

## OAIC celebrates its first birthday!

By Dominic Ledesma

OAIC's primary charge is to lead organizational strategies that improve Extension's institutional commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and equity in our programming. Our charge is rooted in the need to prepare a 21st century workforce to address 21st century issues in a 21st century society. So, what has the OAIC been working on in the past year to bring a more strategic and coordinated approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion issues in Extension? Here are a few highlights that we feel are worth celebrating with a slice of cake and a scoop of ice cream.

1. **Expanded OAIC resources** - We have been working behind the scenes to develop protocols and processes that maximize our staff's time, capacity, and content expertise. This includes the development of website that is centered on building staff capacity. Worth noting is our creation of two libraries that expanded resources, one that compiles self-directed learning opportunities around anti-racism and anti-bigotry and another one comprised of OAIC guidance documents that support the development of inclusive programming.
2. **Frontline support for program access, equity, and inclusion** – OAIC's support request intake process is an educator-centered effort to promote equitable and inclusive programming statewide, and to do so in a manner that is tailored to the specific context of their locality, target audiences, and programs. A team-based approach to supporting colleagues helps us consolidate and align our expertise in a streamlined manner.
3. **Revamping our civil rights training platform** – We are working to update our civil rights compliance training materials and transition them to Canvas. This platform will provide an introduction to new colleagues on our non-discrimination responsibilities and also serve as a refresher for existing colleagues as they prepare for Area-based civil rights reviews.
4. **New Colleague Onboarding** – OAIC plays a central role helping onboard new staff, introducing them to our office's support services for language access accommodations and other areas of support we offer. During NCO, we also provide new colleagues with an introduction to Extension's non-discrimination policy and responsibilities around civil rights laws.
5. **Program Manager Collaborative** – OAIC collaborates with Institute Directors and evaluators to provide training sessions and coaching opportunities for Program Managers. The purpose is to help colleagues develop a Program Plan of Work that takes a more outcome-driven, equity-centered approach to identifying statewide priorities for programming.
6. **Institute-driven equity initiatives** – In the past few months, some Institutes have rededicated their commitment to raising critical awareness around equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. Some Institutes have established specific equity committees while others have been planning in-service trainings that are tailored to their community of employees. OAIC staff is working closely with Institute leadership to coach and guide their efforts in positive, and in some cases new, directions.
7. **Call to Action** – In August 2020, OAIC launched a Call to Action, which serves as Extension's overarching framework for advancing institutional goals around equity,

diversity, and inclusivity. Our leadership is guiding the work of 9 specific initiatives that are driven by organizational leads and supported by work groups, steering committees, and task forces. The Call to Action represents an unprecedented effort in Extension and aims to galvanize a broader institutional will to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion goals.

Our unit's work is focused on ensuring that Extension, as both a workplace and as a space for publicly available educational programming, is safe, inclusive, and equitable for all colleagues and learner-participants.

It has been an exciting challenge to develop a new unit of dedicated and talented colleagues; above all, one that is truly responsive and accountable to colleagues to providing services, support, and professional learning opportunities that allow statewide colleagues to better serve our publics. It has been a busy first year but we are excited to continue our work on multiple fronts across Extension. Happy birthday OAIC!