**Marlena Daher-Rahman Update**

**4/14/22 DEI Committee Meeting**

**INTRODUCTION**

Linda did ask me to give an update on the status of the DEI Committee in terms of what we have previously discussed and how we plan to proceed.

We looked at best practices, other DEI models, and today, I want to relay some of the collective findings of the DEI committee.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Sometimes we use acronyms because they are easier for us to articulate. I don’t want the DEI acronym used to avoid saying things that are uncomfortable.

So I want to spell it out.

It means that:

* students, faculty and staff are not as diverse as our community members
* students, faculty and staff may feel uncomfortable in the classroom and workplace
* spaces are not accessible to everyone.
* we are not doing enough to develop an organizational culture to make people feel welcome.

In addressing these issues we should realize that there is a restorative justice side to a DEI initiative.

**REVIEW**

* In review, this committee has met to conceptualize the mission of the DEI Committee
* This committee has examined the concepts of DEI, and the need for the college to embrace DEI principles,
* The DEI committee will make recommendations to the college, but it is not for the committee to perform the duties and responsibilities of those who work for the college

**SET PLATFORM FOR MOVING FORWARD**

I want to reiterate what I said at my very first DEI Committee meeting.

Former NYS Assemblymember, Arthur Eves, who was the architect of the EOP/EOC/HEOP Opportunity Programs, said that there is no such thing as an opportunity without access.

With that in mind, our starting place must be a vision of access, and from there we must create the conditions that can ensure it.

We should apply a standard of access to all DEI goals.

* It will require open and uncomfortable dialogue
* It will require us to assess our current efforts in order to offer recommendations for improvement and to establish a baseline for further progress.
* We should also apply a standard that is in the best interest of the student

We have reviewed specific documents addressing the need for DEI.

* The Chancellor’s 25 point DEI Plan
* While the college has published a DEI Strategic Plan, it is a living instrument and needs to be updated
* There is also a campus climate survey that is a few years old that should be updated or reviewed
* In looking at DEI Models from other colleges, there are four organizational areas, or domains, that can initiate and sustain a sound DEI infrastructure.
* Organizational Culture
* Recruitment
* Retention
* and Data
* Create policies and procedures that can establish accountability within these domains.
* Focus on ways in which the college can work, with the support of administration, to create a diverse and inclusive community, and to make ESF a better more equitable place to work and learn.
* Please think of the DEI Committee as a campaign committee and we are your boots on the ground.