and called for a motion to approve.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

MOTION: Dr. LaVar Charleston moved to approve the May 14, 2021 meeting agenda of the Governor's Advisory Council on Equity and Inclusion, as submitted. Ms. Robyn Davis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously on a voice vote.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 19, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: Mr. Joaquin Altoro moved to approve the February 19, 2021 meeting minutes. Ms. Mai Xiong seconded the motion, which passed unanimously on a voice vote.

B. UNDERSTANDING GOVERNMENT - INTRODUCTION

State of Wisconsin Gubernatorial Board and Commission Appointments

Flora Csontos, the Director of Gubernatorial Appointments, began her presentation by thanking the Department of Administration team and Madam Chair Crim for putting together the meeting. Ms. Csontos guided council members to the "Apply to Serve" page on the Boards and Commissions page. Ms. Csontos gave the Council a general idea of the boards and commissions which currently exist, including the 911 Subcommittee, Access to Justice Commission, and the Accounting and Examining Board. Ms. Csontos explained that the Appointment Office welcomes applicant diversity and participation. Furthermore, there are so many boards that if council members are passionate about a topic, they should find a board that matches their interests. Additionally, the boards vary in meeting times, length, size, and focus, making them more accessible to different applicants. Ms. Csontos navigated the drop-down menu on the website to show committee members how to utilize the sorting tool.

Ms. Csontos explained that the application process allows applicants to list their top three boards. The Appointment Office helps find the right fit for the candidates and the boards. Applicants will be notified when vacancies occur. These notifications may happen over a long period of time as the Appointment Office keeps applicant materials over a long time. Applicants may also be contacted regarding the potential to join boards outside of the ones they had listed. Ms. Csontos urged council members to reach out to the Appointment Office through email: govappointments@wisconsin.gov. She added that individuals can always reach out to check in about the status of an application. Ms. Csontos concluded her presentation with the idea that council members could reach out to board and

commission members to start a partnership or continue equity and inclusion work with these individuals. A council member asked if there was a report on the diversity of council and board membership. Ms. Csontos explained that collecting this information was optional and varied by boards. Another council member asked if there was a way to learn about each appointment's term lengths and frequency. Ms. Csontos clarified that term lengths do not change; this information should be listed on the council website and that the Gubernatorial Office could get the information out to individuals.

How Wisconsin Government Works

T.R. Williams, the Deputy Director of External Affairs, thanked Madam Chair Crim for the opportunity to present and welcomed everyone. Ms. Williams recognized that the Council members might have varying knowledge of how the government works, so she put together a presentation to provide basic knowledge to all council members. Ms. Williams provided a disclaimer that the presentation was intended as general information only, not as specific legal advice. Individuals should consult qualified legal counsel for specific questions. Ms. Williams defined policy as a construct in response to an issue or a problem that requires a solution. She added that policy could be interpreted as something that the government does or does not do, a form of law or regulation, or an ongoing process that needs to be continually reassessed, revisited, and revised. Ms. Williams added that legislatures, the Executives (Mayor and Governor), Departments and Agencies, and the Judiciary (Courts) could all make policies.

Ms. Williams summarized the policy stages as (1) Identifying the problem, (2) Raising the problem's profile, (3) Developing a solution and getting it adopted, (4) Implement policy (5) Evaluating the impact. Ms. Williams reinforced the idea that policy is not always linear; often, it can be cyclical. She named the Speaker of the Assembly and the Leader of the Senate as two significant roles which name committees, choose committees, and decide committees' chairs and members of their party on the committee. Ms. Williams urged council members to pay attention to the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC) as it makes very important decisions on the state budget and finances. Ms. Williams reviewed the eight steps on how a bill becomes a law. The presentation was concluded with a brief outline of the Wisconsin Biennial Budget process. Mr. Joaquin Altoro commented his appreciation for Ms. Williams and the importance of the Deputy Director's work on Inclusion and Equity. Ms. Robyn Davis added that Ms. Williams' presentation were of particular interest to the Data and Policy Subcommittee.

C. EXECUTIVE ORDER #59 OVERVIEW & UPDATE

Executive Order #59 Overview

Malika Evanco, the Division of Personnel Management (DPM) Administrator, reviewed her responsibilities with council members. Ms. Evanco explained that her day-to-day role includes overseeing all state Human Resource functions and professionals, class and compensation programs, training and development programs, merit recruitment and selection, and furthering equity and inclusion efforts. Ms. Evanco reminded council members that the Governor's Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council was established as a result of Executive Order 59. Ms. Evanco elaborated on Executive Order 59, stating that it expands the focus of the State Affirmative Action Council, requires all cabinet secretaries to attend diversity, equity, and inclusion training on an annual basis, and requires all

agencies to develop an equity and inclusion plan. Executive Order 59 also requires the DPM to assess Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity programs, collaborate with state agencies to collect and analyze relevant Equity and Inclusion data. This data would be used to develop and provide mandatory and professional development Equity and Inclusion training opportunities for employees. Ms. Evanco concluded her presentation by stating that the Equity and Inclusion plans through Executive Order 59 were due this past December and implemented in January.

