



**ARIZONA
CENTER
FOR RURAL
LEADERSHIP**

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force Agenda
Monday 12/7/2020 12 – 1:30 p.m.
<https://arizona.zoom.us/j/89773837418>
Dial: +1-602-753-0140 Meeting ID: 897 7383 7418

1. Call to Order and Intros / Welcome – Seperich
2. Icebreaker Activity - Koenig
3. Task Force Focus and Tenure – All
4. Nomination / Election of Task Force Chair – Seperich / Koenig
5. Review & Discussion of preliminary documents – Chair / All
6. Discussion Future Meetings: Dates, Protocol, Forma – Chair / All
7. Next Meeting – Chair / Koenig

Adjourn

Members:

George Seperich, Board Chair, Retired ASU
Glenna McCollum, Class 9, Board Vice Chair, Curriculum, Nutrition Professional
Matt Eyrich, Class 7, Board Treasurer, Wells Fargo
Robert Shuler, California Class 13, Board member, Retired Government Relations/Lawyer
Julie Murphree, Class 7, Board member, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach
Doug Norton, Class 18, Board member, CAC Member, Farm Credit West
Brinton Colburn, Class 29 and CAC Class Rep, Foothills Bank
Ashley Schimke, Class 29 and CAC Class Rep, Department of Education

Staff:

Scott Koenig, Niki Key and Tracey Wasson

DIVERSITY DEFINITIONS:

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

1: the condition of having or being composed of differing elements : *VARIETY especially* : the inclusion of different types of people (such as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization

2: an instance of being composed of differing elements or qualities : an instance of being diverse

Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diversity>

The University of Arizona

Inclusive excellence (IE) is the engine that drives the value and practice of diversity and inclusiveness at the University of Arizona. At the center of IE is the recognition and acceptance of the talents, worldviews, perceptions, cultures and skills that diverse communities bring to the educational enterprise that can be harnessed to prepare students for leading, living and working in a diverse world. Native American, LGBTQ, Asian American, White, Latino, African American, women, veterans, people with disabilities, Jewish, Christian, International, Muslim, fraternities and sororities, athletes, alumni and many other communities of students, staff and faculty contribute positively to all dimensions of the university. Every individual and group at UA is a critical component of and contributor to diversity and inclusiveness. Making a difference in diversity at the University of Arizona is the essence of inclusive excellence.

Source: <https://diversity.arizona.edu/vision-our-campus>

Arizona State University

Diversity Philosophy

Arizona State University is deeply committed to positioning itself as one of the great new universities by seeking to build excellence, enhance access and have an impact on our community, state, nation and the world.

To do that requires our faculty and staff to reflect the intellectual, ethnic and cultural diversity of our nation and world so that our students learn from the broadest perspectives, and we engage in the advancement of knowledge with the most inclusive understanding possible of the issues we are addressing through our scholarly activities.

As one part of this commitment, we have developed a strategic plan for diversity at ASU. Developed in consultation with a wide variety of constituencies within the university and the deans, this plan, called "Building blocks for success through people, programming and policies," contains a statement that serves as an ongoing touchstone of our commitment, and several specific initiatives that will change and evolve over time, depending on the challenges and opportunities we have before us.

Diversity is defined in terms of representation and inclusion. Representation reflects the extent to which our students, staff, faculty and administrators proportionately reflect the regional and national populations served by our public institution. Inclusion encompasses empowerment and voice among all members of the university community in the areas of scholarship, teaching, learning and governance.

We recognize that race and gender historically have been markers of diversity in institutions of higher education; we further believe that diversity includes additional categories such as socioeconomic background, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, veteran status, nationality and intellectual perspective.

Source: <https://inclusion.asu.edu/diversity>

Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative

The wide range of national, ethnic, racial and other backgrounds of U.S. residents and immigrants as social groupings, co-existing in American culture. The term is often used to include aspects of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class and much more.

