



## 2019 Mid-Year Update

### **History of the Diversity Inclusion Commission**

The **Diversity Commission** was established by resolution at our Centers for Spiritual Living Vancouver Annual Meeting in February of 2013. While individuals and groups within the organization have expressed varying views about what led to the establishment of the Diversity Commission, perhaps it is most accurately seen within the greater context of the Science of Mind teaching that consciousness is causal. Such a perspective recognizes the manifestation of the Commission as one of answered prayer in the continuous revelation of The Divine's Self-Knowingness as the diverse expression of Itself through the vast multiplicity of form and effect as Creation Itself.

The Commission is made up of twelve (12) members appointed by the Centers for Spiritual Living Leadership Council. The Commission is charged with leading the organization's efforts in developing plans and programs for attracting and retaining a diverse population in its member communities and for inclusion in leadership, conference speaking opportunities, committees, and all aspects of the organization in support of continuing growth of the Organization globally. This commission is charged to make recommendations based on one-year, three-year and five-year plans to the Leadership Council. For a more detailed explanation, refer to SECTION ELEVEN – ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION, Item 11.2.4 Diversity Commission, of the Centers for Spiritual Living – Organizational Design Model as amended at the organization's Vancouver Annual Meeting (2013), Priority 4: Diversity of the Centers for Spiritual Living Strategic Plan (2014) and throughout the Centers for Spiritual Living Strategic Plan Update 2019 ([https://ourcsl.org/pdf/2019/StrategicPlan\\_2019\\_Update\\_TLC.pdf](https://ourcsl.org/pdf/2019/StrategicPlan_2019_Update_TLC.pdf)).

### **Focus**

At its inception, the Commission focused on educating the organization at large of its existence. Among its first steps, a call was sent out to the field inviting individuals to apply to be trained as diversity trainers to facilitate informational presentations within member communities. As the program unfolded, the Commission's efforts were met with varying degrees of welcoming embrace, tolerance, acceptance and resistance. During the initial years the work of the commission focused on educating the organization and its members about diversity in general; what it means, its complexities, its impact within and on the organization, and why it matters that we address diversity at all levels of our organization from both a human and spiritual perspective.

## Gap Analysis

From the fourth quarter of 2017 thru the second quarter of 2018, the Commission conducted a self-initiated gap analysis examining the alignment and impact of its activity to its organizational charge. Identified accomplishments were:

- the establishment of the Commission,
- the successful completion of the initial Train the Trainer Program,
- the successful implementation of delivering Diversity Training to our CSL Leadership, CSL Home Office Employees and those Member Communities requesting DI training presentations,
- the creation and presentation of a video produced by the Center for Spiritual Awareness – West Sacramento, California highlighting the importance and positive impact of openly addressing diversity as a spiritual community (<https://youtu.be/vEC35HHkI08> ),
- the creation of printed media for advertising the Commission,
- the creation and on-going management of the Diversity Inclusion - Centers for Spiritual Living Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/csldiversity/> ),
- the creation and on-going management of the CSL Diversity Inclusion Commission Resources Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/597473863962475/> ),
- the creation and on-going management of the Commission’s website (<https://diversity.csl.org/> ), and
- an increased awareness of and success in creating a more diverse and inclusive make-up within the Commission members

Gaps presenting increased opportunity for organizational engagement were identified as:

- improving the overall understanding of the intended purpose and function of the Commission;
- creating a well-defined and effective recruitment, screening and assessment process for evaluating and recommending perspective Commissioner’s to the CSL Leadership Council for possible appointment;
- creating a well-defined and effective onboarding process for new Commissioners;
- creating a well-defined and effective off-boarding process for departing Commissioners;
- more effectively using social media as a teaching tool and as a community building and support network,
- and, developing more collaborative and mutually supportive relationships between the Commission and the CSL Member Communities, Practitioner Body, various Councils, Committees, organizational employees and Leadership Council, and
- a greater focus on impact as our primary measure of accomplishment.

One of the awakenings that we, the Commission, realized through our process, was a call to bring our focus and activity to bear in a way that would begin to bridge the terms “diversity and inclusion”. We recognized that The One, individualizing Itself in multiplicity, already created diversity so we really didn’t need to create more diversity in Centers for Spiritual Living, rather, we needed to be about identifying, recognizing, celebrating and, including the diversity of Creation within every level of our organization. Out of this awakening we changed our name from Diversity Commission to Diversity Inclusion Commission to more accurately communicate our function.