Minority Business Enterprise – Supplier Diversity

Tondra Davis, the Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Director, began her presentation by thanking the Council for having her. Ms. Davis explained that she would introduce the supplier diversity program as it may be a valuable resource to council members. Ms. Davis presented SDP's background in that it has existed since 1983. It is made up of 3 staff members, 2 of which are equal opportunity specialists. Ms. Davis has been the Director since October 2019. There are currently around 1,300 certifications which include: Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (MBEs), Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses (DVBs), and Woman-Owned Business Enterprises (WBEs). She explained that the mission of SDP is to certify MBEs, DVBs, and WBEs, which provides better opportunities for them to do business with the State of Wisconsin, other government entities, and private businesses. Ms. Davis explained that certifying a business means that SDP authenticates that a business has 51% ownership by a targeted population (minority, service-disabled veteran, woman) and is managed and controlled by the majority owners. State statutes and administrative codes govern the SDP certifying process. There are no fees associated with MBEs; however, there is a \$150 fee associated with DVBs and WBEs.

Through this certification process, SDP is trying to give these businesses better opportunities. As a result, the State of Wisconsin has spending goals with these businesses. Currently, there is a 5% state spending goal for MBEs and a 1% spending goal with DVBs. The statutes provide a 5% bid preference for MBEs and DVBs. Ms. Davis explained that through Executive Order 59, the Department of Administration's Director of Supplier Diversity shall (1) Assess and improve current procurement and contract process (2) Develop new relationships and strategies to create and foster opportunities for businesses owned and operated by racial and ethnic minorities, women, and veterans. Ms. Davis explained that SDP's charge aligns with certifying diverse suppliers and working on tabulating, analyzing, and improving the state's diverse spend number.

Ms. Davis reviewed the four components of diverse spend as (1) General Purchasing (2) Architecture and Engineering (3) Construction (4) State Highway Program – Department of Transportation (DOT). She explained that some of the progress made by SDP is that the FY20 MBE Diverse Spend Goal was met for the first time in 6 years. Some of the challenges that still need to be addressed include dispelling the myth of how individuals get state contracts. An idea to keep in mind regarding state contracts is that there must be a process of bidding on, winning, and performing for state contracts. Furthermore, there is work to be done in dispelling the chicken and the egg argument where individuals need the experience to get contracts but cannot get contracts without the experience. Some SDP strategies which have been developed include Relationship Building,

Improving the Diverse Spend Reporting Process, Monthly Validation of Diverse Spending, In-House Improvements, Diverse Supplier Recruitment and Training, and Policy Development.

Secretary Amy Pechacek asked if there was any reciprocity for businesses having gone through other certifications at the county or city level. If a business is certified as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), then they could get an SDP certification through the streamlined United Certification Program (UCP). Wisconsin DBE Certifications are granted through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, City of Madison, Dane County, or Milwaukee County. She also clarified that a subcommittee headed by Dr. LaVar Charleston directly aligns with Supplier Diversity work. Ms. Mai J. Lo Lee asked about how long it takes between completing an application to reaching a decision. Ms. Davis explained that the application is made online, and SDP will review the application within 30 days. Ms. Mai J. Lo Lee asked if the application is English-speaking only. Ms. Davis said that it currently is; however, SDP is working with the Hmong Chamber of Commerce in June to carry out certification workshops in which individuals can have documents translated for them and leave with completed applications. Madam Chair Crim added that language barriers are a relevant and important issue that has been discussed across the government enterprise.

D. AGENCY OVERVIEW & EQUITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE

Department of Administration

Secretary Joel Brennan gave an overview of the vision, mission, and key functions of the Department of Administration (DOA). Secretary Brennan explained the vision of the DOA as acting as the most effective, secure, innovative, and transparent agency for their customers. He explained the DOA mission as providing effective and efficient services at the best value to government agencies and the public. Some of the key functions of DOA are helping the Governor develop and implement the state budget and support other state agencies and their programs by offering centralized purchasing and financial management services. A diverse set of issues to be prioritized by the DOA include proactive communication with employees about equity and inclusion work, establishing equity and inclusion steering committees, and establishing equal employment workgroups. Secretary Brennan announced that there would be grants available to community partners working to eliminate disparities and promote equity and inclusion.

Department of Health Services

Secretary Karen Timberlake provided an overview of the Department of Health Services (DHS) and the agency's mission of protecting and promoting the health and safety of all people of Wisconsin, and described the department's current, ongoing work towards equity and inclusion. This work includes supporting the Health Equity Council and creating a new office of Health Equity and Inclusion, for which the agency is currently undergoing recruitment for a Director.

Secretary Emilie Amundson provided a background on the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the shared vision that unites the department – that all Wisconsin children and youth are safe and loved as members of thriving families and communities. The agency has been working on mandatory training for employees entitled "Embracing Equity and Fostering Inclusion," which will be rolled out in late 2021. The agency continues to focus its efforts on diverse workforce recruitment and retention, strengthen community connections, and utilize equity tools to evaluate DCF policies and practices.