Source: A Community Builder's Tool Kit at <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/idr.pdf>

American Chamber of Commerce

Diversity and inclusion is an issue which has evolved significantly in the past few years, from an emphasis on racial diversity to an emphasis on diversity of ideas and experiences. Most major companies have diversity and inclusion programs, although these often vary in scope and can focus on different things. Some examples of diversity and inclusion initiatives which are fairly representative of the field include:

- Targeting new hiring to reflect the customer demographics (especially in international markets, this could include age, origin, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation)
- Promoting company resource groups based on age, origin, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation
- Encouraging employees to put forth their ideas for new products to be considered by upper management

Why does business engage this issue?

Desire to remain competitive. As companies become increasingly global, they are highly sensitive to the fact that diversity of thought and experience can help them to produce goods and services relevant for new demographics. Diversity and inclusion programs are also the outcome of stakeholder demand for non-homogenous workforces; companies are increasingly interested in ensuring that their workforce reflects their customer base. Diversity and inclusion programs can provide valuable resources to recruit and retain a strong employee base that will generate novel ideas.

Source: <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/issue/diversity-and-inclusion>

Ford Foundation

Our Values

Diversity, equity, and inclusion mean many things to many people. To us...

Diversity is the representation of all our varied identities and differences (race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, tribe, caste, socio-economic status, thinking and communication styles, etc.), collectively and as individuals. We seek to proactively engage, understand, and draw on a variety of perspectives. We believe that the solution to the

problems we hope to address through our grant making can be found by affirming our similarities, as well as by finding value in our differences.

Equity seeks to ensure fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and fairness in access to information and resources for all. We believe this is only possible in an environment built on respect and dignity.

Inclusion builds a culture of belonging by actively inviting the contribution and participation of all people. We believe every person's voice adds value, and we strive to create balance in the face of power differences. We believe that no one person can or should be called upon to represent an entire community.

Source: <https://www.fordfoundation.org/about/people/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>

From BoardSource.org

Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

As the decision-making body at the highest level of organizational leadership, boards play a critical role in creating an organization that prioritizes, supports, and invests in diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Whether in the hiring of the executive, the determination of strategy, the allocation of resources, or the goal of serving the community with authenticity, the board's leadership on diversity, inclusion, and equity matters.

As stewards of the public good, all social sector organizations, regardless of mission, are called on to embrace and celebrate our common humanity, and the inherent worth of all people. In doing so, we must also acknowledge that a climate of growing intolerance and inequity is a challenge to our democratic values and ideals. Divisions along economic, racial, religious, and political lines have created an increasingly polarized society in need of healing. And the complex issues and dynamics at the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality call for deeper thinking as we seek to understand each other.

We believe that social sector organizations are better able to do this work effectively and with authenticity when they are led by boards that are

- **diverse:** The individual leaders who compose nonprofit boards are a reflection of an organization's values and beliefs about who should be empowered and entrusted with its most important decisions. We believe that all social sector organizations can better achieve their missions by drawing on the skills, talents, and perspectives of a broader and more diverse range of leaders, and that the diversity of viewpoints that comes from different life experiences and cultural backgrounds strengthens board deliberations and decision-making.
- **inclusive:** The most effective boards work to build a culture of trust, candor, and respect — none of which is possible without a culture of inclusion. Boards that cultivate an inclusive culture ensure that all board members are encouraged to bring their perspectives, identity, and life experience to their board service. An inclusive board culture welcomes and celebrates differences and ensures that all board members are equally engaged and invested, sharing power and responsibility for the organization's mission and the board's work.
- **equity-focused:** Boards play a critical role in helping organizations understand the context in which they work and how best to prioritize resources and strategies based on that reality. An awareness of how systemic inequities have affected our society and those an organization serves enables boards to avoid blind spots that can lead to flawed strategies, and creates powerful opportunities to deepen the organization's impact, relevance, and advancement of the public good.

