



OFFICE OF EQUITY TASK FORCE

Draft Meeting Minutes – January 24, 2020

Hotel RL, Fir Room
2300 Evergreen Park Drive SW
Olympia, WA 98502

Task Force members present:

Benjamin Danielson (Co-Chair)
RaShelle Davis
Michelle Gonzalez
Elizabeth Gordon
Toshiko Hasegawa
Karen A. Johnson

Laura Lindstrand (for Sharon Ortiz)
Ramona Nabors (for RaShelle Davis)
Jan Olmstead (Co-Chair)
Maria Siguenza
Allison Spector

Task Force members absent:

Craig Bill
Manka Dhingra
Jeremie Dufault
Melanie Morgan
Ed Prince
Lisa van der Lugt

Task Force staff present:

LinhPhung Huynh, Project Manager
Hannah Fernald, Administrative
Coordinator

Esmael Lopez, Community
Engagement Coordinator

Guests and other participants:

Christy Curwick-Hoff, Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities
Melanie Hisaw, State Board of Health
Kitara Johnson, Minority and Justice Commission/Excelsior
David Ortiz, Communities of Color Coalition (C3)
Manny Santiago, LGBTQ Commission
Omar Santana, LGBTQ Commission
Christine Stalie, Results Washington

Benjamin Danielson, Task Force Co-chair, called the public meeting to order at 9:16 a.m. and read from a prepared statement. Jan Olmstead, Task Force Co-chair, welcomed the group and acknowledged the tribal lands we are on. Co-chair Danielson said we are entering the next phase of our work, which is about delineation, description, and refinement of the tools the future Office of Equity can use.

Allison Spector, Task Force Member, introduced Manny Santiago and Omar Santana, staff of the LGBTQ Commission. Mr. Santiago said it is important to be part of this conversation,

represent the community, and be a part of the effort to create a society that takes intersectionality into account.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Co-chair Danielson proposed that the Governor's Budget Update precede agenda item #3 (Reflections, Announcements & Review of Task Force Bylaws).

Motion: The Task Force approves the January 24, 2020 agenda as amended.

Motion/Second: Gordon/Spector. Approved unanimously.

2. ADOPTION OF DECEMBER 16, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

Motion: The Task Force adopts the December 16, 2019 meeting minutes.

Motion/Second: Gordon/Spector. Approved unanimously.

5. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE & GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

[This agenda item was moved to an earlier time. See item #1 – Approval of Agenda.]

RaShelle Davis, Task Force Member, and Ramona Nabors, Office of Financial Management, gave a summary of proposed investments related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the Governor's Budget. Ms. Nabors said the proposed budget funds the Office of Equity at just under \$1 million. Co-chair Danielson asked how efforts related to language access will fit into this proposed investment.

Task Force members discussed the proposed funding for educator training in DEI. Elizabeth Gordon, Task Force Member, said it is critical to have standards around operationalizing the concepts of DEI or else training will become another checkbox to complete. Kitara Johnson, Minority and Justice Commission/Excelsior, said there needs to be accountability around the training curriculum since training is often subject to interpretation. Accountability would include consideration of who is providing the training, who is approving the curriculum, and who is tracking participation and outcomes.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

[To stay on time for the scheduled public comment period, this agenda item preceded item #3 – Reflections, Announcements & Review of Task Force Bylaws.]

Co-chair Olmstead read from a prepared statement (on file).

David Ortiz, Communities of Color Coalition (C3), invited the Task Force to the 2020 Race Conference on April 18 at Mariners High School in Mukilteo. He said this annual event is free and draws around 500 to 600 attendees. He offered this event as an opportunity for the Task Force to gather information on efforts in the North Sound and said it could help with the Task Force's work to recommend practices in meaningful community engagement. Mr. Ortiz said this year's conference theme is the climate crisis and its impact on communities of color.

The Task Force reviewed written comments submitted by Linda, WA Asians for Equality (on file).

3. REFLECTIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS & REVIEW OF TASK FORCE BYLAWS

LinhPhung Huynh, Task Force Project Manager, said the 2020 public meeting schedule (on file) was filed with the Code Reviser's Office in December.

Ms. Huynh walked members through the Task Force bylaws that were adopted on August 19, 2019 (on file). Co-chair Danielson asked for members' thoughts on: the bylaws, including voting procedures; the Task Force's practice of showing thumbs up/sideways/down (straw poll) to get a sense of where members are on a topic; and whether members want to include a record of those present/absent for monumental votes.

Michelle Gonzalez, Task Force Member, said she is comfortable with the voting process as it is. She said passing motions through majority vote is the right path forward. Maria Siguenza, Task Force Member, said she recognizes that consensus is important, but also does not want the group to get stuck by seeking consensus. Member Gordon said consensus was particularly important for topics like the recommended vision and mission statements for the Office of Equity. Karen A. Johnson, Task Force Member, said it is important to be adaptable and learn how to signal to each other. She said it would be helpful for the group to express when it wants consensus on a topic and when a majority vote is enough.

