

## TESOL International Association

### Diverse Voices Task Force

22 May 2019

#### Background

TESOL International Association has made significant efforts to have geographic diversity represented in its leadership at all levels. However, other forms of diversity have not been as well represented. This became quite clear as a result of a Teaching Tip session at the TESOL 2019 International Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The presentation was about offensive language in the classroom, a topic which many teachers struggle with and which the proposal reviewers felt would be appropriate.

Unfortunately, the topic was not addressed in a sufficiently sensitive manner. In addition, the Teaching Tips were all in the Exhibit Hall, so this presentation was visible and audible to passers-by as well as those who came specifically to attend. A follow-up meeting during the conference with then-incoming TESOL President Deborah Healey, TESOL Associate Executive Director John Segota, and eight African-American TESOLers, including several from Georgia TESOL, brought out more fundamental issues. These included diversity and inclusion in the adjudication process and broader representation at the convention and in various levels of TESOL leadership. We also recognized it is unclear to what extent our publications, published authors, and event leaders represent diverse voices.

TESOL's success as an organization that is the pre-eminent source of information about English language teaching, as well as attaining our strategic outcomes of Global Presence and Connectivity, Knowledge and Expertise, and Voice and Advocacy depend on having diverse representation in TESOL events, publications, and leadership. We have begun the process of incorporating awareness about implicit bias in our conference strand coordinator and proposal reader training. We are also looking at ways that the TESOL Office could do a better job at diversity and inclusion. To improve diversity in leadership, we are now calling for a Diverse Voices Task Force.

The Task Force is expected to develop and present ideas and recommendations to the Board of Directors, which will in turn decide on policy changes for the association.

#### Charge

Focus – cultivating diverse leadership and a culture of inclusion in the association

- Develop a **vision statement** on diversity and inclusion for the association [draft by March 2020]
  - What does diversity and inclusion mean for TESOL International Association?
  - What are the different dimensions of diversity within the association?
- Research and **report** on the ways that other associations
  - address diversity and inclusion
  - diversify their leadership
- Develop **recommendations** on how TESOL International Association can cultivate diverse leadership at all levels within the association
- Develop **recommendations** on how we can build a culture of inclusion across the association
- Identify possible **mechanisms** the association can employ to develop diverse leaders for the benefit of the field and profession