

Standing Committee on Diversity and Inclusivity

Charge: *The committee will have the following charge:*

- *Advise NCTE on efforts to foster diversity and inclusivity among members and potential members, including (but not restricted to) in terms of race, ethnicity, sex and gender identity, age, economic status, physical ability, and teaching circumstances. Work in concert with the NCTE Executive Committee and Executive Director on specific assignments that ensure equity and diversity within membership.*
- *Identify strategies to employ the resources and values of diversity and inclusivity to advance NCTE's mission for all members, our students, and our constituencies.*
- *Provide annual or biannual analyses of the effectiveness of NCTE diversity and inclusivity initiatives, and to make recommendations based on that analysis.*
- *Identify existing research or resources that can support a diverse NCTE membership and their professional needs. Identify gaps or opportunities that might be met with new research or resources.*

Major activities: What major actions, projects, initiatives, or studies in your charge have been completed by your group since July 1, 2017? In each activity describe the more important features of the work and connect your work to the NCTE Vision Statement, if applicable.

Note: *In January 2018, Toby Emert, former chair of the committee, became a coeditor of NCTE's English Journal, which meant that he had to resign as the committee chair. Julia Torres, a committee member, was selected as the chair of the committee, but shortly thereafter, Julia was elected to serve on the Executive Council. These changes in duties for both Toby and Julia have meant that the committee has been "in limbo" in terms of a designated chair for much of the 2017-18 year. See the correspondence below.ⁱ*

1. What actions, projects, initiatives, or studies are "in progress" at this time?

In preparation for the 2017 conference, the committee members worked closely with the local engagement committee to plan for a robust series of events specifically related to issues of race and justice (in response to several incidents of harassment and violence in Missouri, where the conference was held). Julia Torres served as a committee representative to the local engagement committee and reported on their work to the group in online meetings held prior to the conference.

We have also partnered with the Committee on Anti-racism and Bias to sponsor a conference session for the 2018 conference in Houston. Here is the information about the session:

Title:

Envisioning Our Future: Joint Session for the Committees on Anti-Racism & Bias / Diversity and Inclusivity

Abstract:

How might teachers, students, and other educational leaders work together to re-image Language Arts policies and practices with a focus on justice, healing, and equity? In this session, you will hear from practicing educators who are leading the work to disrupt white supremacy and oppression within NCTE and schools.

Panelists/Participants:

Julia Torres - DCIS at Montbello, Denver, CO (committee member)
Tiffany Rehbein - Laramie, WY (committee member)
Lorena Germán- Headwaters School, Austin, TX
Susi Long - University of South Carolina (committee member)
Holly Spinelli- Somers High School, NY

Jazmen Moore- Chicago Math & Science Academy, IL
Keisha Rembert- Clifford Clone Middle School, IL

2. What have you accomplished so far, and what is your timeline for future work?

In our report to NCTE after the 2017 conference in St. Louis, the committee members suggested that the committee is struggling to identify a specific role to play or a specific project to undertake that will assist the NCTE leadership team. That is still an issue. Below is an excerpt from that report that attempts to describe this concern:

The committee members who were present discussed with Jocelyn the struggle we have had in identifying how to operationalize the expectations embedded in the charge. Over the course of the year, the committee met in an online conference call three times (March, August, and October). In each discussion, we tried to imagine specific projects that would be beneficial to the organization and that would address elements of the charge. I'm attaching the notes from the August meeting, which sketch out the ideas we generated for addressing the concerns about the recent race-related violence in Missouri (and across the country) and the political responses from lawmakers in the state.

The members of the committee are each especially committed to issues of justice, but we have had difficulty determining exactly where to begin our work and how we can be helpful to the organization. In conversations throughout the year we had drafted four areas of possible attention: (1) membership, (2) awareness of current resources, (3) analysis of existing inclusivity efforts, and (4) research.

There is some interest among committee members to partner in more specific ways with the Committee on Anti-racism and Bias, as it seems the goals of each group overlap.

At this point, it's unclear what the timeline is for future work, but once a new chair is selected for the committee, that person may help the members select from the areas of attention that we have identified and, in consultation with the NCTE leadership team, choose a focus for the coming year's agenda.

3. How has the work of your group contributed to NCTE's role in shaping the profession of teaching and/or the understanding of literacy in educational contexts?

¹From: **Emert, Toby** <temert@agnesscott.edu>

Date: Tue, Jun 5, 2018 at 9:53 AM

Subject: Notes on Standing Committee

To: "Kirkpatrick, Emily" <EKirkpatrick@ncte.org>, "Jocelyn A. Chadwick" <jocelynochadwick@yahoo.com>

Dear Emily and Jocelyn,

I just wanted to check in with you about the work of the Standing Committee on Diversity and Inclusivity. Since taking over as coeditor of *English Journal* in January, I've had little time to do other service work, and, unfortunately, I don't see that changing very much between now and November. So, I wanted to let you know that.

We are set for Julia Torres to take over as chair after the convention in Houston and we have put together a sponsored session at the conference. So, we're taking care of what's pressing. I don't know that, without me having the time to "push" a bit, that we will accomplish some of the other goals we set for the year.

However, if there's a specific need or project that you envision for the committee, I think I could get folks to take on something that's a clear priority for NCTE.

I apologize for having to send this kind of note, but it's become clear to me that the time commitment of editing the journal makes other "chores" difficult to get to.

So, I wanted you to have that information as you discuss priorities for the committee.

Julia is excited to take over the chair's position and has already begun cross-committee conversations. That's good news.

Best to you both
Toby

**Submitted by Toby Emert, former chair of committee,
after a conversation with Julia Torres, interim chair**