## **Social Media and Virtual Teaching**

In 2018, the Commission initiated two significant actions to more effectively use social media and virtual platforms as teaching tools, avenues of community building and support networks in collaboration with the CSL Member Communities, Practitioner Body, and our various organizational Councils and Committees. The first project was the compilation and weekly release of 52 “Did You Know” educational statements highlighting little known information about diverse concepts, groups, communities, and cultures including an affirmation and a call to action offering additional resources to explore for further education. The second project was the creation and implementation of monthly live webinars covering a variety of topics related to diversity inclusion.

The Commission launched its monthly webinar offerings in April of 2018 presenting webinars covering the following topics:

- Understanding Diversity Inclusion in Today’s World
- Transforming Unconscious Bias
- Building Inclusive Communities
- How to Talk to Friends and Family About Diversity Inclusion
- The Importance of Diversity Inclusion in our Leadership and our Elections
- Gender Identity: What's in a Body?
- Navigating the Transgender Journey
- Celebrating the Holiday Season Inclusively

In the first half of 2019 (January through June), the Commission conducted webinars covering the following topics:

- Unconscious Bias: Continuing the Journey
- Whiteness as a Social Construct (Bystander to Ally Series)
- Black History Month- Black Pioneers in SOM
- Ally as a Verb (Bystander to Ally Series)
- From Marginalization to Empowerment (Part One)
- Identifying Your Inner Abolitionist (Bystander to Ally Series)
- From Marginalization to Empowerment - Breaking the Cycle of Internalized Oppression (Part Two)
- Hispanic or Latino?
- Asian and Pacific Islander American History
- Understand Multiracial Experiences
- Unscrambling the Alphabet - What LGBTQ Means
- Celebrating Pride Month
- Celebrating Juneteenth (U.S. Emancipation Proclamation)

## **Measuring Productivity, Outcomes and Social Impact**

The 2018 webinar offerings drew a total of 575 attendees.

The 2019 webinar offerings to date have drawn a total of 981 attendees.

The total number of attendees since the beginning of the monthly Diversity Inclusion Commission Webinars has been 1,556.

In connection with the webinars, we created an anonymous online survey as a means to engage attendees to evaluate our performance, increase community communication with the Commission and to measure the outcomes and impact of the webinars. The survey questions asked after each webinar are:

- Q1 How likely is it that you would recommend the *(specific webinar title)* Webinar to a friend or colleague?
- Q2 Overall, how would you rate the *(specific webinar title)* Webinar?
- Q3 What did you like about the *(specific webinar title)* Webinar?
- Q4 What did you dislike about the *(specific webinar title)* Webinar?
- Q5 How organized was the *(specific webinar title)* Webinar?
- Q6 How engaging was the facilitator?
- Q7 How well did the facilitator answer questions presented by webinar participants?
- Q8 Prior to the *(specific webinar title)* Webinar, how much of the information presented did you have?
- Q9 Was the *(specific webinar title)* Webinar length too long too short or about right?
- Q10 What I experienced as most beneficial to me was...
- Q11 I believe what would have made this webinar even more beneficial to me is...
- Q12 Other topics I would like the Diversity Inclusion Commission to address are...
- Q13 Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience?

While statics provide us important information about outcomes, a measure of productivity, they give us little information about our deeper goal of impact. Impact measures the broader changes that occur within the community, organization, society, or environment as a result of outcomes. Social Impact Measurement is a much more complex process of understanding how much social change occurred and can be attributed to the Commission's activities.

To measure social impact, we look to the culture or the character and personality of our organization. Is our work evidenced in the values, traditions, interactions, behaviors, and attitudes of our Centers for Spiritual Living membership, member communities, councils, committees, and leadership? Is our work evidenced as more inclusive cultures through every level of our organization as increased engagement of diverse groups, cultures and perspectives? Are we attracting diverse populations at every level of our organization and, if we are attracting them, are they staying? Are we attracting a greater expression and experience of diversity in the talent and leadership of our organization? Are we experiencing greater communal happiness and satisfaction through increased inclusion of diversity? Admittedly, these are challenging to measure due to their subjective nature.

## **Impact**

Some of the ways we are seeing impact evidenced are:

- A visible shift in the composition of our organizational Leadership from predominantly heterosexual white male, to one of predominantly women of intersectional diversity including,

but not limited to, diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, economic, gender identity, sexual orientation, educational and professional expressions and experience.

