



DIVERSE VOICES TASK FORCE

SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS



tesol
international
association

JUNE 2021

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Acknowledgements

TESOL International Association is proud to present the following document as a result of the hard work performed by the TESOL Diverse Voices Task Force (DVTf). The TESOL Board of Directors is immensely grateful to this group of dedicated TESOL professionals for having lent their collective knowledge, expertise, and experience in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the purpose of helping the association elevate its standing, reputation, and leadership in this critical, emerging topic in global English language education. By providing their expertise, Task Force members have enabled us to fill a gap in the organization's mission, vision, and core values.

Over a period of 18 months, members of the task force, led by co-chairs Dr. Kisha Bryan and Dr. Eric Dwyer, have voluntarily spent their time researching, collecting, and analyzing data, and formulating recommendations to the TESOL Board of Directors. Their effort and its resulting product will be remembered as an inflexion point in the life of the association and its stakeholders.

Members of the Task Force are listed below. Their bios and photos can be found in Appendix A of this document.

Kisha Bryan, Co-chair

Eric Dwyer, Co-chair

Arlene Costello, Member

Luciana de Oliveira, Member

Phoenicia Grant, Member

Abdulsamad Humaidan, Member

Sara Kangas, Member

Noreen Mirza, Member

Mary Romney, Member

Yasmine Romero, Member

Federico Salas-Isnardi, Member

Deborah Healey, Board Liaison

Rita Buckner, Staff Partner

Need for the Task Force and Member Input

The TESOL Board of Directors convened the Diverse Voices Task Force in July 2019 for the purpose of reporting on the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the association and making recommendations to enhance DEI within TESOL's culture and activities. The choice of a task force was guided by the need for an effort that was time-bound and outcome-focused, in support of TESOL's mission and values. According to TESOL policy, a task force is commissioned by the Board of Directors to address a critical, strategic issue in a short period of time. A task force is an ad-hoc working group that provides research and information to the Board. The Board uses task force reports to inform policy and strategic direction for the association.

The Diverse Voices Task Force conducted research with peer organizations in order to establish how TESOL measures against similar groups in the area of DEI, and developed a survey to assess members' perceptions of the association's culture and activities. Given the importance of this effort, all members of TESOL International Association were invited to provide their opinions in a survey through a unique online link. The Board also asked the Task Force to define key terms related to DEI for the association. (See Appendix B.)

This document presents findings and recommendations from the Diverse Voices Task Force's work coupled with TESOL's actions to date and planned next steps. The full survey questions and data can be found [here](#).

Background and Charge of the Task Force

In March 2019, at TESOL's annual convention in Atlanta, a Teaching Tip session included a presentation about offensive language in the classroom, a topic which many teachers struggle with and which the proposal reviewers felt would be appropriate. The language within the presentation included outwardly strong language instead of euphemisms. While such a presentation may be appropriate under numerous academic conditions, including those in conference venues, this particular presentation occurred in the convention center publishers' area, complete with microphones and people freely walking by. Of note was use of rap music lyrics including fully uttered examples of the N-word, which many passers-by, many of whom were local colleagues of African descent, easily noticed. For many, a white woman was openly using the N-word freely in a public forum. Of course, TESOL's leadership heard of this almost immediately.

A follow-up meeting the Friday of the convention with then incoming TESOL President Deborah Healey, TESOL senior staff, and eight African-American TESOL members, including several from Georgia TESOL, brought out more fundamental issues. These included diversity and inclusion in the proposal adjudication process and broader representation at the convention and in various levels of TESOL leadership. In order to address these issues head on, TESOL's leadership created the Diverse Voices Task Force (DVTF) with a mandate to provide clear recommendations to the TESOL Board of Directors to cultivate diverse leadership and a culture of inclusion in the association.

The Task Force was charged with the following tasks:

1. Develop a DEI vision statement on diversity and inclusion for the association.
 - a. What do diversity and inclusion mean for TESOL International Association?
 - b. What are the different dimensions of diversity within the association?
2. Research and report on the ways that other associations address diversity and inclusion and diversify their leadership.
3. Develop recommendations on how TESOL International Association can cultivate diverse leadership at all levels within the association.
4. Develop recommendations on how we can build a culture of inclusion across the association.
5. Identify possible mechanisms the association can employ to develop diverse leaders for the benefit of the field and profession.

