

**Subject:** [Cfaes-all] Follow-Up: Ohio State Deans Affirm Commitment  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 11:58:54 AM Eastern Daylight Time  
**From:** Cfaes-vpac on behalf of CFAES Office of the Vice President and Dean via Cfaes-vpac  
**To:** CFAES Office of the Vice President and Dean via Cfaes-all, uagr@lists.osu.edu, uati@lists.osu.edu, faes-grd@lists.osu.edu, uenr@lists.osu.edu  
**Attachments:** image001.png, image002.png, ATT00001.txt

CFAES Community,

As a follow up to [the statement shared by the deans of the university](#), I want to reiterate our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion within CFAES. As stated in the collective message we are committed to self-reflection and ensuring that all voices are welcomed and heard.

Our Principles of Community established in 2020 have set the stage for our commitment to DEI. We are building forward momentum around diversity, equity, and inclusion in our college to ensure that all of our faculty, staff, and students feel safe and supported. A new initiative that launched this May is the Culturally Responsive Mentoring program that is part of [MENTOR](#) (Multi-institutional mEntoring Network for Transforming Organizational CultuRe). Twelve faculty and twelve graduate students are engaging in a 6-month program that will bring faculty and students together to engage in a learning community. Students will interact with faculty with a goal of developing a sense of belonging in the academy as well as building essential skills for a career in academia. The overarching goal is to provide this experience in a culturally responsive manner that benefits the students and the faculty members.

Additionally, several initiatives that we will be working on stem from the recommendations provided by the CFAES DEI Action Council. First, in cooperation with the Faculty Advisory Council and Staff Advisory Council, we will launch a faculty and staff climate survey in the fall followed by a survey of students during spring semester with our student councils. We will also host focus groups for both surveys. Data gathered from these surveys will be used to generate DEI initiatives for CFAES.

Second, per requests from undergraduate and graduate students we will be implementing DEI Audits of all academic departments and support units. This will allow us to establish baseline data and identify best practices around recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority (URM) faculty, staff, and students. We are actively engaged in reviewing all Appointment Promotion and Tenure (APT) and Patterns of Administration (POA) documents of each academic unit to provide recommendations that ensure that the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion is part of our governing structure. We are also implementing a special professional development fund for faculty and staff to apply for funds to engage in DEI development opportunities as well as launching a CFAES Diversity Speakers Series.

In addition to these initiatives, the Ohio State University Extension Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce, which launched in February of 2020, has provided recommendations to Extension Leadership. Some of those recommendations address recruitment and retention of faculty and staff, expanding partnerships with diverse community organizations and assisting counties with messaging related to DEI and related issues. The Extension DEI Taskforce was also the catalyst for the now collegewide DEI Book Club which has 110 CFAES faculty and staff participants and has been replicated in some counties.

We will continue to develop strategies to attract a diverse workforce as well as a diverse student body at the graduate and undergraduate level. You should always feel free to reach out to me, any member of our leadership team, as well as Senior Associate Dean Tracy Kitchel, or Assistant Dean and Director, Dr. Kathy Lechman with questions, suggestions, and concerns.

Sincerely,

Dean Cathann Kress

**Dean Cathann A. Kress, Ph.D.**

Vice President for Agricultural Administration & Dean

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