

Annual Report to the Board of Trustees

Ad Hoc Committee for Representation, Equity & Accessibility

December 12, 2020

Committee Purpose Statement: To foster an environment where all adult children are represented and can feel safe and welcome.

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Committee Formation & Beginnings

The Diversity Ad Hoc Committee was created by the WSO Board on Feb 6th, 2020, following the approval of an ACA Diversity Statement at the 2019 Annual Business Conference (ABC): “ACA is an inclusive organization and open to all affected by family dysfunction. We strive to create an atmosphere that reflects the diverse communities we serve and where everyone feels empowered to be their full, authentic selves.”

The motion that passed to form the committee: “That WSO creates an ad hoc committee to review Diversity in the ACA fellowship and the WSO and provide their findings and recommendations.”

Background information included with the motion: “The ad hoc committee will be formed with a Board member as the interim chairperson. The interim chair will form the ad hoc committee with volunteers from the fellowship and then elect a chairperson. The interim chair will then become the board liaison to the ad hoc committee. The ad hoc committee is to provide a report by the December 12th, 2020 board teleconference. And can ask for an extension if needed.”

Committee Goals & Progress in 2020

Listed below are the committee goals per the 2020 ABC Committee Report, and the committee’s progress on those goals.

Goal 1: Reach out to members that may be interested in joining the committee.

Status: Ongoing. The committee reached out to members through various means including posting in The Traveler, the ACA WSO website, and in the #diversity_open channel in Slack. The committee also wrote an article for ComLINE with the history of the formation of the committee and a recruitment message, but unfortunately ComLINE was never published due to lack of content. The committee plans to publish the ComLINE article once it is back up and running, and has a recruitment email message as a pending agenda item for discussion and action by the committee.

Goal 2: Start having regular meetings.

Status: Complete. The committee's first meeting was on April 3, 2020. The committee met once per month through July, and twice per month thereafter for a total of thirteen (13) meetings. Each meeting lasted approximately 1.5 hours, for a total of approximately 19.5 hours. An average of ten (10) people attended each meeting, and the racial and gender identity diversity of meeting attendees has increased over the life of the committee.

Goal 3: Develop a plan – Diversity, Inclusiveness, Accessibility, Anonymity. How to get more diversity in ACA meetings and service?

Status: Ongoing. Over the course of the past eight (8) months the committee has engaged in robust dialogue about the concepts of diversity, inclusion, accessibility, representation, and equity through the mediums of committee meetings, committee Slack channels, and in shared documents. The dialogue has included the diversity of aspects of human identity (e.g. race and ethnicity; sex; gender identity; sexual orientation; physical, emotional, and/or developmental (dis)ability; spiritual or religious beliefs; socio-economic status; national origin/immigrant status/refugee status; family structure; age; first language; criminal/prison record; and being a minority within a family or neighborhood), and ideas for how to increase representation (of identities that are currently underrepresented within ACA) across the different elements of the ACA structure (e.g. the ACA website, literature, WSO structure, WSO board and committees, intergroups, meetings, communications (The Traveler, ComLINE), and the DIA committee itself).

The committee also began building its organizational structure and developing processes that allow members to work together in a safe, fair and equitable manner, and allow all voices to be heard.

Below is a select list of decisions made and actions taken by the committee this year:

- Changed the name of the committee (from *Diversity* to *Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility to Representation, Equity & Accessibility*) to better represent the scope of the committee work.
- Nominated a committee Chair and Vice Chair, with terms through the end of the year.
- Decided upon a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority, based on number of votes cast, for substantial unanimity in determining the group conscience
- Created a committee purpose statement: *To foster an environment where all adult children are represented and can feel safe and welcome.*
- Developed an *Acronyms and Definitions* working document to help create shared meaning around the complex topics the committee is dealing with
- Developed a *Strategies and Initiatives* working document to keep track of ideas for committee actions
- Sponsored the *Faces of ACA* virtual speaker event
- Decided upon an email address: represent@.....

Below is a list of items currently on the committee's meeting agenda. See the *Proposals for Committee Action Items* section of this report for a more complete list of ideas for committee action items.

- Proposal to Create a Structure & Safety Subcommittee to work on all things related to how the committee operates, including but not limited to the meeting script, agenda-making process, and roles within the committee.
- Acronyms & Definitions Document - discuss how to use this document. ● Recruitment Message for Intergroups and Meetings - recruit more members to committee
- Standards for Accessibility: Discuss standards for accessibility in ACA (World Service/Regions/Intergroups/Meetings) and in the DIA committee
- Race & Ethnicity: Discuss the membership of this committee and how we plan to address racial equity and representation.
- Pamphlets: Create pamphlets or fliers on DIA.
- Collaboration with the Public Information Committee (PIC): Work with the PIC to get the ACA message into different communities. PSA, newspapers, posters, etc. ● Representative Language: a draft document about representative language is ready for input from the committee. Intent is to eventually approve this document and then send it to the Literature Committee for collaboration and potential development of a joint motion to the board.
- Website Updates to Committee Page: Updating website to have better visibility for the Diversity message.