Over 60 individuals applied to TESOL's call for participants. Ultimately, 10 people were selected and agreed to work as the Task Force.

The DVTF held initial meetings and determined that in order to formulate informed responses to the charges, data should be collected and analyzed from the following sources:

- a DEI-based climate survey that goes to the breadth of the membership;
- notes and chat transcripts from DVTF presentations at TESOL-related virtual conferences; and
- Task Force members' own academic inquiries and experiences.

The DVTF members organized into the following subgroups: Peer Organizations Review, DEI Vision Statement, and Survey Development.

Data Collection

In response to TESOL International Association's charge to "research and report on the ways that other associations address diversity and inclusion and diversify their leadership," the **Peer Review subgroup** conducted a preliminary review of the websites and public documents of various organizations. The subgroup decided to focus its review on five language or literacy-focused organizations: American Association for Applied Linguistics, International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, International Literacy Association, Literacy Research Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English. For these organizations, the Task Force reviewed the following artifacts: mission statements and strategic plans, leadership and governance documents, conference programs, themes, plenaries, awards and recognitions, initiatives, and statements on diversity, inclusion, and antidiscrimination.

The **Vision Statement subgroup** met regularly to discuss experiences and academic orientations regarding a statement and supporting principles that might contribute to a DEI vision statement for the association. While there are various resources that were used to determine aspects to include, key resources informing this discussion included online resources, books, and shared documents.

The DVTF felt the most important step in the process would be asking the membership its impressions of DEI. As such, the **Survey Development subgroup** decided to create a survey for the membership. The subgroup wrote several drafts of the survey, and a climate survey specialist offered feedback. The survey also was reviewed by the Board of Directors and the TESOL Interim Executive Director. On June 10, 2020, a pilot of the survey was offered to 500 TESOL members chosen at random. Upon receipt of the results and feedback in the pilot, a final revised survey was sent to the membership on August 11, with a request that it be filled out by September 21. Survey reminders were placed on the TESOL website, advertised in TESOL newsletters, and sent directly to the membership.

In addition to the subgroups' work, the Task Force was active in its outreach to TESOL members through frequent updates during invited conference presentations. Task Force members presented at the following TESOL-affiliated conventions:

- The TESOL Virtual Conference (July 16, 2020)
- DEI Networking Session (July 18, 2020)
- The Affiliate Network Profession Council Virtual Conference (July 20, 2020)
- Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages racial justice task force meeting (August 31, 2020).
- MIDTESOL Virtual Conference (October 3, 2020)
- Sunshine State TESOL (November 14, 2020)

These sessions allowed for interaction and collaboration with the membership regarding the work of the DVTF. Through virtual chats and discussions at many of these conference sessions, association members provided feedback that helped to shape the vision statement and associated principles.

Deliverables

The analysis of data and conversations yielded the following deliverables with respect to findings and recommendations:

- I A diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) vision statement for the association that included important terms related to DEI
- II A report on how other associations address diversity and inclusion
- III Recommendations for building a culture of inclusion and diverse leadership in TESOL International Association
- IV A draft of a TESOL Membership Demographics document for initial membership and membership renewal
- V The TESOL Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey
- VI Mechanisms to develop diverse leaders for the benefit of the field and profession

The elements in this section are the outcomes of the Task Force's work.

Deliverable I: DEI Vision Statement

The DVTF proposes the following DEI Vision Statement:

***TESOL International Association is the world leader
in anti-racist, inclusive, and diversity-focused English language education.***

To support diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels, this DEI vision statement articulates four tenets of diversity and inclusion. These principles are based upon research on similar associations, a survey of TESOL members, and critically reflective discussions during Diverse Voice Task Force meetings from July 2019 through January 2021. These tenets can aid TESOL in reaching its diversity, equity, and inclusion goal and ensure that the association takes a socially responsible and ethical stance against racism and other forms of discrimination that structure our institutions, scholarship, and everyday situations.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Tenet 1 | Identify and interrupt individual or systemic racism and other forms of discrimination and bigotry. |
| Tenet 2 | Include the voices of marginalized and underrepresented English language professionals, graduate students, and language learners at all levels of the association. |
| Tenet 3 | Engage in professional learning that focuses on anti-racist practices, policies, and social justice issues that impact language teaching and learning contexts. |
| Tenet 4 | All policy statements, position papers, strategic plans, and internal procedures of the association and its entities as pertinent to their contexts reflect TESOL's commitment to inclusion, equity, and diversity. |

