

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council**

**Members Present:** Erin Headley (Chairperson), Tori Stivers (Secretary), Angela Walla, Armitra Jackson-Davis, Caitlin Karolenko, Christina Allingham, H. Lester Schonberger, John Boyce, Lily Yang, Takiyah Ball, Vanessa Whitmore, YeonJin Jung, Yvonne Masters.

**Board/Staff Present:** Wendy White.

**Visitors:** Ann Charles Vegdahl, Annette Kenney, Betsy McCaulley, Brian Schaneberg, Claudio Gallottini, Courtney Crist, Festus Tawose, Jeffrey Kornacki, Kyle Stoutenberg, Ledon Black, Mary Snow, Michael Wood, Michelle Braun, Natalie Seymour, Ruth Petran, Shannon Coleman, Tom Weaver.

**Number of Attendees:** 32.

**Meeting Called to Order:** Sunday, July 27, 2025, 10:30 A.M.

**Minutes Recording Secretary:** Tori Stivers.

Meeting called to order by Armitra Jackson-Davis, outgoing chair, at 10:30 A.M. ET Sunday, July 27, 2025. She introduced current officers, Erin Headley, incoming chair, Mary Ann Amalaradjou, new co-chair, and Tori Stivers, new secretary. She also recognized past DEI past chairs in attendance, Angela Wala and Ruth Petran. She mentioned that there are >2,900 attendees for this meeting and encouraged people to thank the Ohio Association for Food Protection for their help with this annual meeting.

Manan Sharma gave announcements from the IAFP executive board:

1. IAFP has implemented tiered Membership prices that are based on a Member's resident country's economic standing; student Membership fees are half the amount for a country.
2. IAFP is starting a podcast, a sample of which will be previewed at the opening session.
3. IAFP is implementing AI-generated closed captioning (CC) at all symposia and roundtable (RT) sessions at this meeting. The board would appreciate feedback about this service on the attendee survey.

4. This year's annual meeting symposia and roundtable acceptance rate was 36%. Webinars continue to be a good avenue for rejected symposia and other topics; last year there were 9,000 views and this year 17,000 views of webinars.
5. For IAFP Members who want to be considered for appointment to a standing committee, please complete and submit forms that can be found on the IAFP website.
6. Using the meeting app is the best way to be apprised of any presenter changes in sessions.
7. The quiet room, for those who need a break from the meeting, is located in room 2.

Armitra then turned the meeting over to incoming chair Erin Headley who reminded attendees that next year's annual meeting will be in New Orleans, LA, July 26–29, 2026. **September 30, 2025** is the deadline to submit symposia and RTs. However, if you plan to submit one either sponsored or co-sponsored by the DEI Council, please email it to Erin (Erin.Headley@schreiberfoods.com) or Mary Anne (mary\_anne.amalaradjou@uconn.edu) **by September 9** to give them time to review it and ensure it doesn't overlap with other submissions. IAFP is also supporting November meetings in China and Dubai.

Secretary Tori Stivers summarized minutes of the 2024 annual DEI Council meeting in Long Beach, CA and mentioned that the full minutes can be accessed from *IAFP Connect*. The DEI Council's mission and vision was read and the purpose of the council was elucidated. Five new DEI Council appointees were announced: John Boyce, Boyce Food Safety Consulting Ltd., Takiyah Ball, Sargento Foods (industry representatives); Channele Acheamfour, Delaware State University, YeonJin Jung, Cornell University, and Shivaprasad Prakash, Delaware State University (academia representatives).

Updates: Angela Walla reminded us that this year a new survey needs to be sent to the IAFP Membership to help inform/direct future council efforts. She also mentioned the Welcome Committee booth and that they are sponsoring a mixer for first-time attendees from 4:30 to 5:30 P.M. Sunday before the opening session at 6 P.M.

Erin relayed the months when DEI Council virtual meetings which will be scheduled: August and November 2025 and February and April 2026. However, subgroups will meet outside of full DEI Council Meetings as needed.

Erin mentioned that none of our sponsored or co-sponsored symposia/roundtables proposals were accepted by the program committee for the 2025 meeting. However, DEI Council Members are developing a webinar entitled, “Preserving Tradition, Ensuring Safety: Applying Food Regulations in Diverse Manufacturing.”

The following ideas for symposia, roundtable and webinar proposals and most of the board recommendations come from two break-out groups’ discussions.

### **Ideas for Symposia/RT Proposals:**

1. How to communicate food safety to English-as-a-second-language speakers without “reducing food safety language”/ “reducing intelligential content”
2. AI as a tool in food safety
  - a. The dos and don’ts in risk assessment and document development
  - b. Liability of using AI (Lawyer)
  - c. Use of AI to reach a diverse audience (generationally and people with disabilities)
  - d. AI within higher education
3. Traditional foods and food safety: how to communicate food safety principles while respecting cultural traditions
4. Youth education: communicating food safety to the next generation
5. IAFP is an international organization: best practices in ensuring inclusivity within programming and meetings
6. Strategies to navigate diversity, equity, and inclusion in current climate
  - a. Sharing of best practices to continue the work (such as language use)
  - b. Advocacy strategies
  - c. Include university, private industry, and retired government
7. Roundtable on LGBTQ+ experiences in the food industry (one held 3 years ago was excellent)
8. Propose either a symposia or RT about neurodiversity and generational differences and try to get Temple Grandin as a speaker/participant. Or ask President-elect Manan Sharma to consider inviting Grandin as the 2026 Ivan Parker or Siliker lecturer.

### **Book Club/Webinar**

1. Generational connection (how to communicate across generations): Webinar focused on professional development and education on the topic

2. Book club and meet up (virtually and at IAFP): Generations: The Real Differences between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents—and What They Mean for America's Future by Jean Twenge.

After breakout groups summarized their discussions, Wendy White provided input on communicating with the executive board and expectations regarding their feedback (although she is secretary-elect, so she's new to board). We should prioritize when we want feedback; first executive board meeting after annual meeting is February 22.

### **Recommendations to the Executive Board:**

1. Provide feedback on DEI revisions to: 1) exhibitor guide, 2) convenor guide that were submitted to board February 2025, and 3) Review the presentation/poster templates for meeting presentations.
2. For future meetings, provide information on how dietary restrictions (sensitivities, intolerances, allergies, vegan, etc.) will be accommodated in advance for lunches and all receptions. Include additional budget funds for the 2026 Meeting for the Quiet Room to rent or purchase some additional items like mats, lights, pillows, or bean bag chairs.
3. For hearing-impaired attendees, consider offering hearing assist-headphones so they're not reliant on microphones or speakers who don't hold them close enough to mouth. In addition to time limits, add a card to student monitor deck with the words, "speak up," or "microphone closer." Presenters should be reminded not to turn their faces away from audience since people also rely on lip reading.
4. Incorporate interactive activities within the annual meeting communal spaces, such as jigsaw puzzles, chess, Jenga, or Connect 4 to encourage interaction for people who are introverted.
5. Rename "cheese and wine reception" or add language to better describe it.

- Ensure attendees under 21 know this reception is open to them and that non-alcoholic beverages are also served.
- Ensure cheese menu includes vegan, non-dairy, and gluten-free options.

**Next Meeting Date:** Sunday, July 26, 2026, New Orleans, LA.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 12:00 P.M.

**Chairperson Name:** Erin Headley.