

Minutes from LGBTQIA+ Faculty and Staff Alliance on Wednesday, September 22, 2021

Time: 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. via Zoom

- **Introductions and Welcome**

- Co-leads – Lara Sullivan and Jay Marano - and founding members introduced themselves.

- **Guest speakers**

- Office of Human Resources
 - **Speakers:** Jennifer Pablonis, Staff Ombudsperson
 - Shared information about mission, ground rules, etc.
 - See PowerPoint attached for further information.
- Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion
 - **Speakers:** M. Shernell Smith, Executive Director; Rowshan Lang, Special Projects Manager; and Shanai Sloan, Coordinator for Student Engagement and Support.
 - Introduced what their office does and ground rules for engagement
 - See PowerPoint attached for further information.
 - In addition to the PowerPoint, members shared the following additions to the ground rules:
 - Keep in mind that people are experts in their own experiences.
 - Identities are fluid, and experience changes.
 - Individuals may be out in some spaces and not others, and identities change and fluctuate with that.
 - Language is also non-verbal.
 - Reminder: The Center is open 7 days a week for connectedness. If you are on campus and want to drop by, please do so. M-TH (8:30a-10p) F (8:30a-7 pm) Sat (12n-6p) and Sun (12n-9p).

- **Discussion**

- The following discussion topics were introduced for a breakout room activity:
 - Participants were asked to introduce themselves, and if they participated in the background activity, explain what photo they selected and why?
 - They were also asked to each take turns answering the following questions:
 - What is important to you in participating in such a group?
 - What activity, events, or programming would you suggest?
 - What are your expectations for the group?
- Once individuals returned from the breakout rooms, the following information related to the discussion questions was shared:
 - Connections and get-togethers ranging from casual to more structured.
 - Gatherings, lunch or coffee together, going for a walk/ jog sometimes.
 - Social and community building
 - Volunteering in the community
 - Connecting with LGBTQIA+ student groups as well
 - Mentorship with the student groups
 - Training for faculty and staff relating to LGBTQIA+ issues and experiences
 - Emphasis on microaggressions
 - Connecting with like-minded LGBTQ+ staff/ faculty affinity groups at Pitt or other nearby universities
 - Develop a list of regional/community resources for LGBTIA+ to connect with as well.
 - Connecting this community with the library (both in terms of services and as a place)

- **Next Steps**

- Jay reviewed some future agenda items including the following:
 - Brainstorm potential names for our group

- Further develop mission statement
- Discuss and plan for activities
- Working with other ERGS on a community service project
 - Winter apparel drive
- Requesting individuals to participate in follow up survey:
https://cmuhrex.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_42Pgvd3UUgC7Yy
- National Coming Out Day – Noah provided further information on how you can get involved. See details below.
 - Please help us spread the word that Staff Council and The Office of the Vice Provost of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are collaborating on the recognition and celebration of National Coming Out Day. These recognitions will feature an online panel event (October 6, 5:00-6:15pm) with members of the LGBTQ+ community as well as a virtual collage, where people can contribute images or words of reflection. Both events are open to all CMU faculty, staff, students. For additional information, please see the [staff council event website](#). To contribute questions for the panelists and submissions for the virtual collage, please submit this [Google Form](#) (also linked on the website).