Deliverable II: How Other Associations Address Diversity

Based on the research and review of the artifacts from five peer organizations, the subgroup identified the following strategic areas in which TESOL International Association might enhance diversity and inclusion within the organization.

Strategic Plan	<p>Peer organizations have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear definitions of diversity and inclusion • Specific initiatives and goals relating to diversity and inclusion • Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely (SMART) goals for each initiative • Diversity and inclusion embedded throughout multiple initiatives and goals
Leadership and Office Staff	<p>Peer organizations have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represented historically marginalized racial groups on boards of directors and executive committees • Provided publicly available statistics regarding demographics of and feedback from members of the leadership programs • Designated professional council/entity/positions committed to ethno-racial diversity and inclusion within the organization
Membership	<p>Peer organizations have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracked demographic membership information • Conducted outreach to minority-serving institutions regarding membership opportunities and benefits • Provided mentoring programs, scholarships, and leadership training opportunities for historically marginalized or underrepresented members • Ensured ethno-racial, age, gender, and geographic diversity in their recruitment of volunteers from the membership
Convention	<p>Peer organizations have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilized a systematic, transparent mechanism to report discrimination at conferences/conventions • Featured diverse keynote speakers at conventions • Promoted and marketed both academic principles and social justice principles (e.g., anti-racism, anti-linguicism) through large billboards/signage at conventions • Considered ethnic, racial, linguistic, sexual orientation representations and sensitivities in conference proposals and keynote vetting mechanisms

The DVTF also noted that none of the five organizations has implemented all of these initiatives and actions.

Deliverable III: Recommendations for Building a Culture of Inclusive Leadership

The DVTF identified six strategic areas in which TESOL International Association can enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization. Key findings for each of these strategic areas, based on the research of language or literacy-focused organizations and survey data, and corresponding recommendations for TESOL International Association's governing entities are provided below.

1. Strategic Plan

The Board and Executive Committee should consider the following revisions to the strategic plan:

- providing clear definitions for “diversity” and “inclusion”;
- developing strategic initiatives around diversity and inclusion;
- approving annual SMART goals and/or implementation plan for each strategic initiative;
- identifying a TESOL staff/committee/task force charged with monitoring progress and attaining outcomes; and
- providing a timeline for monitoring progress, follow up, and reporting to staff and members on SMART goal progress.

2. Leadership

The Nominating Committee should consider

- encouraging members from historically marginalized and underrepresented ethno-racial groups who are interested in leadership positions to apply;
- having clear definitions of what “underrepresented groups” means in terms of leadership structure; and
- targeting outreach to historically marginalized and underrepresented ethno-racial groups.

The Awards Professional Council should consider

- conducting a program audit on the Leadership Mentoring Program (LMP), specifically to evaluate the success of the organization's LMP in outreach to historically marginalized and underrepresented ethno-racial groups.

The Membership and Marketing Department should consider

- assisting in the promotion of Communities of Practice within the organization that have been historically marginalized in education and academia.

The Board and Executive Committee should consider

- assigning a professional council and creating a position committed to ethno-racial diversity and inclusion within the organization.

3. Membership

The Membership and Marketing Department should consider

- eliciting demographic information in membership forms; and
- providing outreach to minority serving institutions (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions) regarding membership opportunities and benefits.

The Awards Professional Council should consider

- providing mentorship, scholarship, and leadership opportunities for historically marginalized or underrepresented members, staff, and students.

The Professional Development Professional Council should consider

- creating workshops for members to engage in diversity, multicultural, and inclusion training and programming; and
- developing multicultural resource guides for members.

