



Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Launches Employee Networks

Employee Networks (E-Nets), also known as Employee Resource Groups, and Employee Affinity Groups, are voluntary employee-led groups whose memberships are typically based on specific demographic groups. They are dedicated to a diverse and inclusive environment that align with the mission, values and goals of an organization (Welbourne, Rolf & Schlachter, [2015](#), [2017](#)).

The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) considers the E-Nets to be an integral component of diverse and underrepresented employee recruitment and retention. The ODEI and the Subcommittee on Recruitment and Retention of the Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion selected demographic groups with social identities that align with the mission and goals of the ODEI. Although the E-Nets are specific, they acknowledge and make room for all social identities to collaborate and partner inclusively and broadly.

Participation:

The E-Nets are open to all faculty and staff, full time or part time. The ODEI requests employees have social identities that align with the E-Nets they join. However, any employee can join any E-Net of their choice.

Leadership:

Each E-Net has a Team Leader and Champion. The Team Leaders coordinate monthly activities for their respective E-Nets. The Champions support the leadership of the Team Leaders. Additionally, the Champions are members of University Leadership and report directly to the President. They do not attend the E-Net events unless by invitation. However, they meet regularly with the Team Leaders to specifically address concerns identified in the [2018 Great Colleges to Work For Survey: Final Report of Results](#). These concerns are: first, perceptions that senior leadership need to show more genuine interest in the well-being of faculty, administration and staff. Second, perceptions that senior leadership lack understanding and empathy toward faculty, administration, and staff, p. 11.

The Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee created a list of about a dozen E-Nets with room to grow more, eventually enabling every UW employee to have an opportunity to join an E-Net. In this academic year, the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is launching five E-Nets:

1. Asian and Pacific Islander E-Net: Dr. Tao Han, Associate Professor, School of Teacher Education, College of Education (Team Leader); and David Jewell, Associate Vice President for Financial Affairs (Champion).

2. African American and Black E-Net: Kwanna King, University Registrar, Office of the Registrar (Team Leader); and Tom Burman, Director, Intercollegiate Athletics Office (Champion).
3. Latinx and Hispanic E-Net: Samantha Velez, Coordinator, SER Publications, School for Energy Resources (Team Leader); and Edmund Synakowski, Vice President, Research and Economic Development Office (Champion).
4. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer+ (LGBTQ+) E-Net: Griffen Farrar, Residence Coordinator, RLDS, Dining (Team Leader); and Meredith Asay, Director of Government Relations, Government and Community Affairs Office (Champion).
5. Native American and Indigenous People E-Net: Melvin Arthur, Research Scientist, Assistant, Kinesiology and Health (Team Leader); and Robert Aylward, Vice President, Office of the CIO (Champion).

Activities:

The activities are themed around welcoming new employees, social engagement, professional development, etc. The ODEI will coordinate at least one annual activity for all the E-Nets collectively, and it will replace a monthly meeting that the Team Leaders would have coordinated.

To Join:

For more information about E-Nets or to join one, send an email to diversity@uwyo.edu by Dec. 2. The Latinx/Hispanic and Native American and Indigenous People E-Nets are planning events for November. Please make your interest known to be involved with these E-Nets at your earliest convenience.