

February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Greetings Rotarians,

As we close out Black History Month, the District Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is reaching out to all District Rotarians to give you an update regarding the DEI Survey that was written and administered by Rotarian Xavier Ramey's company, Justice Informed as a pro bono initiative to get District 6450 moving forward in its DEI work and to potentially serve as a model to other Districts and to Rotary International as a whole. We have attached the results of the Survey in its full entirety, along with the presentation that was made to the District Board of Directors to highlight the major findings of the Survey and suggested recommendations.

We'd also like to provide for you a quick summary for everyone, which will allow those of us who are busy people to get at least a gist of the Survey's results (and a few points to be highlighted, but by no means all), and when we have the time, will give us references to dig deeper into the full story of the Survey and its recommendations.

First, to revisit the goals and purpose of the Survey were to:

1. Produce a **DEI Census**, to give an indication of what the various identities within our District exist, based on how people self-reported themselves
2. Provide a view of the **DEI Alignment** that District Rotarians understand and evaluate in relationship to DEI practices and principles that Justice Informed engages with in service to its wide array of clients
3. Provide a **Safe Space for Feedback** from District Rotarians to the District on how it is doing in terms of DEI leadership, treatment, strengths and growth areas at all levels of Rotary
4. **Evaluate Alignment at the District and Club level** to DEI Best Practices as presented by Justice Informed as a well-respected practitioner and resource of DEI frameworks

As an overview of the demographics of the Survey, here are some top-level pieces of information:

- 310 Rotarians and Rotaractors of the recorded 1,585 Rotarians of record at the time of the Survey.
- This number of responses should be seen as a sample of potential data, and statistically is valuable for the District to move its DEI work forward
- Of these 310 respondents, almost 50% of them came from 9 Clubs within the District

Digging a little more deeply into the data, here are a few salient points that should be noted as an introduction:

- The results from the survey demonstrate that both racial and gender diversity across the district were not representative to the respective cities and suburbs that many of the District's Clubs exist. In particular, 22 out of the 50 total Clubs that were surveyed were 100% white.
- Most of the racial diversity that exists across the District exists in a few specific Clubs.
- Of the Rotarians that responded, the large majority responded to be either "female" or "male"
- 90% of the respondents identified as Straight or Heterosexual
- An observation the survey brings to light is that given the increasing attention and support being directed to LGBTQIA+ issues and concerns, it is curious that there is such a lack of gender and sexual diversity within the District
- Areas that demonstrated greater diversity are those of age and religion

Again, these are just a few points we decided to tease out of the Survey's data, and encourage members to review it themselves to get further depth and context.

Justice Informed has developed a framework for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion that it calls its DEI Spectrum of Engagement, which is composed of 3 components:

1. **Understanding:** The practice of increasing an organization's capacity for DEI by investing in education about these topics, moving toward consensus regarding the value proposition, and creating a plan of action for DEI. Organizations with high levels of understanding reflect membership and leadership that are able to independently ideate on solutions for DEI and involve a much higher level of internal initiative and leadership on DEI issues and challenges.
2. **Rooting:** The act of creating policies and practices that increase the probability of equity at an organization.
3. **Accountability:** To ensure the longevity of social equity for those holding minoritized and marginalized identities, created through the policies and practices developed in the rooting phase.

Justice Informed has provided a number of observations and themes within each of these components of its Spectrum of Engagement, a few of which we've summarized here:

### **Understanding**

- Responses indicated that there is a clear enthusiasm and alignment on several areas of DEI
- Responses demonstrated that there is relative consensus on the value of DEI within Rotary
- The majority of respondents identified race as a key area of greater learning for the membership as well as for greater diversification
- Issues of age, ethnicity, gender, class and sexual orientation were not far behind
- However, a majority of respondents are not familiar with who leads DEI at the Club, District or international level
- In addition, large numbers of respondents indicated that they were "unsure" or "disagreed" if they believed stakeholders across Rotary (Club, District, RI, etc.) has a strong and demonstrated grasp on societal and Club DEI challenges
- Also, many respondents answered "unsure" or "disagree" when asked if they believed stakeholders across Rotary were capable of effectively leading and managing DEI conversations
- However, over 70% of respondents indicated that they "agreed" in some capacity that their Rotary Club Officers **could** lead DEI work in ways that are accountable.

### **Rooting**

- A key policy that a majority of respondents (over 70%) stated they did not know or where unaware of is that of a grievance/complaint policy in regards to DEI issues, particularly when it comes to interpersonal issues such as negative or offensive comments or actions
- Some of the most requested supports requested by respondents from Rotary International are:
  - A DEI Values Statement (64.3%)
  - A DEI Strategic Plan (61.0%)
  - A policy that specifically speaks to issues related to DEI, including how the Club deals with issues of identity-based harms (60.6%)
  - Trainings and guidance for Club members to know how to handle DEI issues with community partners and volunteers (51.6%)