4. Convention and Events

The Conferences Professional Council should consider

- creating a specific link to a form that may be used to report discriminatory acts experienced by attendees at the convention;
- distributing the link to convention attendees along with an explanation of how to report discrimination at the convention;
- nominating a member of the Board of Directors to review and respond to reported discriminatory experiences;
- identifying keynote speakers who represent a wider range of underrepresented groups;
- promoting anti-racist principles or principles of inclusion in parity with academic principles (e.g., through large signage, conference program booklet); and
- providing and requiring diversity training for reviewers of convention submissions.

5. Publications

The Department of Content and Learning should consider

- encouraging applications for editorial team members from qualified underrepresented populations and document these efforts;
- documenting author diversity in institutional affiliation, geographical area, gender, race, and other demographic categories; and
- providing guidelines for materials writers and course developers to avoid coded-language, to use diverse images, and to eliminate cultural and linguistic bias in materials.

6. Advocacy

The Department of Advocacy and Outreach should consider

- including DEI in workshops for advocacy training; and

- encouraging TESOL affiliates to share issues and ideas related to diversity and inclusion and advocate for marginalized populations in appropriate ways based on context.

Deliverable IV: TESOL Membership Demographics

The DVTF found that most large education organizations collect demographic data. TESOL International Association currently does not. The DVTF prepared a task force survey to collect demographic information as well as employment status and job security from participants. The intention was to also draft a demographic questionnaire that the organization could use subsequently as part of an individual's initial membership application or renewal form.

The analysis of demographic questions in the survey however revealed that respondents reported identity in ways that differed somewhat from the choices included in the survey. For example, a number of the participants qualified their race and ethnicity by regional or geographic descriptors. As a result, the DVTF relied on members' feedback within the survey to create the proposed options in the list of demographic questions.

Deliverable V: TESOL Association Climate, Diversity, & Inclusivity Survey

From August 11 to September 21, 2020, the TESOL Climate, Diversity, and Inclusivity Survey was accessed 1,488 times. Between 705 and 864 respondents answered the survey items, depending on the question, yielding a 95% confidence level margin of error calculation of between 3.5% and 3.2%. Based on TESOL's membership population of 11,000 at the time, this was an acceptable margin of error for a social science questionnaire. Survey data were analyzed via SPSS in subsequent months. [Survey data are available [here](#).]

Sense of Belonging, Inclusivity, and DEI Experiences

From the results of the survey, the DVTF reports that a large majority of TESOL members who responded believe the association is committed to DEI but suggests that TESOL still has some work to do to be successful at this goal. Overall, 81.3% of the respondents believe TESOL fosters positive cross-cultural experiences and 61.3% feel their voice is heard. Furthermore, 74.7% of the respondents believe TESOL looks inwardly, to a great or moderate extent, to identify systemic discrimination; 20.2% believe TESOL does so to a small extent, and 5% believe TESOL does not do so.

- 89.2% see TESOL committed, to a great or moderate extent, to creating an inclusive organization.
- 86.9% feel they belong in the association.
- 61.3% feel their voice is heard in the association.
- 83.2% consider TESOL a diverse organization.
- 78.9% consider TESOL an inclusive organization.
- 81.3% say that TESOL has assisted them, to a great or moderate extent, with positive cross-cultural experiences.
- 74.1% say that TESOL has assisted them, to a great or moderate extent, in thoughtful use of language related to DEI.
- 65% say that TESOL has contributed, to a great or moderate extent, to their ability to recognize bias that affects their own thinking.

- 74.7% say that TESOL looks inwardly, to a great or moderate extent, to identify systemic discrimination within its practice.

Survey analysis found a strong correlation (.763) among respondents who felt TESOL contributed to their thoughtful use of language related to diversity and inclusion and to their ability to recognize bias that affects their own thinking. A similar strong correlation (.760) was found among those who believe that TESOL has contributed to their understanding of positive cross-cultural experiences and to their thoughtful use of language related to diversity and inclusion. Another strong correlation (.702) existed between those who believe that TESOL has contributed to their understanding of positive cross-cultural experiences and their ability to recognize bias that affects their own thinking.