- Liaisons to Other Committees: Having DIA Committee Liaison to other committees ●
- Prioritization of Committee action items: How do we decide which strategic initiatives to prioritize?
- Structure of ACA: Discuss the structure of ACA/the inverted pyramid and how the membership drives change
- ACA-Wide: How to increase delegate participation/numbers
- ComLine article: publish when ComLine gets up and running again.
- Group Inventory
- Debrief of *Faces of ACA* event, including report from IT committee
- Discuss use and purpose of committee Slack channel
- Develop a process for dealing with complaints/feedback/etc about committee actions

The committee finds there is a plethora of ideas for actions the committee could take, and that the challenge lies in coming to substantial unanimity about how to prioritize the list of ideas, especially in terms of balancing process-oriented actions with actions that are more easily measured, and that more time is needed to develop group conscience around prioritization and subsequent committee actions.

Goal 4: Provide monthly reports to the Board.

Status: Complete. Monthly reports were provided to the Board and presented at the monthly WSO Board teleconference meetings.

Goal 5: Assess if more time is needed to deliver its findings to WSO.

Status: Complete. On October 16, 2020, the committee's group conscience decided to request permanent committee status as part of this annual report. As noted in Goal 3, above, the committee finds there is a plethora of ideas for actions the committee could take, and that the challenge lies in coming to substantial unanimity about how to prioritize the list of ideas, especially in terms of balancing process-oriented actions with actions that are more easily measured, and that more time is needed to develop group conscience around prioritization and subsequent committee actions.

When developing group conscience, the committee looks to Cornell University's Diversity & Inclusion certificate program: "meaningful diversity in any club or company can only happen when the people brought in are not expected to conform to the existing environment but are encouraged to add their unique perspective." The committee is committed to working within the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of ACA to work on these complex topics, and the committee also recognizes there is not a monolithic

interpretation of the spiritual principles of the program, and each member brings their own unique perspective and interpretation to the informed group conscience.

In addition, the committee finds there is much work to do to include adult children who have been impacted by acts of physical, emotional, and and/or psychological abuse, neglect and and/or violence within families based upon skin color/racial identity. And/or violence toward a family member who steps out to embrace someone who is seen as the "other". These acts of abuse, neglect and abandonment mirror those felt by LGBTQIA+ members, members with disabilities, and those within non-dominant religious contexts, yet require a much different lens - based in racial equity principles.

In summary, the committee finds the topics being discussed and addressed by the committee are incredibly complex, necessitate time to develop substantial unanimity, and require long-term, ongoing dedication and commitment by ACA WSO. To that end the committee is requesting permanent status and the Board's continued support of the committee's work.

Committee Goals for 2021

- Goal 1: Collect feedback from membership about diversity, representation, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to help guide future committee actions (e.g. surveys, workshops and/or town halls).
- Goal 2: Develop accessibility standards and guidelines for ACA, informed by feedback from the membership collected in Goal 1.
- Goal 3: Develop representative language guidelines for ACA, informed by feedback from the membership collected in Goal 1.
- Goal 4: Develop committee structure and operational processes and procedures through the group conscience process.
- Goal 5: Develop effective methods for information-sharing and collaboration with other WSO committees.
- Goal 6: Develop a process for prioritizing and implementing committee strategies and initiatives using the framework of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.
- Goal 7: Begin exploration of an oversight-inventory component within Bylaws/OPPM that is responsive and easily accessible within the ACA/DF fellowship as a whole.
- Goal 8: Create a racial equity subcommittee.

Summary of Motions & Meeting Attendance

4/3/20 - 5 people attended

- Motion to meet monthly - PASSED

5/1/20 - 6 people attended

- Motion to approve previous minutes - PASSED
- Motion to change the name of the committee to the Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DIA) Ad Hoc Committee - PASSED

6/5/20 - Unknown number of people attended

- Motion to approve previous minutes - PASSED

7/3/20 - 7 people attended

- Motion to approve previous minutes - PASSED
- Motion to make the committee permanent - TABLED

8/7/20 - 14 people attended

- Motion to approve previous minutes - PASSED
- Motion to make the committee permanent - WITHDRAWN
- Motion to change meeting time to accommodate European time zones - PASSED