Read more about [BoardSource's Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, & Equity: For Ourselves and the Social Sector.](#)

BoardSource's Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity: For Ourselves and the Social Sector

BoardSource envisions a world where every social sector organization has the leadership it needs to fulfill its mission and advance the public good. While many factors contribute to strong and effective board and staff leadership, we believe that a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity is essential to making this vision a reality.

As stewards of the public good, all social sector organizations, regardless of mission, are called on to embrace and celebrate our common humanity, and the inherent worth of all people. In doing so, we must also acknowledge that a climate of growing intolerance and inequity is a challenge to our democratic values and ideals. Divisions along economic, racial, religious, and political lines have created an increasingly polarized society in need of healing. And the complex issues and dynamics at the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality call for deeper thinking as we seek to understand each other.

Nonprofit organizations play a unique role in bridging these divides and brokering solutions. As a sector, we have the power to bring together communities and speak out against and change longstanding systems and policies designed to benefit some groups while marginalizing, excluding, or harming others.

For some organizations, creating a more inclusive and equitable society is at the core of their missions and the reason they do their work. For others, a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity reflects the context in which their organizations are working — an acknowledgement that to fulfill their missions, they must understand and embrace the full diversity of their community and the societal realities that affect all of us.

We believe that social sector organizations are better able to do this work effectively and with authenticity when they are led by boards that are intentionally diverse, inclusive, and focused on equity:

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BoardSource is committed to supporting and encouraging boards as they work to strengthen their leadership on diversity, inclusion, and equity, both within their institutions and in the work their organizations do. We do this by:

- [providing tools and resources to support boards as they work to be more intentional about board recruitment that results in diverse board composition and to build a culture of inclusion within their boards](#)
- advocating for and supporting board-level thinking about how systemic inequities impact each organization's work, and how best to address that in a way that is consistent with their mission
- highlighting and celebrating boards that are working to address issues of racial and structural inequity within their organizations and through their organizations' work
- helping to challenge assumptions about what it takes to be a strong board leader, and who is well-positioned to provide leadership as a board member
- continuing to be intentional about our own board and staff diversity, our internal work to cultivate a culture of inclusion and accountability, and our actions to support equity

As leaders and the ultimate decision-making bodies for nonprofit organizations, boards of directors guide the way that each organization articulates and upholds its purpose, its values, and its responsibility to advance the public good. Through these focused efforts, BoardSource aspires to help unleash the full potential of the social sector to be a force for a more just society and world.

Recruiting for Board Diversity — Without Disrespecting People of Color

Posted by [Jim Taylor](#) on Aug 31, 2020 2:22:19 PM

As a Black man who has worked with or for nonprofits for most of my career, I've become very familiar with how nonprofit boards recruit for board diversity; by my count, I have been actively recruited by the boards of 13 organizations.

I can divide 11 of these 13 board recruitment experiences into two categories:

- Five boards that I agreed to join due to a mutual passion for the mission and a shared understanding of the alignment between what the board was seeking and what I could offer
- Six boards that I didn't join due to a poor fit or inopportune timing

But there's a third category of board recruitment experiences that has left the most indelible memories – memories that, although unpleasant, have provided some valuable “lessons learned” that I carry with me to this day. The third category consists of the two times I declined to join a board because I felt disrespected during the board's recruitment process – so disrespected that declining the invitation was an easy decision because I believed that the recruitment experience was a foreshadowing of the obstacles I would have faced as a board member.

As we at BoardSource continue to urge the nonprofit sector to commit to action on diversifying its boards (a cause that has become even more important during the current national conversation on racial inequity), I want to share my story of what went wrong in these two recruitment experiences and offer my perspective on what boards need to do differently to successfully recruit – and retain – people of color.