Co-chair Olmstead said we have different ways of processing, and some need more time to articulate their thoughts and rationales. She said that although we do not have the luxury of time, it could be helpful (as a general practice) to give time between meetings for members to make a decision and then vote on the topic at a subsequent meeting.

Members discussed whether there is a need to amend the bylaws to require that meeting minutes include a record of members present for all/certain votes. Co-chair Danielson proposed a motion to continue the discussion.

Motion/Second: Spector/Siguenza. Fails unanimously.

Laura Lindstrand, Task Force Member (for Sharon Ortiz), said she believes the bylaws do not need to be amended because they already allow for a roll call. Ms. Huynh said the question before Task Force members is whether recording members present/absent for all or certain votes should be the default practice. Co-chair Danielson clarified that the current bylaws allow for a roll call when requested, but staff will not be recording members present/absent for a vote unless there is this request. Member Siguenza asked that the meeting minutes include the time of a vote when a roll call is requested. Ms. Huynh agreed to implement this practice without a change to the bylaws.

The Task Force took a break at 10:47 a.m. and reconvened at approximately 11:00 a.m.

4. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE & GOVERNOR'S BUDGET [Continued]

Ms. Huynh gave an update on Task Force business. She said she submitted the Task Force's preliminary report to the Governor's Office and it is in the formal review process. She said she worked with staff from the WA State Coalition for Language Access to flesh out content related to language assistance services before submitting the report.

Ms. Huynh said she gave a presentation to the State Board of Health on the Task Force's work so far, and she shared feedback from Board members. She said the SBOH supports the inclusion of \$1 million in the supplemental budget to create a WA State Office of Equity. Member Gonzalez asked how the Board may have interpreted the terms 'diversity,' 'equity,' and 'inclusion' during this presentation. Ms. Huynh said she shared the Task Force's recommended definition of 'equity.' She confirmed that the Task Force has not adopted definitions for 'diversity' and 'inclusion' and has committed to creating/endorsing a glossary in 2020.

Ms. Huynh continued with a legislative update. She said E2SHB 1783 passed out of the House and is on its way to the Senate. She referred members to printed materials that include: a summary of the effects of E2SHB 1783, an analysis of how the legislation aligns and differs with Task Force recommendations, and proposed amendments that were debated on the House floor (1 approved, 6 failed).

Members discussed Amendment 1010, which was approved and incorporated in E2SHB 1783. Members recognized the importance of protecting privacy and handling personally identifiable data in a responsible manner. Member Siguenza said there was a recent Executive Order that seeks to protect individuals' privacy by limiting the kinds of data agencies can collect and share. Co-chair Danielson said the language in the amendment seems to prohibit the Office of Equity from collecting any information beyond race and ethnicity, which would prevent the Office from fulfilling its full scope. Member Johnson said it is important to fully understand: (1) How is 'personally identifiable information' defined in this context?; and (2) What is the definition of 'respondents' in this context? Christine Stalie, Results Washington, said we may need additional guidance to answer these questions. Ms. Huynh suggested drafting language for a Task Force statement during lunch and revisiting this topic afterward.

The Task Force took a break for lunch at approximately 11:25 a.m. and reconvened at approximately 12:15 p.m.

Members discussed their desire to clarify the intent and impact of Amendment 1010. They reviewed draft language for a Task Force statement.

Motion: The Task Force adopts the draft statement in concept and gives authority to staff and the Chairs to finalize and incorporate comments from this discussion. The Task Force directs staff to share the draft language with members and provide the opportunity for members to submit suggested revisions. The Task Force authorizes staff and the Chairs to first share this statement with Representative Mia Gregerson, the prime sponsor of E2SHB 1783, and then with the Senate policy committee that hears the legislation.

Motion/Second: Gordon/Gonzalez. Approved unanimously.

5. 2020 WORK PLAN

Ms. Huynh gave a presentation (on file) to review the project timeline and the Task Force's responsibilities as outlined in the authorizing proviso (ESHB 1109, section 221, subsection 7). She said creating a work plan helps organize the Task Force's work and convey purpose and scope when we engage communities, agencies, and tribal partners

in this work. She said staff will use this work plan to identify strategies and plan meetings through June.

Task Force members split into three groups. Each group discussed some of the details and questions the Task Force should resolve for each recommendation area in order to get to a comprehensive proposal by June. The recommendation areas included: government-to-government relations; a plan to engage executive-level management; community engagement and outreach; disaggregated data and decolonizing data; the public dashboard and reporting; and accountability and enforcement mechanisms. To conclude the session, each group shared out its work.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Due to time, the Task Force did not cover this agenda item.

7. PANEL DISCUSSION: STATE OMBUDS MODELS

Co-chair Olmstead welcomed the presenters and said the Task Force would like to hear about their work, so members can identify guiding principles.