One interpretation of the results is that TESOL could possibly contribute more in the areas where more than a quarter of the survey respondents did not note a considerable impact: one's voice being heard in the association, thoughtful use of language related to diversity and inclusion, the ability to recognize bias that affects one's thinking, and the identification of systemic discrimination with TESOL practices.

DEI Issues in TESOL

Respondents report positively that when TESOL offers exercises or events that promote DEI, they are able to update their understanding and participation in that realm, including in their own self-reflections. More than 87% of the respondents note that they feel included at TESOL events, at least some of the time, based on their social identity, while 19.1% have at least some of the time felt targeted or singled out unfairly due to their social identity in TESOL-related spaces. Some (17.2%) have heard negative remarks regarding social identity in TESOL spaces, at least some of the time. Survey respondents report that they feel that varieties of English are accepted in spoken contexts at events but report more barriers to use of varieties of English in publications.

- 82.6% feel different varieties of English are welcomed in the association's conferences and professional development events to a great or moderate extent.
- 70% feel different varieties of written English are acceptable in the association's publications to a great or moderate extent.
- 88.6% report having felt (at least sometimes) included on the basis of "social identity" at TESOL conventions; 87.1% at other events.
- 19.1% report having been singled out unfairly (at least sometimes) because of their social identity in TESOL-related spaces.
- 17.2% report having seen or heard negative remarks or comments (at least sometimes) related to the social identity in TESOL-related spaces.

When asked about being silenced or excluded based on several factors, 94.8% to 97.6% of participants (depending on the factor) report that they have not experienced this. Interestingly, for those respondents who report feeling silenced or excluded, the top factors are professional position (13.2%), socioeconomic status (11.8%), and political views (7.6%), with fewer responses for age (6.5%), race (5.8%), language (4.1%), gender (3.6%), or sexual orientation (3.1%).

Another finding was that 7% of the survey participants report belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community and 8% declined to respond to this question. The DVTF noted that for future advocacy efforts and data analysis, it is important to be sensitive to the members' contexts, namely the degree to which their lifestyles are legal or accepted in numerous countries.

Finally, the analysis of members' self-identification markers revealed two unexpected findings: 1) greater identification by religion rather than race or ethnicity, and 2) connections to an indigenous community or tribe rather than a geographic location, which was an outcome of members from Africa, South Asia and the Pacific, and Central and South America.

Deliverable VI: Mechanisms to Develop Diverse Leaders for the Benefit of the Field and Profession

TESOL is a multi-faceted association. Its different aspects include communities of practice [Interest Sections (ISs) and Professional Learning Networks (PLNs)], products (e.g., publications, standards, professional development offerings), awards (e.g., grants, scholarships), activities (e.g., conventions, academies, symposia, webinars, etc.), and governance structure and leadership (e.g., Executive Director, Nominating Committee, Board of Directors, Professional Councils, TESOL staff). For each of these areas, TESOL International Association should review paths to fostering inclusion based on, but not limited to identity, knowledge, and experience. This could include encouraging some Professional Learning Networks to seek Interest Section status, for example. The following questions should be considered:

- Whose identities are represented or not represented?
- Whose knowledge and experiences are valued and whose knowledge/experiences are not?
- In what ways is the association fostering inclusivity?

For example, where TESOL's structure is concerned, the entities that clearly demonstrate the association's inclusivity are largely those with Professional Learning Network status, but they lack most of the TESOL support that Interest Sections receive. The reasons why should be investigated to determine whether those PLNs see structural issues involved, such as definitions of what constitutes an Interest Section. Where feasible, those PLNs should be encouraged to apply for Interest Section status.

An example of where TESOL could be more inclusive in its activities is selecting featured speakers (including plenary speakers) at TESOL annual conventions that reflect the demographics of the membership. Although the recent TESOL 2020 and 2021 Virtual Conventions included a more diverse lineup of speakers, more speakers of varying physical abilities, racial, and ethnic backgrounds should be included. By not doing so, TESOL may inadvertently perpetuate a sentiment that non-white, non-US-based, and/or NNES members are not leaders in or major contributors to the TESOL association, the TESOL profession, or education at large. Even if many convention attendees and TESOL members know that this is not true, the absence of these groups in leadership roles and as speakers at TESOL's major events reinforces subconscious (and conscious) biases, stereotypes, and negative perceptions of underrepresented and/or marginalized peoples in the U.S. and around the globe.

