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CSE’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee: Celebrating Our First Year of Growth, Successes, and Future Direction

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Scholarly publishing organization leaders, journal editor and editorial teams, and authors recognize that advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) best practices helps to enhance diversity across a variety of areas, including but not limited to, disciplinary, racial and ethnic, and linguistic and cultural diversity, and to promote the value and benefits gained from diversity of opinion, thought, and perspective.^{1,2} Recently, there have been important and long-needed discussions regarding why, how, and where principles of DEI should be integrated into scholarly publishing.¹ In September 2021, the Council of Science Editors (CSE) Board of Directors (BOD) approved the formation of the CSE DEI Committee out of the existing DEI Task Force, formed the year before. The original task force, and later the committee, grew from the BOD’s commitment to establishing CSE as a leader in the field of scholarly publishing on integrating timely, effective, and responsive DEI principles in organizational culture and operations, as well as in educational opportunities for members.

The purpose of the CSE DEI Committee is to support the organization in building capacity among its leadership, members, and the profession at large to deliver programmatic activities and training that integrate DEI best practices in science editing, publication management, scholarly publishing and communication, member recruitment, participation, and engagement. Since the BOD's approval of the DEI Committee, the priority has been to recruit active members. The committee currently consists of nearly 20 members working in various capacities among organizations and journals in scholarly publishing. The committee spent time early on deciding where to focus its efforts to maximize participation and identify areas that would provide CSE members with resources, educational experiences, and opportunities to contribute feedback on the committee's direction. Meeting once a month, the committee has worked diligently to position CSE as an international resource on DEI best practices. DEI Committee members have worked to integrate principles of DEI throughout CSE's programs, services, and operations. This article provides highlights of activities undertaken by the committee since its inception and discusses future activities planned for 2023.

The CSE DEI Committee has made great strides in its first year and is pleased to share the progress achieved so far in 9 key areas:

1. Coalition for Diversity & Inclusion in Scholarly Communications (C4DISC)

A source of support and tools for CSE's DEI committee is the Coalition for Diversity and Inclusion in Scholarly Communications (C4DISC).³ The goal of C4DISC is to work with organizations and individuals to build equity, inclusion, diversity, and accessibility in scholarly communications.³ CSE was one of the 10 cofounding organizations of C4DISC when it was formed in June of 2017. Within the past few years, C4DISC has published a statement of principles and several toolkits to help guide the scholarly publishing world in addressing DEI issues, along with reaching out to establish partner organizations and sponsoring webinars and educational events. A major effort has been made in developing training materials for use in transforming our organizational cultures and workplaces. The Toolkits hosted on the C4DISC site include the Antiracism Toolkit for Allies⁴; the Antiracism Toolkit for Organizations⁵; the Antiracism Toolkit for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color⁶; and most recently, the Guidelines on Inclusive Language and Images in Scholarly Communication.⁷ These resources are intended to be used not only by the leadership of C4DISC member organizations and partnership organizations, but also by members of these organizations who can apply their use in various work settings around the world.

2. New Content in CSE's "Recommendations for Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications (formerly the CSE's White Paper on

Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publications)” on DEI Best Practices in Scholarly Publishing

CSE and its Editorial Policy Committee encourage organizations, journals, and individuals in scholarly publishing to take responsibility for promoting integrity in scholarly publishing. CSE’s “Recommendation for Promoting Integrity in Scientific Journal Publication” offers guidance on ethical ways to do this, ranging from roles and responsibilities in publishing to authorship and author responsibilities to reviewer roles and responsibilities to research misconduct. New content regarding DEI best practices in scholarly publishing was approved by the BOD. The new section, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Scholarly Publishing,” identifies 7 ways to integrate DEI best practices and policies in scientific publishing.^{2,8} These include:

- Establishing accountability
- Developing guidelines for publishing content on diverse racial and ethnic groups
- Publishing intentional statements to promote DEI
- Ensuring fair representation among editorial boards, peer reviewers, and journal staff
- Ensuring inclusive language in journal publications
- Collecting demographic data
- Acknowledging progress and missteps