8/28/20 - 8 people attended

- Motion to create a team to work on the committee mission statement outside the standard meeting - PASSED
- Motion to write a ComLINE article to recruit committee members - PASSED ● Motion to draft a recruitment message to be sent via WSO sometime in the near future (We amended this motion from a request to write AND have it sent via WSO to all Intergroups and Individual Meeting contacts. Discussion and concerns around ensuring we are a bit more organized before recruiting and then potentially losing members.) - PASSED
- Motion to increase frequency to 2x a month, specifically on the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month - PASSED
- Motion to send meeting minutes via email to everyone whom we have an email address for, so they know about the new meeting schedule and latest decisions - PASSED

9/4/20 - 9 people attended

- Motion to approve previous minutes - PASSED
- Motion for Jill to facilitate meeting - PASSED

- Motion for Julianne to be Chair and Jill to be Vice Chair until end of 2020 - PASSED
- Motion to keep ComLine article as one article (rather than break it into two separate articles) - PASSED
- Motion to take discussion about the committee name offline - PASSED ●
- Motion to continue to use secretary@adultchildren.org as point of contact for recruitment efforts - PASSED
- Motion for start time of future meetings to be 4:10pm ET (to accommodate a People of Color meeting) - PASSED

9/18/20 - 11 people attended

- Motion to approve previous minutes - PASSED
- Motion to have Jen R be the committee secretary until the end of the year - PASSED
- Motion to change the committee name to Committee for Accessibility, Representation and Equity (CARE) - WITHDRAWN
- Motion to approve committee purpose statement: "To ensure all adult children are represented and can feel safe in ACA by holding ACA/ourselves accountable through the continuous inventory, living amends, and transformation process." - NOT PASSED
- Motion to approve committee purpose statement: "To foster an environment where all adult children are represented and can feel safe and welcome." - PASSED

10/2/20 - 10 people attended

- Motion to approve previous minutes - PASSED
- Motion to use a simple majority to decide on agenda structure - PASSED ●
- Motion to move the "committee email address" item, currently listed as number 11, to "higher" on the agenda - PASSED
- Motion to move the "email address" agenda item to between current 7 (working groups can use the zoom account) and 8 (committee report on Dec 12) - PASSED
- Motion to add new agenda item specific to how roll call is conducted (ie. how we present ourselves including name, pronouns, privileges you benefit from and direct experience of under representation.) - PASSED
- Motion to add New agenda item specific to Introduction by newcomers, and any old timers who haven't done an introduction. Also recording these intro in a written place for us to reference later. - PASSED
- Motion to add to agenda a discussion about how the committee evaluates group conscience - how we decide stuff - PASSED
- Motion to add item to agenda, between current items 5 and 6, about how the agenda is developed. This would include things like when the draft agenda is posted, how much time to review, how to come to consensus on the order of the

agenda. The goal being to have an agenda in place in advance of the meeting. - NOT PASSED

- Motion to extend meeting by 30 minutes - NOT PASSED

10/16/20 - 8 people attended

- Motion to approve previous minutes - PASSED
- Motion to request permanent status at December WSO Board Meeting - PASSED
- Motion for the committee to sponsor the "Faces of ACA" speaker event on November 8th - PASSED
- Motion for the committee to proceed to make decisions with two-thirds majority for group conscience, and to further investigate Knowledge Based Decision Making for future use - PASSED

11/6/20 - 11 people attended

- Motion to approve previous minutes - PASSED
- Motion to start the meeting 1hr 10min earlier than currently. This would be 3pm ET / Noon PT - PASSED
- Motion for 5 mins to talk about Committee Name with option for 5 more minutes - WITHDRAWN
- Motion to move forward with the agenda as written - NOT PASSED ● Motion to to adopt this agenda review process as it is written in the agenda, call it "Prioritize Agenda" - PASSED
- Motion to add four items to the agenda: (1) Create guidelines for how often and when we change the meeting time?, (2) How do we share documents within this committee?, (3) Use of the diversity Open channel vs closed channel?, (4) When is it appropriate to use unilateral/authority by a single person on this committee? - PASSED
- Motion to extend meeting by 10 minutes - NOT PASSED
- Motion to extend meeting by 15 minutes and focused only on adding agenda items - PASSED
- Motion to reinstate agenda item #6 (report to the board) with explicit focus on action items and next steps to complete the 12/12 report. - PASSED

11/20/20 - 12 people attended

- Motion to approve previous minutes - PASSED
- Motion to put Report to Board item ahead of Shifting Priorities discussion - PASSED
- Motion to entrust Jill H. with the task of writing a report to be submitted to the board on December 12th that incorporates the concerns discussed in this meeting. She will post it to Slack from our shared Google Drive within one week from today so that people can add their input and revisions before our next

meeting. If there are contentious issues in the report then those items will be named as contentious when presented at the board. - PASSED