Based on the research and preliminary findings of the Task Force, the aforementioned recommendations are inclusive of mechanisms that can take TESOL International Association steps closer to becoming an

educational leader in anti-racist, equitable, inclusive, and diversity-focused English language education. Nevertheless, there are three mechanisms that the DVTF believes would be critical in ensuring that DEI is integrated in all facets of the work that TESOL Association does.

Mechanism I – Executive Director

Ensure that the Executive Director of TESOL International Association has a proven commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the organization and in the profession.

The DVTF believes that the Executive Director of TESOL International Association should have management and leadership skills that include evidence of contributions to the achievement of strategic equity and inclusion goals. The ED should be committed to TESOL's DEI principles and initiatives and be a staunch advocate for DEI issues. As such, the following characteristics should be considered for candidates who wish to assume the Executive Directorship of TESOL International Association:

- Experience leading a diverse organization, including leading diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding access, equity, diversity, inclusion, implicit bias, and institutional racism; and ability and experience developing and implementing strategies to identify and define complex equity and inclusion issues.
- Knowledge and experience developing and implementing communication strategies to reach diverse audiences.
- Experience communicating effectively to front-line staff, managers, executive leadership, teams, Board members, partners, and diverse stakeholder groups.
- Experience providing direction on developing relationships with underserved or underrepresented communities, communities of color, and differently able communities.
- Knowledge and experience facilitating and leading difficult conversations.

Mechanism II – Revision of TESOL International Association's Strategic Plan

The TESOL strategic plan provides goals and objectives to guide the association. If DEI is a goal for the association, it should be addressed in the strategic plan. The DVTF suggests that an updated or revised strategic plan for TESOL include the following:

- clear definitions of “diversity,” “inclusion,” and other DEI terminology deemed relevant and important;
- specific initiatives relating to diversity and inclusion; and
- Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely (SMART) goals for each initiative.

Mechanism III – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Professional Council

Professional Councils provide professional expertise to advance the association's strategic objectives and activities and are accountable to the Board of Directors. If DEI within the association is to be highlighted as

a strategic objective, it is important that there be a professional council to represent that particular area. A DEI professional council would be responsible for the following:

- overseeing the implementation of DEI principles;
- assisting TESOL entities with DEI initiatives;
- responding to DEI issues that emerge in the association, at its conventions, and within the profession; and
- reporting to a staff partner, board liaison, and the Executive Director regarding DEI concerns.

Limitations of the Diverse Voices Task Force Report

The Task Force recognizes several limitations of the work which was conducted over 18 months. First, the review of peer organizations included only one association that is based outside the United States with an international membership. Therefore the findings may have had an overly U.S.-centric perspective. Second, although all members of TESOL (numbering approximately 11,000 at the time) were invited to participate in the survey, fewer than 900 did so. Third, the survey results mostly reported statistics in the aggregate. Correlational studies were not conducted to see if any recurring opinions came from particular groups or not.

Next Steps: DEI Initiatives

TESOL International Association's mission is to advance the expertise of professionals who teach English to speakers of other languages in multilingual contexts worldwide. We accomplish this through professional learning, research, standards, & advocacy, and we operate under four core values: Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, and Lifelong Learning. Our value of Respect states that we are committed to equity, diversity, multilingualism, multiculturalism, and individual language rights. This commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is unswerving but requires corresponding actions.

TESOL is grateful to the Diverse Voice Task Force for its internal and external review of policies and practices that can help TESOL become a more equitable and inclusive organization. TESOL has always been a diverse association with global members representing a wide variety of racioethnic groups, language backgrounds, professions, religions, ages, abilities, gender identities, geographic locations, and more, but this report has shown that we can do better in ensuring that the voices, needs, and interests of our diverse membership are heard and supported.

Actions to Date

Since March 2019, the association has undertaken a number of activities to promote more equity and inclusion, in addition to the striking of the Diverse Voice Task Force in the summer of 2019. These include the following:

Regarding the Annual Convention:

- Enhanced training was delivered for convention proposal reviewers.
- A review of past conventions was undertaken to determine the scope of diversity among the keynote and featured speakers.
- A system to report incidents of discrimination at TESOL events is being set up.