- Some of the most requested supports requested by respondents to support Clubs are are:
  - A DEI Values Statement (62.2%)
  - A Member Policy/Handbook that specifically speaks to issues related to DEI, including how the Club deals with issues of identity-based harms such as racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia, etc (47.4%)
  - A DEI Strategic Plan (46.9%)
  - Trainings and guidance for Club members to know how to handle DEI issues with community partners and volunteers (42.6%)

### **Accountability**

- Respondents indicate that they generally believe that the District and Rotary International were committed to DEI
- However, 35% and 28% of respondents believed that while this commitment has been communicated, it has not been demonstrated at the RI and District levels, respectively
- Nearly 20% of all respondents indicated that they have experienced some kind of offensive comment
  - Women were slightly overrepresented both in regards to instances of harmful comments (57.1% of harmful comments reported by women vs. women being 44.5% of total population) and in regards to instances of discrimination (52.6% of instances of discrimination reported by women vs. women being 44.5% of total population)
  - Black members are over 3x as represented in the reported instances of discrimination (36.8%) as they are in the general survey respondent population (11%)

### **Concluding Recommendations from Justice Informed**

#### **Goal 1: Increase understanding of DEI and various areas of DEI-related topics**

- Working with RI or sponsored by the District, a DEI-learning series should be engaged and offered as a training for all members
- Create a clear DEI Values Statement that moves beyond, but includes the RI DEI Statement language to include values for increased LGBTQIA+, People of Color, and younger generations in the work of Rotary
- Host an annual DEI forum at the Annual District Conference where a clear, specific discussion on what is driving local DEI-related issues is undertaken.
- Start an online DEI-learning bookclub

#### **Goal 2: Develop a goal-driven DEI Strategic Plan for District 6450, ideally using the DEI Spectrum as a guide**

- This plan should include the following areas:
  - 3-year goals for increased diversity, belonging, and inclusion of minoritized and marginalized populations
  - A plan for how to organize the work (time-limited task forces, standing committees, charter groups, etc.), and who is responsible for it
  - Clear articulation of the current diversity of District 6450 clubs and goals for the numbers of persons to be introduced and grown as new members with diverse backgrounds
  - A strategy to create and/or update (where needed) club and district policies relating to DEI, harassment, and member expectations
  - A marketing plan and budget for communicating the strategy

- Ultimately, Rotary has very few actual goals for DEI. There are stated values and a vision, but there is little in the way of accountable, measurable goals. Once goals are created, they must be funded and put on a timeline. The District DEI committee should undertake this work
- It is clear that a racial equity, queer identity, and sexuality lens must be created in Rotary's work. This is possibly inhibiting membership diversity
- Rotary's language does not state a dislike or lack of desire for marginalized or minoritized people, however, there is very little in the way of a clear, specific invitation to them. There is little language about how District 6450 or Clubs specifically are changing. Their patterns, practices, and expectations for existing members to be welcoming to different persons. Nowadays, organizations must be specific, and show they hold the competencies and capacities for the challenges of diversification (microaggressions, racial tensions, "but what abouts," backlash against diversification and a specificity about bringing in new identities, etc.)

### **Goal 3: Evolve general language of DEI into action and policy-informed conversations and actions**

- Bring in issue-area experts to host monthly DEI roundtables on specific areas of DEI. Ensure these experts are seen as prominent in their field, and Rotary should establish a budget to compensate them
- Rotary's work in philanthropy and volunteering does not also catalyze members to better understand why there is a continued need for philanthropy and volunteering (e.g., wealth inequality, systemic racism, etc.). The high level work of Rotary should be connected to the high level issues that create the need for more of Rotary's work
- Include electoral and civic action as parts of Rotary's social and community engagement strategies. This involves supporting members to volunteer as poll workers, write to legislators, and embrace the growing practices of decolonized and racially-aware ways to engage in community engagement
- The District should host a series of listening and conversation sessions across the district to learn how older, and White members specifically see their work to embrace racially, gender, and age-diverse new members should they join

### **Goal 4: Develop a clear call to action and request from Rotary International**

- From the Assessment, it was clear that Rotarians throughout the District are unaware of where leadership and responsibility lies for authorizing activities, engaging the work, or funding programs in service of Rotary DEI values or activities. Less than half of Rotarians (including Club and District Leaders) knew whose job it was to lead or advance DEI efforts. This must be clarified
- RI generally takes a hands-off approach to directing clubs in how they should set goals, manage (versus value) DEI, or train members (outside of leadership training) on how to support DEI. A conversation must take place then at the District level for how DEI should be actionably engaged by clubs, and any supports or actions that the District cannot undertake should be part of a conversation with RI
- District 6450 may not be able to lean on any "best practices" within Rotary to advance their goals or asks of RI, given much of the action and goal-focused DEI work is sporadically undertaken across the Rotary footprint, and the infrastructure for managing and communicating activities and challenges is still underdeveloped. For this reason, District 6450 must consider where and how it will boldly pioneer in this work (e.g. to specifically advance antiracism in clubs by reviewing how clubs work with police districts to volunteer or raise money, how clubs do or do not support civic/electoral education for all, and/or how clubs/members work to speak out when racial injustices happen within their club or District boundaries)