- Motion to add "Faces of ACA" IT Report and general event debrief to the agenda - PASSED
- Motion to combine some related agenda items to declutter agenda - PASSED ●
- Motion to add an agenda item to discuss the use of the Slack channel - PASSED ●
- Motion to Extend the meeting by 15 minutes, amended to 20 minutes - PASSED ●
- Motion to add item to the agenda to clarify $\frac{2}{3}$ majority for group conscience (based on number of people in the room or number of votes cast?) - PASSED ●
- Motion to add item to the agenda to give equal access to propose agenda items - PASSED
- Motion to add item to the agenda for how to address feedback about committee actions - PASSED
- Motion to add item to the agenda to discuss the Annual Report to the Board - PASSED

12/4/20 - 14 people attended

- Motion to approve previous minutes - PASSED
- Motion to table all agenda items except items 8 (committee name), 9 (email address), 37 (group conscience majority), and 40 (report to board), and begin with item 37 first - PASSED
- Motion to base $\frac{2}{3}$ majority for group conscience on the number of votes cast (where abstentions are not considered votes), and number of abstentions will be recorded - PASSED
- Motion to discuss committee name and email address for 10 minutes - PASSED
- Motion to change committee name to Committee for Representation, Equity & Accessibility - PASSED
- Motion to create committee email address of crea@... - NOT PASSED ●
- Motion to create committee email address of represent@... - PASSED ●
- Motion to extend meeting by 15 minutes - PASSED
- Motion to approve Annual Report to the Board of Trustees - PASSED

Proposals for Committee Action Items

Below is a list of proposed committee actions from committee members, which are housed in a common spreadsheet but have not yet been discussed or prioritized through the group conscience process:

- develop a demographic survey of membership, would need language translations
- Seek input from ACA members who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)
- Systemic Racism, Generational Racial Trauma, ongoing Racial Trauma and the Internalizing of racist beliefs and how that also leads to serious dysfunction and

abuse within families (black, white, POC) surrounding racial superior or inferior identity - could be a specific subcommittee for the committee.

- This DIA Committee work must be made a permanent committee, for there is much work to do to include many of us who have been impacted by acts of physical, emotional, psychological abuse/neglect and even violence, within families based upon skin color/racial identity and or violence toward a family member who steps out to embrace someone who who is seen as the "other". These acts of abuse, neglect and abandonment mirror those felt by LGBTQ members, members with disabilities, religious context, etc..
- ACA website:
 - on meeting search page, edit filter function to be in alphabetical order and use appropriate acronyms (e.g. LGBTQIA+, BIPOC)
 - replace gendered language with representative language (e.g. use "people" instead of "him" or "her")
 - make website fully accessible to agreed-upon standards
 - in meeting search feature: make text/chat meetings, phone meetings, video meetings separate filters
- Big Red Book:
 - shares from a larger, more diverse cross-section of ACA experience
 - chapter on dysfunctional family types to expand on emotional abuse to include rejecting/denying or otherwise emotionally abandoning a child based on an innate characteristic (i.e. their sex, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.)
 - Create DIA guidelines for literature committees so we don't need individual liaisons to each literature group
 - Use representative language for gender and relationships
 - Explore the effects of intergenerational trauma
- ACA WSO Structure/Committees
 - Separate incorporated publishing from ACA WSO; empower IGs & meetings via IT to dialogue and share lit, set up conferences, retreats--Internationally
 - all WSO meetings and events to offer and provide accommodations as needed; ABC to only be held at fully-accessible locations
 - Consider the impact of WSO events which take place on Saturdays, which is a barrier to inclusion of Sabbath observers (e.g. observant Jews & Seventh Day Adventists)
 - Ballot committee to incorporate equity lens in ballot proposal analysis

How to integrate an equity lens into all layers/levels of committee work? ●

Meetings:

- develop recommended safety language for meeting scripts in collaboration with other WSO committees.
- Ideas for a safe and accessible meeting script: include information about business meeting (empowers people); include ADA diversity statement and predatory behavior statement; give people the option of stating their pronouns during

introductions; give people the option of saying either Higher Power or God when participating in the meeting (e.g. when doing readings); tell people how they can find special interest meetings on ACA website using filter feature (so they can find a safe space for themselves within ACA); tell people how to get literature on ACA website - is there a scholarship for those who can't afford to purchase literature?

- Ideas for safe and accessible operation of a meeting: for zoom meetings recommend literature is shared on screen for low vision people and people who don't own literature; recommend new meetings are held in neighborhoods where meetings don't already exist; recommend meetings are held in fully accessible meeting spaces; provide accessibility information about meetings on website (new filter?)
- Communications:
 - consider how do different age groups receive information and how that impacts spreading the message of ACA (e.g. snail mail, email, social media, website) ○ Advertise the meeting filter search function in The Traveler and ComLINE so people know where they can find special interest meetings (i.e. spaces that feel safe for them)
 - find a way to share info about what WSO committees are doing and opportunities for service with the membership on a regular basis (e.g. a WSO committee monthly newsletter?)