Regarding current events about racial and social justice issues:

- A special issue was prepared on the topic, drawing from prior TESOL Quarterly and TESOL Journal articles and made available online, free of charge to all.
- A DEI Book Club was established on myTESOL for members to discuss some of the articles from the special issue and other related topics.
- TESOL published two statements condemning racial injustice and inequality.
- TESOL supported actions in the U.S. Congress, such as the Anti-Discrimination Resolution in U.S. House of Representatives and passage of the Dream Act in the U.S. Senate, and opposed other actions, such as bans on international students and restrictive visa rules.
- TESOL held its first webinar honoring Black History Month.
- TESOL held its first webinar honoring Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.
- TESOL disseminated information and provided a platform for webinars from its communities of practice addressing racism, discrimination, and bigotry in English language teaching.

Regarding TESOL leadership:

- The Nominating Committee has incorporated principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion into its candidate recruitment efforts and evaluation rubric.
- TESOL's interim Executive Director has joined the CEO Action Network and pledged to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace. (See <https://www.ceoaction.com/pledge> for more information.)

Regarding TESOL membership:

- The Board of Directors approved a policy for all members and others who use TESOL's social media to guide actions for posting on TESOL's venues and for responding to inappropriate conduct.

Next Steps

In March 2021, the TESOL Board of Directors accepted the DVTF's report and began discussing ways to implement the recommendations. Several activities and practices will be undertaken in the short-term, from 6 months to 2 years. These include the following:

Regarding TESOL leadership:

- The Board will address DEI more explicitly in the upcoming strategic planning process.
- TESOL will define underrepresented and historically marginalized groups within TESOL and encourage them to apply for leadership positions.
- The Board has committed to hiring an Executive Director with management and leadership skills that include evidence of contributions to the achievement of strategic equity and inclusion goals.

Regarding TESOL membership:

- TESOL will define underrepresented and historically marginalized groups within TESOL and target outreach for membership.
- TESOL will elicit more detailed demographic information in membership applications and renewal forms, using the DVTF's proposed list of questions.

Regarding TESOL's Annual Convention and strategic events:

- The convention and future TESOL events will include a welcoming message expressing a vision of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- TESOL will create a form and a specific link that may be used to report discriminatory acts experienced by attendees at the convention or other strategic events and distribute the link to convention attendees along with an explanation of how to use it.
- TESOL will provide and require diversity training for reviewers of convention submissions.
- TESOL will identify keynote and featured speakers who represent a wide range of underrepresented groups.

Regarding TESOL publications:

- TESOL will encourage applications for editorial team members from qualified underrepresented populations and document these efforts.

TESOL will hold itself accountable for these measures by reporting on progress as part of the Annual Business Meeting.

Future Actions

The TESOL Board of Directors recognizes that other recommendations merit action as well. These will continue to be discussed and ways to implement them will be explored. Some of the recommendations require resources that the association does not have available in the current and projected year's budget due to the fiscal shortfalls caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, TESOL International Association is committed to serving its diverse members in equitable and inclusive ways and will continue to pursue appropriate and effective actions.

Appendix A: Diverse Voices Task Force Members

Dr. Kisha Bryan, DVTF Co-chair, is a Professor of ESL Education at Tennessee State University, where she focuses on intersectional identities of Black immigrants and the role of language in identity construction.



Eric Dwyer, DVTF Co-chair and associate professor at Florida International University, is a former TESOL Board member and a James E. Alatis Award for Service to TESOL recipient. His work includes the TESOL Teacher Education Standards.

Dr. Arlene M. Costello, a faculty member at the University of West Florida, is President of SATESOL of Florida and 2022 Chair of the TESOL Conferences Professional Council. She received the 2007 National Christa McAuliffe Educator Award.



Dr. Luciana C. de Oliveira is Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor in the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. She was the first Latina to serve as President (2018-2019) of TESOL. TESOL Board Liaison 2019-2020; task force member (2020-2021)

Phoenicia L. Grant is compassionate about providing access and equity to students in her role as an EL Counselor and International Transcript Evaluator for DeKalb County School District in Stone Mountain, Georgia.