My Story

The two recruitment experiences that made me feel disrespected were almost identical; here's a summary of what happened:

A White board member requested a meeting with me to discuss his organization (a nonprofit that was unfamiliar to me) and to gauge my potential interest in joining the board. When we met he gave me more background on the organization, with a particular emphasis on the board's desire to become more diverse. After listening to the board member's “pitch”, I asked him to share the ways he thought I could add value to the board; I wanted to know what prompted him to reach out to *me*, specifically. The board member seemed surprised and unprepared to answer the question, and just re-stated his board's focus on becoming more diverse. His visible discomfort in directly answering my question revealed the real answer to me: I was being recruited because -- and seemingly *only* because -- I was Black and my board membership would support the organization's board diversity goals. The board member didn't appear to know much about my work or my skills and experiences (or else he considered them to be far less important than my race, from the board's perspective), so based on his response I believed that I was being “tokenized” – being recruited by a board not for my capability (in combination with my race), but so that the board could use my membership to portray to the public a misleading impression of its commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity.

The board member's approach to recruiting me was indicative of a board that has adopted (whether due to lack of awareness or a conscious decision) a “check the box” mentality rather than a thoughtful, strategic, respectful approach to becoming more diverse. It was as though they

understood that they *should* be diverse, but had no idea why that mattered or how it connected to a broader recruitment strategy focused on bringing in the expertise, perspectives, and reputational capital needed to lead and govern effectively. At the time that these conversations took place, I brought a wide range of skill sets and expertise – I was an expert in affordable housing policy and financing, I had significant leadership experience in both non-profit and for-profit contexts, I had been a grantmaker and understood fundraising, and I had a network of influence in my community. I am also Black, and bring the lived experience of being Black in America that could have helped both of these organizations bring new insight to their thinking about diversity, inclusion, and equity. But they didn't see any of these things. Or, if they did, they didn't know how to communicate that to me.

Based on these experiences, I now ask the “how can I add value to this board and organization” question as an initial litmus test whenever I meet with a board member to discuss potentially joining a board; if the board member is unable to answer the question to my satisfaction, we may continue the dialogue but the real conversation, from my perspective, is effectively over. To be clear, I think this question of “how can I add value” is essential for every potential board candidate to ask, and to which every recruiting organization should have a thoughtful response. But as a person of color, the stakes are even higher. That's because there is a fundamental, “uncomfortable” truth related to racial inequity in our country that is common knowledge to people of color, but to others may come as a revelation: in our society, people of color live under a constant “cloud of suspicion” that when we achieve something significant, it's because we've been given something that we haven't fully earned, such as obtaining desirable jobs that White people imply (or sometimes explicitly state) that we didn't deserve, or graduating from top schools that White people are often surprised to learn we attended (these are not hypothetical scenarios; they are examples from my own experiences and those of many people of color that I know). There is a perception among many in our society that when a person of color is successful, someone must have “lowered the bar” in order for the person of color to have cleared it. So when a White board member recruits me and effectively diminishes the totality of my assets and qualifications to one aspect of my identity – my race – he may expect me to be pleased by the invitation, but from my perspective it is a “flashing red light” indicating that although the board is inviting me to be “included” in an official sense, I am still being seen as “less than”. That's why – for me – it's not just clunky or awkward when someone cannot provide a thoughtful response to “how can I add value to this board and organization”; it's offensive.

A Better Way

I want to be very clear on this point: the intent of the story I've shared here is not to discourage boards from recruiting for racial diversity. I believe that boards can and *should* prioritize recruiting for racial diversity, but race should not be the *only* lens that boards apply to the search. Boards that focus on race as the sole qualification for board membership are employing an overly simplistic approach that is disrespectful to the people of color who are being recruited. Boards should be applying *multiple* lenses as they consider their needs; racial identity should be part of that consideration – but not *all* of it. 

There's a better way for predominantly White boards to plan and execute the process of recruiting people of color to join their boards – a way that honors the vital importance of the task to the board's continued effectiveness and respects the full value of the skills and attributes people of color can bring to boards. Here are some questions predominantly White boards should be asking themselves to assess and guide their approach to recruiting for board diversity: 

Reflecting on the Importance of Diversity to Your Organization's Work

- Have we identified our “blind spots” as a board? Have we compared the current composition of our board in terms of the skills, expertise, cultural/ethnic demographics, and lived experiences to the optimal composition we would like to achieve so that we include a wider range of perspectives? Does our board’s composition signal a sincere commitment to understanding and sharing power with the communities we seek to serve? What do we understand about why it matters that we become more diverse? How will it impact the way that we lead our organization?

