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MEMORANDUM

TO: Yale Alumni

FROM: Rahul Prasad '87 PhD, Chair, Executive Director's DEI Working Group
Weili Cheng '77, Executive Director, Association of Yale Alumni

DATE: May 18, 2018

SUBJECT: Update: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work of the AYA

BACKGROUND

As many of you know, an alumni task force focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) worked together from early 2016 through fall 2017, resulting in a [report](#) delivered at the AYA Assembly that November. The task force's efforts were highlighted in a recent YaleNews [story](#) about alumni leadership in DEI.

NEW WORKING GROUP FOR DEI

In January of this year, Weili constituted the Executive Director's DEI Working Group to follow up on selected recommendations in the report. Her charge to the Working Group runs through June 30, 2019. We fully expect DEI work will continue in various forms after the end of the term of this Working Group, including further work on the report's recommendations.

The Working Group consists of the following alumni: Akosua Barthwell Evans '90 JD, Marv Berenblum '56, Lise Chapman '81 MBA, Darryl Crompton '76 MPH, Jerry Henry '80 MDiv, Jocelyn Kane, Susan Lennon '85 MPPM, Maria Lopez-Bresnahan '78, Erin Roberts '02, Edward Sevilla '82, Nancy Stratford '77, Rosita Thomas '87 PhD and Christine Walsh '73 MD. The Working Group is supported by AYA staff liaisons Nicholas Roman Lewis '93 and Jenny Chavira '89.

Based on the AYA's current resources and staffing, the Working Group is pursuing the following projects, each based on recommendations in the Task Force's report:

- Organizing events branded as Community Impact Initiative to bring together alumni and civic leaders to discuss solutions to community challenges;
- Continuation of FY2018's "leadership forums," now known as "Learning Events," with an expanded focus on additional DEI themes.
- Developing best practices for building diverse leadership pipelines for AYA, classes, clubs, SIGs, Alumni Fund, G&P; and
- Developing ways to engage young alumni and alumni of color, including building alumni-to-student connections around DEI.

COMMITTEE WORK

The Working Group consists of 4 committees organized around each of the 4 projects. In addition to the Working Group monthly calls, each of the committees has been meeting regularly by phone.

A) Community Impact Initiative

The working group has decided to hold an event, late summer 2018 in Washington, D.C. entitled “Closing DC’s Food Security Gap.” As D.C. grows and changes as a city, Washingtonians have very different experiences trying to get healthy and affordable food. In some neighborhoods, new construction brings new supermarkets and food options. But [11 percent of the city is characterized as a food desert](#) – a place where over 40 percent of residents don’t have cars, the closest supermarket is over half a mile away, and poverty levels are high. This Community Impact Initiative event will address gaps in food security in D.C. in the wake of increased development, gentrification, and socioeconomic and racial stratification, building on issues covered during the successful Yale Explores event about the 21st Century City, held in D.C. in April 2018. The event will be co-sponsored by local Yale organizations such as the Yale Club of Washington, D.C. and will consist of the following three parts.

- Learn About It (Educational Panel): This panel will bring together experts from the Yale community to speak about food insecurity, urban planning, gentrification, stratification, etc. The panelists will be asked to speak about the topics generally, and how they impact D.C. specifically.
- Do About It (Community Service Event): This one-day event will be held in a manner similar to the Yale Day of Service, bringing Yalies in the area together to perform community service with a local organization that deals with issues of food access or food security. While the specific community service activity will be determined by working with the partner, potential options could include staffing an existing local or pop-up community greenmarket, preparing food boxes for D.C. residents who live in food deserts, or lending a hand to a community garden in an area with limited food access.
- Be About It (Ongoing Partnership): This one-day community service fair will help to bring together Yale alumni and organizations in the D.C. area that need ongoing volunteer work to address the issue of food security. Ideally, the fair will showcase three to four community organizations, each serving a different community in D.C., each of whom will speak about their work and then open up for questions and conversations with the attendees. To make the event even more appealing, an activity will also be incorporated into the event, like a healthy-recipe-on-a-budget swap, a potluck, or a community garden walking tour, to be determined in partnership with the organizations involved.

This committee plans to organize another event in 2019 and will compile a template on how to plan such events so that other Yale alumni groups may similarly work together to make a difference in their communities.

B) Learning Events

This committee has designed a survey to identify experts and speakers on DEI in the alumni community, with a goal of compiling a list that can be used as a reference for events and programs. As in the case of the community impact initiative committee, this committee will plan and execute a couple of events in 2018-19 and create a template that can be passed on to other Yale groups to stage such events in the future. One proposal being considered is an event to help participants understand implicit bias and learn how to change this behavior.

C) Diverse Leadership Pipeline

This committee is working to identify mechanisms for creating a strong pipeline of emerging leaders to reflect the alumni population of today. Building this diverse pipeline involves working with the committee that is focused on young and diverse alumni engagement. The leadership pipeline committee will engage Yale alumni groups, such as [YaleWomen](#) and the [Yale Alumni Nonprofit Alliance](#) (YANA) that already have or are working towards diverse leadership, to identify best practices for creating a diversity pipeline for all Yale groups.

D) Engaging Young Alumni, Diverse Alumni

This committee is working to identify ways to remove barriers that prevent young alumni and alumni of diverse backgrounds from engaging in Yale alumni activities. Cost of events is often cited as a major factor. Not having other alumni that “look like me” is another major factor preventing engagement. This group is planning on working with local Yale alumni organizations such as clubs and shared interest groups to help produce events that reduce these barriers to entry. Even programs such as Yale Educational Travel (YET) might benefit from producing lower cost, shorter trips that appeal to younger alumni and alumni that cannot either afford the cost or time commitment of the typical Yale travel program.

A common goal that all four committees have is to create templates and otherwise document the planning for their respective programs. In this way, other Yale groups may continue with the programming in a sustained way.

We look forward to sharing further updates on this work with you.