3. CSE Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Scholarly Resources Webpage

In 2020, CSE recognized the need to establish a repository for journals, publishers, and trade and professional associations to share published DEI-related position statements, commitment statements, action plans, frameworks, and policies. CSE established its DEI Scholarly Resources webpage, and over this past year the CSE DEI Committee has regularly updated this webpage to include the latest resources available.⁹ It now includes content in 6 categories:

- DEI Committees of Trade and Professional Organizations in Scholarly Publishing
- DEI and Peer Review
- DEI Statements and Policies from Journals, Trade and Professional Associations, and Publishers
- Bias, Discrimination, and Racism
- Data Collection on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Reporting Sex, Gender, and Race in Publications
- Inclusive Language Communication

The resources available in these categories can assist journals at various stages of implementation of DEI-centered activities. As with any field of interest, new insights are constantly being generated within and across these categories. Thus, the DEI Committee has envisioned a process to curate and maintain the page over time, and visitors are encouraged to explore how the content evolves and to consider submitting resources for inclusion as they become available.

4. DEI Sensitivity Review of *Scientific Style and Format*, 9th Edition

Language that imparts bias toward or against persons or groups based on characteristics or demographics must be avoided. Efforts are currently underway to update *Scientific Style and Format*, the CSE style manual, and members of the DEI Committee were asked to provide a language sensitivity review of the forthcoming 9th edition. This review was conducted to provide culturally diverse perspectives about the language commonly used in scholarly publishing and, where necessary, offer guidance to users on ways to avoid the harmful effects of dominant narratives, words, terms, and the like. The 9th Edition of *Scientific Style and Format* is scheduled for release in 2023.

5. 2022 CSE Annual Meeting Panel: Approaches to Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Journal Publishing

The CSE DEI committee coordinated and led a panel of 4 journal editors-in-chief (EICs) to discuss the rationale for establishing and sustaining the expansion of diversity, equitable decision-making, and a culture of inclusion not only in scholarly communications but also among journal publishing professionals.¹⁰ The EICs of *Preventing Chronic Disease: Public Health Research, Practice & Policy*, *American Family Physician*, *Health Education & Behavior*, and the *American Journal of Public Health* participated in the panel. The EICs discussed the importance of disseminating statements committed to creating diverse representation on editorial boards and among peer reviewers and journal staff. Panel members also talked about the benefits of identifying a DEI editor or consultant to review institutionalized processes and systems and ensure accountability in day-to-day journal operations. The discussion emphasized the importance of embracing publication content that focuses less on risk factors and more on non-individual determinants of health, including infrequently discussed topics such as racism and intentional and unintentional societal biases. The panel strongly encouraged organizations and journals to reach out to one another and share lessons learned—both successes and failures.

6. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Checklist

To address the need for increased diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility across CSE programming, a DEI Checklist is being developed in collaboration with the DEI Committee and CSE leadership. The checklist is organized into 4 parts to address multiple aspects of event programming: 1) participants (event designers, speakers, and attendees), 2) content of the event and any enduring materials, 3) marketing, and 4) dissemination. The latter part refers to disseminating the ideas of participants from underrepresented groups generated during CSE events, which is an important step to deflecting misappropriation of those ideas

by dominant groups in the field of scholarly publishing. The checklist includes an invitation letter template to be used when recruiting panelists and moderators, designed with inclusive and respectful wording. In addition, a DEI-focused rubric has been put in place that has an evolving purpose. To start, it is intended to hold event planners accountable to DEI principles, eventually allowing CSE leadership to track and assess the DEI of programming over time. Ultimately, the finalized checklist will be made available on the DEI Committee's publicly available webpage to share this work broadly across disciplines.