Department of Veteran's Affairs

Secretary Mary Kolar provided information on the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and its work on behalf of the Wisconsin veteran community in recognizing the service and sacrifice veterans have made for this state and nation. The DVA has been focusing on recruitment, retention, training, and culture in carrying out its equity and inclusion initiatives, including the development of a mentorship program.

Council Chair Remarks

Madam Chair Crim announced that today Governor Evers had designated this day, May 14, as Hmong and Laos Veteran's Day.

E. REMARKS – GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

Governor Evers provided an update on the budget, remarking that the Joint Committee had removed all equity items from the budget. The Governor reaffirmed his administration's commitment to equity.

Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes thanked Governor Evers for his leadership, spoke on the importance of climate work, protecting water quality, and access for indigenous communities.

F. COMMITTEE OPERATIONS

Subcommittee Nominations Process and Overview

A general overview of the nomination process was explained by Madam Chair Crim, in which the Council was able to select the Vice Chair and the Chairs of the three subcommittees. A survey was sent out to indicate member interest in leadership roles on the Council, and members nominated themselves for different positions. This process resulted in the leadership team as follows: Mai Xiong as Vice-Chair of the Council, Dr. LaVar Charleston as Chair for the Subcommittee on Economic and Business Development, Robyn Davis as Chair for the Subcommittee on Data and Policy, and Mary Kolar as the Chair for the Subcommittee on Community Engagement.

Vice-Chair Remarks

Vice-Chair Mai Xiong expressed excitement about the Council's work and stated that she

was thrilled and honored to be working with the Council. She explained that the focus of this councils' equity and inclusion work would revolve around embracing diversity, whether it be in ethnicity or geography. She explained that her role as Vice Chair would entail working with the chairs of subcommittees in creating synergy and identifying common goals moving forward.

Data and Policy Subcommittee

Data and Policy Subcommittee Chair, Robyn Davis, explained that the subcommittee met on April 13. During this meeting, subcommittee members got to know one another, reviewed housekeeping, and open meeting laws, discussed the recording of notes, and taking part in the meeting. The subcommittee discussed its charge, including researching policies and statutes for review to eliminate gaps in homeownership, business development, and employment. Ms. Davis explained that the best way to narrow the subcommittee's focus would be to focus beyond state government operations. The subcommittee should start with data, get the lay of the land, identify policy barriers, and find potential solutions. Ms. Davis provided the Council with the update that the next Data and Policy Subcommittee meetings would be on June 2 and July 9.

Economic and Business Development Subcommittee

Economic and Business Development Subcommittee Chair, Dr. LaVar Charleston, explained that the subcommittee met on April 21. Eight subcommittee members joined with Dr. Charleston to plan their subcommittee's work. The subcommittee focused its charge on serving as a roadmap to remove barriers to business ownership and economic development to those historically excluded. Furthermore, they would identify strategies for marginalized groups such as veteran, minority, and female-owned businesses. The subcommittee identified three buckets to focus on in the future: (1) Barriers, (2) Best practices (3) Big ideas. Dr. Charleston provided the Council with the update that the next Economic and Business Development meeting would be on May 21.

Community Engagement Subcommittee

Community Engagement Subcommittee Chair, Mary Kolar, reported that nine committee members recently met to discuss their backgrounds and review open meeting law requirements. The subcommittee also discussed how they would address their charge. The subcommittee proposed developing a state repository of local organizations and questioned whether funding was available for supporting these initiatives. The subcommittee sought to capitalize on their support from the Governor's office by bringing about more cultural understanding and finding additional opportunities to promote cultural awareness. Subcommittee members were reminded that not everyone would support their efforts, and some may misinterpret and use recommendations to further a cultural divide. Subcommittee Chair Kolar concluded with the message that their subcommittee would persist through those obstacles.

Council Chair Remarks

Madam Chair Crim wrapped up the subcommittee report-out by recognizing each committee's enthusiasm and valuable purpose and acknowledged the expertise of the 31 Council members. She extended the message that the Council will look forward to their

sustainable action plans, and subcommittee meeting notes will be available to all Council Members.

G. FUTURE MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

Madam Chair Crim announced that the future Governors Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council meetings would occur on August 13 and November 12. Additionally, the forthcoming meeting dates for the Subcommittees take place as follows: Data and Policy Subcommittee meeting on June 2 and July 9, Economic and Business Development Subcommittee meeting on May 21, and Community Engagement Subcommittee meeting to be determined. Madam Chair let the Council know that updates on the next meeting included presentations from herself from the Department of Safety and Professional Services, Secretary Kevin Carr from the Department of Corrections, Mr. Joaquin Altoro from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, and Secretary Amy Pechacek from the Department of Workforce Development. Madam Chair Crim reminded council members that she is available by email or phone. Ms. Lo Lee asked if future council meetings would be in an in-person or virtual format. Madam Chair Crim responded that the next meeting would be virtual, and the Council will continue to prioritize the safety of council members. Madam Chair Crim concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their participation, input, and enthusiasm in their work with the Council.

H. CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURN

Motion: Madam Chair Crim closed the meeting

The Council adjourned at 11:54 am.

Date Approved: _____

Signed: _____

Secretary Dawn Crim, Chair
Governor's Advisory
Council on Equity and Inclusion