Abdulsamad Humaidan is a doctoral candidate majoring in Language, Literacies, and Culture/TESOL at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, a former Fulbright Foreign Student Program recipient, and a TESOL Leadership Mentoring Program awardee.

Dr. Sara Kangas is an assistant professor in the College of Education at Lehigh University. Her research examines the learning opportunities afforded to English learners with disabilities for their academic and language development.



Dr. Noreen Mirza is at the National University of Medical Sciences in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. She is a life member of SPELT, teacher trainer, and IELTS examiner with a strong interest in marginalized communities. (inactive; no photo available)



Dr. Yasmine Romero is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu. Her research maps intersectionality onto language and writing studies. She teaches courses in rhetoric and composition, cultural studies, and critical race theory.

Mary Romney is a retired educator who taught English learners for over 40 years in Spain and the U.S. She is a former TESOL Board member and recipient of the James E. Alatis Award for Service to TESOL.



Federico Salas-Isnardi is Director of the Mayor's Office for Adult Literacy in Houston, Texas. He is an adult educator and diversity trainer. He received the 2021 James E. Alatis Award for Service to TESOL.

Dr. Deborah Healey, DVTF Board Liaison (2020-2021), was the 2019-2020 President of TESOL. Her major areas of interest are appropriate use of technology in global settings, online education, and language teacher education.



Rita Buckner, the TESOL Staff Partner to the Task Force, is one of the longest-serving TESOL staff members. She is the Executive Assistant and Human Resources Manager, as well as Staff Partner to the Nominating Committee.

Appendix B: Definitions of Key Terms

Anti-racism is the practice of opposing and actively interrupting racism and racist acts, and the adoption of policies that support and promote racial tolerance while actively seeking to remove racist practices and behaviors.

Bigotry is the obstinate or unreasonable attachment to a belief, opinion, or faction; in particular, it is prejudice against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular group.

Discrimination is the unfair treatment of a person or people based on the class or category to which they belong, rather than on individual merit.

Diversity is the representation and active engagement of individuals with varying identities at all levels of an organization. These identities are based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, dis/abilities, language background, nationality, appearance, geographic location, religious and/or political beliefs, or other characteristics. In TESOL, diversity is the participation of a variety of groups and individuals throughout the association, especially in positions of prominence.

Equity is the fair treatment of all people in terms of access, opportunity, and advancement. This is not the same as equality. Equity recognizes that there are barriers for some people based on historic inequality, so it also means working to identify and remove barriers that prevent some groups from being full participants in TESOL activities.

Inclusion/Inclusivity is the incorporation of groups that are underrepresented in all areas of an organization, especially those of prominence. In TESOL, positions of prominence are those that are visible to the entire membership, and include, for example, the following:

- leadership (in governance);
- adjudicated and featured presentations at the annual convention;
- contributions to publications;
- recipients of scholarships or grants; and
- course facilitators, webinar hosts, and more.

Racism is the presence of stereotypes, prejudice, bigotry, negative attitudes, and discriminatory acts based on the race, color, or ethnicity of a person or a group. Racism is also the system of power and advantage conferred on one racial group to the detriment and exclusion of people of other races. Systemic racism has direct consequences for historically marginalized people and can result in enslavement; religious, linguistic, or cultural oppression; colonization; and/or genocide.

Representation is the inclusion in the leadership and governance of an organization, as well as in presentations and publications, of diverse demographic groups in a manner that reflects the proportion of that group in the total membership of the organization.

Silencing refers to discriminatory policies and acts used to silence individuals or groups of people. Within organizations, silencing can be described as both acts to exclude groups or individuals from positions of prominence (where their voices may be amplified) and withholding of information and opinions about the organization that could hinder growth.

Underrepresentation is the insufficient or low representation of certain groups of people in the decisions, governance, publications, and events of an organization. This is proportional to the demographic presence of a group in a larger population, such as membership in the organization. The underrepresentation of a particular demographic within TESOL indicates a need for targeted recruitment of or outreach to that group.