- The 2019 Centers for Spiritual Living Sunday Talk Bank Theme “Spirituality in Action” which offers monthly themes that invite a metaphysical perspective of “spiritual activism”:
  - Seek the Common Good
  - Be Truthful in Facts and Motives
  - Promote Diversity and Inclusion
  - Care for the Poor
  - Protect the Vulnerable
  - Advocate for Freedom of Thought
  - Respect other Nations and Peoples
  - Ensure the Stewardship of Our Planet
  - Cherish the Human Family
  - Spiritually Motivated Moral Leadership
  - Celebrating Science of Mind Through the Holy Days
- An increase in the engagement of webinar participants which has resulted in newly forming post webinar discussion groups by and for those who want to go deeper with the topics and material presented. During the first half of 2019, four (4) such discussion groups occurred: two (2) General Diversity Inclusion Discussion Groups, one (1) From Marginalization to Empowerment Discussion Group, and one (1) Bystander to Ally Series Discussion Group with a total of 105 participants.
- An increase in member communities attending webinar offerings as a group and holding their own discussions afterwards.
- The establishment of on-going Diversity Inclusion Discussion Groups within several member communities.
- An increase in member communities including the information about the webinar offerings in the weekly e-Blast Newsletters and bulletin announcements.
- The establishment of Diversity Inclusion Affinity Groups within several member communities.
- An increase awareness and effort by member communities to visibly celebrate diverse expression of creation and culture such as Black History Month, LGBTQIA Pride Month, Holidays recognized and celebrated in other religions and cultures than those historically recognized and celebrated within their respective communities.
- Diversity being factored into curricula development.
- And, an increased reaching out to the Commission members requesting webinars on topics we have yet to cover and for direct support and assistance in moving their respective communities into a more inclusive culture.
- Increased diversity in speakers at official CSL events
- Diversity Inclusion Commission collaboration with Global Services
- Diversity Inclusion Commission has been actively represented on the Nominating Council for past 3 years and we have experienced greater diversity among candidates and elected individuals than in the past.
- Diversity Inclusion related goals are included in several sections of CSL Strategic Plan
- Increased diversity among the nominations for and recipients of CSL Awards.

The open-ended comment sections of the post webinar surveys continue to provide the Commission with invaluable indicators of impact and sometimes lack thereof. We read and consider each comment. Your input is instrumental in growing each of us as individuals and as a Commission in service to Centers for Spiritual Living. As we teach in every webinar and presentation, the work of diversity inclusion is often messy and uncomfortable as we challenge generational beliefs and conditioning.

We, too, experience missteps as we awaken and grow, we take ownership free of guilt and shame, we learn, and we improve our efforts and offerings. YOUR input informs, clarifies and guides our ongoing efforts by communicating YOUR desires for greater understanding, inclusion and change as we all work to manifest a World That Works For ALL.

### **We Are Your Centers for Spiritual Living Diversity Inclusion Commission**

Please drop us an email at [csldiversity@gmail.com](mailto:csldiversity@gmail.com) or [inclusion@csl.org](mailto:inclusion@csl.org) and let us know how we can serve you... what you want more of, what you want us to include and especially tell us how you and your spiritual community have been impacted by the offerings of the Centers for Spiritual Living's Diversity Inclusion Commission. THANK YOU!!

In closing, let us take full advantage of this moment of connection to express our deep gratitude for YOUR participation, for YOUR voice, for YOUR insights, for YOUR wisdom, and for Creation's exquisitely individualized expression of Itself as YOU!!

- ♥ Rev. Michele Synegal, Chair, Minister at Large, North Bethesda, MD
- ♥ Rebecca Hiraoka, RScP, Vice Chair, Mile High Center for Spiritual Living, Golden CO
- ♥ Rev. Sharon Mitchell, Secretary, Minister at Large, Calgary, AB, Canada
- ♥ Rev. Rafe A. Ellis, Treasurer, Senior Minister Sierra Center for Spiritual Living, Grass Valley, CA
- ♥ Rev. Alex Escudero, Founding Spiritual Director Center for Spiritual Living, Washington, DC
- ♥ Rev. Mark Gilbert, Global Service Liaison, CSL Global Services Coordinator, Golden, CO
- ♥ Rev. Steph St. Amand, Centers for Spiritual Living Leadership Council Liaison, co-founder Centre for Spiritual Living West Kootenay, Castlegar, British Columbia

### **To Connect with the CSL Diversity Inclusion Commission**

Email: [inclusion@csl.org](mailto:inclusion@csl.org) or [csldiversity@gmail.com](mailto:csldiversity@gmail.com)

Diversity Inclusion Commission Website: <https://diversity.csl.org/>

Facebook Page: Diversity Inclusion Commission: <https://www.facebook.com/csldiversity/>

Facebook Group: Diversity Inclusion Resources: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/597473863962475/>