Expanding and Diversifying Your Network of Potential Board Candidates

- Are we cultivating and recruiting candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences? Are we expanding the board candidate search beyond our customary board recruitment networks (i.e., expanding our networks by posting board roles on diversity-focused job websites such as blackcareernetwork.com, or reaching out to local chapters of ethnic professional or civic associations such as [The Hispanic National Bar Association](#) or [The National Black Chamber of Commerce](#))? When we communicate with a board candidate who is a person of color, are we clearly articulating the organization’s mission and specifically naming the various ways that the candidate would add value and help the board fulfill its mission?

Building an Inclusive & Welcoming Board Culture

- Are we positioning new board members to have a positive, long-term experience with the board; are we welcoming new members to the board and meaningfully engaging them in the work through participation on committees and/or task forces? Are we assigning a mentor or “buddy” for them to contact with questions and/or ideas that they may initially feel more comfortable sharing one-on-one than in the context of the full board?
- Are we examining our long-standing practices regarding board social gatherings to make sure that they are inclusive to board members of color? If they are not inclusive, are we willing to make the necessary changes to make them welcoming to all board members?
- Are we being intentional about inviting new board members of color to share their perspectives and opinions – opening the door to different ideas and conversations in the boardroom?
- Are we acknowledging the value of the perspectives of new board members of color by leveraging their input to develop enhanced strategies and action plans that advance our mission by more directly addressing the needs of those we serve?
- Are we dedicating time for reflection on how our strategies and action plans have been impacted by the addition of more diverse voices and viewpoints? Are we reflecting on how we as a board have, perhaps, been fundamentally changed – changed in ways that will help us better identify the work that needs to be done and the most impactful approaches to doing it as we go forward?

Final Thoughts

Building a diverse and inclusive board is critically important. And efforts to do so should generally be applauded. But the reality is that if a board adopts an insensitive or ill-informed approach to diversifying its membership, there is damage that can be done – both in the recruitment process and if a person of color actually commits to joining the board. Being thoughtful and intentional about why diversity matters to your board and organization, and how the board is committed to cultivating a truly inclusive board culture – a board culture in which every board member’s perspective is welcomed, respected, and valued – is the only way to effectively diversify the board. Any board that

fails to apply a more intentional, considerate approach in its outreach to people of color will struggle – deservedly – to recruit and retain people of color as board members.

Additional Resources & Tools for Boards:

- [Taking Action on Board Diversity: Five Questions to Get You Started](#) (BoardSource)
- [AWAKE to WOKE to WORK: Building a Race Equity Culture](#) (Equity in the Center)

More from BoardSource:

- [The Value of Lived Experience](#) (August 2020)
 - [A Message to My Fellow White Board Chairs](#) (July 2020)
 - [A Moment to Change](#) (June 2020)
 - [Now That We Know Better](#) (June 2020)
 - [Reflections on Trust and Its Relationship to Racial Inequity on Nonprofit Boards](#) (May 2020)
 - [BoardSource's Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity: For Ourselves and the Social Sector](#) (March 2017)
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Topics: [Board Diversity & Inclusivity](#), [Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity](#)

TAKING ACTION ON BOARD DIVERSITY

FIVE QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED

At the most fundamental level, who serves on a board impacts how it functions and the decisions it makes. While board composition is not one-size-fits all, a board that is homogeneous in any way risks having blind spots that negatively impact its ability to make the best decisions and plans for the organization. The blind spots created by a lack of racial and ethnic diversity are particularly concerning, as they may result in strategies and plans that ineffectively address societal challenges and inequities, or even reinforce them.