Joanna Carns, Office of the Corrections Ombuds, said the OCO has authority solely around the Department of Corrections and can look at any issue related to the wellness of incarcerated individuals. However, the OCO does not deal with complaints from DOC staff and cannot look into issues related to Human Resources. Complainants include incarcerated individuals, families, and advocate organizations. The OCO uses a two-tiered approach that includes: (1) intake and early resolution; and (2) opening an investigation. Ms. Carns said the OCO also reviews cases to identify trends and systemic issues. She said the OCO has an annual budget of \$1.2 million and 10 to 12 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff positions. She said the Office of Equity will likely need more than two staff positions to do similar work, and it is important to choose the right database to collect complaints so the Office's work is transparent to the public.

Patrick Dowd, Office of the Family and Children's Ombuds, said the OFCO responds to complaints and has oversight of the child welfare system (child welfare, early learning, juvenile justice, juvenile rehabilitation). The OFCO acts as a neutral, independent entity that reviews the conduct of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). He said the OFCO reviews a case to make sure it is within the OFCO's scope before determining whether: (1) the alleged act occurred; and (2) DCYF's conduct was consistent with state law and policy. Mr. Dowd said the OFCO does not use a two-tier track and, instead, treats all cases like an investigation. He said the OFCO is strategic in writing its adverse findings, and these findings serve as an opportunity for the DCYF to improve the statewide system. He said the OFCO also has an important role in explaining the child welfare system to the public, and it works with stakeholders to identify systemic barriers and issues.

Carrie Basas, Office of Education Ombuds, said the OEO focuses on K-12 issues and works to reduce opportunity gaps and promote educational equity. The OEO is independent as it sits under the Governor's Office and not within the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). She said much of the OEO's work is in closing the information asymmetry that exists, especially for groups that are historically and currently marginalized. While the OEO does not have authority to make or enforce

decisions, its staff help families navigate systems and their main role is to bring people together to solve problems. Ms. Basas said the OEO has an extensive database and staff disaggregate data into more than 90 subcategories, allowing the OEO to use data to inform its outreach efforts and reports.

Task Force members engaged the presenters in a discussion. Some of the questions included:

- Your offices are able to identify issues through public input and you work with others to craft recommendations on systemic issues. How do you capture this information and include it in reports?
- How do you get the word out about your office's mission? How do people learn about how to file a complaint and how they can reach out on issues?
- How could the Office of Equity add value to you and your work? Alignment, coordination, and collaboration are critical to us.
- How do you interact with tribes?

The Task Force took a break at approximately 3:40 p.m. and reconvened at approximately 4:00 p.m.

8. DEBRIEF

Task Force members discussed the idea of an ombuds model and how it would apply to the Office of Equity. Allison Spector, Task Force Member, said it is important to consider how to make a model as effective as possible with the few resources the Office of Equity may be working with.

Members discussed how the work of the Office of Equity's ombuds would be distinct and non-duplicative. Manny Santiago, LGBTQ Commission, said the role of the ombuds is crucial. In order to be effective, the Office of Equity would need to be clear about whom the ombuds are serving.

Toshiko Hasegawa, Task Force Member, said she appreciates this conversation about the roles and functions of the Office of Equity. She asked that time be reserved on the next agenda to continue the conversation. Member Siquenza said she hopes the future Office of Equity can use the Task Force's final proposal to inform its work, so she wants the Task Force to delineate the Office of Equity's scope.

9. COMMENTS, UPDATES & REFLECTIONS

Co-chairs Danielson and Olmstead asked Task Force members for their thoughts on what to include on the next meeting agenda. Member Hasegawa said the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA) is a small agency that advises other agencies and has tremendous connections with the community. She said she will come to the next meeting prepared to talk about the Office of Equity's role relative to CAPAA, and she will think about what CAPAA would want to recommend for the Office. Member Gordon said she hopes the Task Force can get more clarity on the intention of the Office of Equity's work. Member Lindstrand said a two-tiered approach could be helpful, meaning what should the Office of Equity look like when it is first created and what is the vision for the second phase?

Member Johnson said she hopes the Task Force can take the time to pause and look back at what we've accomplished in order to move forward. She said she will re-read the Task Force's preliminary report to prepare herself for that conversation.

Co-chair Danielson said, "There is something rooted in equity, in its strongest form, when we are diligent in the work and in our willingness to change and adapt." He said it is important to avoid unintended consequences while also being bold. He said he appreciates the honest conversation and hearing that members want to show up next time and talk about solutions. Co-chair Olmstead shared her appreciation and said she is hopeful we can take time to step back, so we can all move forward collectively.

ADJOURNMENT

Jan Olmstead, Task Force Co-chair, adjourned the meeting at 4:59 p.m.

OFFICE OF EQUITY TASK FORCE

Jan Olmstead, Task Force Co-chair
Benjamin Danielson, Task Force Co-chair

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