7. 2022 CSE Fall DEI Symposium

At the 2022 CSE Fall Symposium, members of the DEI Committee and representatives from the BOD will participate in a joint session to discuss CSE's DEI-related objectives and activities, particularly as they pertain to CSE's Strategic Plan. The overarching purpose of this session will be to continue ongoing conversations between CSE leadership and the DEI Committee in a transparent forum with members and attendees. Panelists from the BOD and the committee will discuss (among other things) the challenges faced by CSE leadership in implementing policies related to DEI, how the DEI Committee might help address those challenges, and how CSE leadership and the BOD can in turn support the efforts of the DEI Committee. An additional hope for the session is that it will inspire and encourage CSE members to become invested in DEI-related endeavors at every level—not only within CSE but also within other scholarly publishing organizations and the societies of which they are members. DEI work is not limited to boards, committees, and leadership teams—it is critical at every level.

8. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Column in *Science Editor*

The DEI Committee believes that finding ways to provide CSE members with timely updates on the committee's progress, innovations in the field, training opportunities, and ways to become and remain involved are critical. One way to achieve these objectives is to use the newly created DEI column in *Science Editor* to feature articles addressing a range of DEI-related topics. The first article appearing in the column, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force Update and Future Direction," provided CSE members with updates on programs being offered to increase awareness of DEI initiatives, insights learned regarding DEI-related knowledge gaps among CSE members, identification of ways to engage new members who have not traditionally seen membership in CSE as inclusive, and steps taken to launch CSE's DEI Committee.¹¹ The DEI Committee is now contributing this second article to the column to highlight its progress, achievements, and future activities. Beginning in 2023, CSE members can anticipate regular publication of articles for this column. While some articles appearing in this column will be generated by DEI Committee members, all CSE members are strongly encouraged to submit DEI-related articles to *Science Editor* for consideration.

9. CSE Awards and Honors Committee

CSE awards are given annually to recognize leaders in the field of science communication and to acknowledge the exceptional accomplishments and contributions of CSE members.

A member of the DEI Committee assisted the Awards and Honors Committee in identifying individuals and/or organizations submitted to the BOD for consideration. The Awards and Honors Committee recommends recipients along with a rationale for selection to the BOD in accordance with criteria identified for each award type. The BOD makes the final decision on recipients selected to receive CSE awards. Representation from the DEI Committee is important given the need to ensure the tenets of DEI best practices are employed when identifying, selecting, and recognizing individuals, groups, and organizations advancing work in the field of scholarly publishing.

Conclusion

The DEI Committee has accomplished much during its first year, building on the successful efforts of the original task force, and is well positioned to continue to advance DEI efforts for our field. CSE members can anticipate the following DEI Committee activities in 2023:

- Growing collection of curated content on the DEI Scholarly Resources webpage
- Articles in the new DEI column in *Science Editor*
- DEI-focused educational opportunities, including a webinar on collecting and protecting demographic data
- Resources to educate facilitators on effective DEI training
- Collection of demographic data from CSE members and contributors to CSE events and programming
- Efforts to establish, monitor, and assess benchmark DEI-related goals and objectives

There is exciting work ahead for the CSE DEI Committee. As such, the committee members realize they cannot do this important work alone. The DEI Committee encourages CSE members to share their thoughts and suggestions on areas around which the committee can best meet the needs of the organization and community. The work of the DEI Committee is in line with CSE's commitment to equal opportunity and treatment for all regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age, appearance, or political affiliation, as well as its commitment to maintaining an environment free of harassment, discrimination, and hostility.¹² The DEI Committee is proud of the work accomplished to date and looks forward to future growth and successes. According to CSE's President, Jennifer Deyton, "CSE Leadership is committed to advancing the work of the DEI Committee. We have included a DEI goal in our strategic plan: Advance CSE's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Council, its business activities, and across its programs with the very clear objective to define what diversity, equity, and inclusion means to CSE and embed process, strategy, and opportunity to support this in 100% of the organization's operations by 2025. Further, as is exemplified by the list of great work in this article, we have woven the intent of this goal throughout our other strategic plan goals in an effort to support the great work of the DEI Committee fully in all our offerings, membership efforts, programming and strategic planning."

Acknowledgment

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