That's why BoardSource is so troubled by the findings from *Leading with Intent: 2017 National Index of Nonprofit Board Practices*, which revealed the following about the diversity of today's nonprofit boards:

- **The levels of board diversity have largely remained unchanged since 1994.**
 - In 2017, 90% of chief executives and 84% of board members report as Caucasian.
 - In 2017, 27% of boards identify as all white. This compares to 25% in 2015.
 - Since BoardSource began tracking diversity data through this study in 1994, people of color and ethnic minorities have never represented more than 18% of board membership.
- **Chief executives consider board diversity important to their organization's work.**

77% to 89% report it important to

 - understanding external context from a broader perspective
 - developing creative new solutions to problems
 - understanding the organization's client populations
 - enhancing the organization's public standing
 - planning effectively
- **Chief executives and board chairs are dissatisfied with the level of racial and ethnic diversity on their boards.**
 - 65% of chief executives report they are somewhat or extremely dissatisfied with their board's racial and ethnic diversity.
 - 41 percent of board chairs express the same levels of dissatisfaction.

Given these findings, one would expect that boards would be hyper-focused on diversity when recruiting new board members. Unfortunately, *Leading with Intent* documents the opposite.

- Only one quarter of boards are placing a high priority on demographics in board recruitment.
- Changing board recruitment practices does not rank as a top three priority for most boards.
- Nearly one in five of all chief executives report that they are *both*:
 - dissatisfied with their board's racial or ethnic diversity; *and*
 - not prioritizing demographics in their board recruitment practices.

Don't be one of those boards. Take the time to articulate your values regarding the importance of diversity, and then put them into practice throughout your organization and your board.

Here are five questions to get you started:

- 1 Is our organization's reputation being negatively (or positively) impacted by our board's current composition vis-à-vis diversity?
- 2 If someone were to make assumptions about our organizational values based on our board composition, what would they be likely to think?
- 3 How well are we cultivating a deeper understanding of the community or communities that we serve and bringing their perspectives, needs, feedback, and priorities into our strategic boardroom discussions?
- 4 Are we ever at risk of making decisions without fully understanding how these decisions may affect those we serve?
- 5 If we were to make a deeper commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity, what would that mean for our mission, our work, and the people we serve?

The next step: Reboot your board recruitment practices

Strategic board composition does not happen on its own. Boards must define what the ideal board composition looks like — not just in terms of diversity, but also in expertise, experience, and networks — and then be vigilant about finding it through focused and disciplined board recruitment.

1. **Define your needs:** Some organizations find the use of a board matrix to be helpful as a way to document leadership needs and compare those needs to the board's current composition. But a matrix is not a checklist, and boards should be careful not to reduce their board recruitment strategy to a "shopping list" for board candidates based on any one characteristic. Instead, the matrix should be a guide to helping boards identify the ideal combination of skills, networks, experiences, and background that will help move the organization forward, and which can be clearly articulated to potential candidates.
2. **Find the candidates:** If your board is lacking the diversity you seek, you may find that relying on the personal networks of current board members to identify new board candidates will only reinforce that challenge. If that's the reality that you face, you will need to go beyond those networks and get serious about other ways of identifying potential board candidates. That could include deep networking through community organizations, your organization's volunteer network, or leaders in your current or past client community. It might also include formalized search strategies such as posting your board position on a nonprofit board job board such as LinkedIn or tapping a board search firm. Whatever your candidate identification methods are, it requires discipline and diligence to find the right candidates, and may require that you take more time than you have in the past. Strategic board recruitment isn't about speed and ease — it's about taking the time to get it right.

Resources

- For more on the board's leadership role on issues related to diversity, inclusion, and equity, visit boardsource.org/initiatives/diversity-equity-inclusion.
- For more information about board recruitment, visit boardsource.org/fundamental-topics-of-nonprofit-board-service/composition-recruitment/.
- Visit leadingwithintent.org for more on *Leading with Intent: 2017 National Index of Nonprofit Board Practices*.