

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council

Members present: Adejare Adegbuyi, Mary Anne Amalaradjou (Vice Chair), Tori Stivers (Secretary), Takiyah Ball, John Boyce, Alexandra Calle, Michael Ciaramella, Betsy Craig, Sapphira Darmawan, Anthony Flood, YeonJin Jung, Deja Latney, Adeniyi Odugbemi, Ruth Petran, Natalie Seymour, Ann Vegdahl, Angela Walla, Tammy Walsky, Daniel Weller, Wendy White, Vanessa Whitmore.

Board members present: Lisa Garcia, IAFP Exec. Director; Wendy White, Board Liaison.

Visitors:

Number of attendees: 20.

Meeting called to order: 10:35 AM.

Recording secretary: Tori Stivers.

Co-chair Mary Anne called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM. She explained that chair Erin Headley could not attend this meeting. Mary Anne recognized newly-appointed members Mavis Okafor, E'licia L. Chaverest, Marciane Magnani, Tamara Walsky, Malak Esseili, Deanna Zenger, Alexandra Calle. We now have 36 Council members.

She then read through IAFP's anti-trust guidelines and asked for a motion to approve the 2025 annual meeting minutes; Tori made the motion, John Boyce seconded, and the vote was unanimous for approval.

Mary Anne then summarized the Council's mission and vision and mentioned that council members are expected to contribute 10-15 hours per quarter to DEI Council efforts.

Accomplishments for this year:

- Social bingo card for Welcome Reception (thanks to Alexis Omar)
- May 20 webinar - Neurodivergent Thinking in Food Safety: Implications for Practice, Performance & Inclusion (organized by John Boyce & Tori Stivers)
- Quiet Room – 202 Hall B-1 (Thanks to LSU employees for supplying items.)
- Mother's room
- Allergen signage for food
- Completed revision to convenor's guide in time to use at 2026 meeting

Council members recognized at 2026 meeting:

Mary Anne Amaraladjou – Elmer Marth Educator Award

Tori Stivers – Honorary Life Membership

Dan Weller – James M. Jay Diversity in Food Safety Award

DEI initiative for this year still pending:

Approval by board of our revision to best practices for posters & presentations

Initiative in progress – IAFP member & broader food safety professional survey:

Dan Weller has agreed to lead our second membership survey (first one was in 2022), and suggested conducting a paired survey of other food safety professionals for comparison. This may help identify ways to remove barriers to joining IAFP. We will be coordinating with the membership committee to develop and implement the surveys. We will disseminate the surveys through IAFP affiliates, as many of them have members who are not IAFP members, and it would be helpful to know how we can support them, as well as state and local employees to attend IAFP meeting.

Any DEI Council member who wants to serve on the survey subcommittee should contact Dan Weller at wellerd2@gmail.com. Attendees were given five minutes to think about and enter online what info we want to know about IAFP members.

The IAFP board wants everyone to consider submitting symposia and roundtable sessions for **IAFP Europe 2027** (April 28-30 in Copenhagen, Denmark). The submission deadline is 21 September, 2026.

Ideas from break-out groups for symposia/RT/webinars/podcasts

Group 1 - Indigenous/Cultural dietary trends and effect on food safety - Ruth Petran said CCFI committee for food discussed it this morning, so coordinate with them-Mike Batz. From our group: Ann Vegdahl av45@cornell.edu; Dan Weller said he can connect us with some CDC and Alaskan people for this session. Yaohua Feng at Purdue may be interested as she did similar research in the past. (Suggestion from Erin Headley - Eric Johnson who retired from UW Madison did a bunch of outreach there with the Eskimo population and seal oil and reducing the risk of botulism. Kristin Schill took over his lab and we could see if anyone there might still have some of that research.)

Best practices/micro efforts to be more inclusive as a professional-symposium/white paper-Natalie Seymour natalie.seymour@ecolab.com. Having conversations on how we talk about outbreaks and food safety in a respectful way.

How to advocate any DEI issue as a person vs professional-Panel how to continue DEI efforts personally without company DEI efforts. Angela Walla angela.walla@ttu.edu

How to reach the population without mentioning the population in grant writing-webinar-Angela Walla angela.walla@ttu.edu

Revamp and resurrect Why campaign-Angela and Vanessa. Book club in connection with why campaign: Generations by Jean M. Twenge, How Equality Wins by Kenji Yoshino. Vanessa Whitmore (van.whitmore15@gmail.com) and Angela Walla angela.walla@ttu.edu

Group 2 – RT about harmonizing food safety globally (sharing experiences); Adeniyi Odugbemi and Tammy Walsky

Group 3 – Symposia/Roundtables

- Food safety disparities and inequities – roundtable of those understanding them and those addressing them. Foodborne disease inequities, how the food system impacts this. What can food safety professionals do to address this? Contact Dan Weller
 - Participants

- State, tribal and first nations: ppl
- Local public health people
 - Inner city food deserts
- Extension/non-profit: 1 person facilitator
 - New York State Dept. of Health fish advisories efforts
- Industry: retailer (Wegmans)
- Audience: Government and Industry
- How food safety professionals mitigate these challenges?
- Disp
- **IAFP Europe 2027 meeting**; John Boyce will attend and open to coordinating Mike Ciaramella potentially.
 - Importance of DEI to international food safety professionals
 - Mercury challenges – impact of diversity in study population – Dan Weller
 - Addressing Global iodine deficiency – Mike Ciaramella
 - Occupational exposure to vibrio - Anyone doing any work in this space
 - Updating dietary guidelines
 - Talk to STOP foodborne illness to ID examples of foodborne illness that may have occurred because of inequities of DEI barriers like language barriers or other.
- Accessibility **Workshop** - Food processing skills Canada facilitator Deanna Zenger coordinating with John Boyce. Mary Anne will help as needed.
 - a. Workshop to support how to accommodate differently abled folks (organize with education PDG)
 - b. Roundtable to follow up on engagement and how you create accessible programs and resources
 - i. Barriers and opportunities to increase accessibility of programming
 - 1. Alexandra – Educator
 - 2. Extension – Minnesota Institute for Sustainable agriculture Hmong growers
 - 3. Industry - Multilingual language service provider
 - c. Set of resources and checklists (simple checklist for ensuring accessibility)

Deadlines to submit session proposals for IAFP 2027:

- For DEI Council endorsement, email proposal to Erin Headley at Erin.Headley@schreiberfoods.com by Sept 9, 2026
- Then, submit to IAFP via online portal by Sept 29, 2026

Future DEI Council meetings:

Sept 17, 2026; noon to 1 pm (EST, US & CAN) via Zoom

Nov. 19, 2026; noon to 1 pm (EST, US & CAN) via Zoom

January and April 2027 (TBA) via Zoom

July 18, 2027 at IAFP annual meeting in Kansas City, MO

Board updates: Wendy White, board liaison

1. Welcome to NOLA; more than 3,000 people are attending IAFP 2026.
2. Tell co-workers about benefits of IAFP and encourage them to join.
3. Submit session proposals for IAFP Europe 2027 meeting (April 28-30) in Copenhagen, Denmark – moved from every year to every other year format.

4. If you want to get involved with IAFP committees, select which ones you want to volunteer on from your IAFP online profile; the executive board selects from those who volunteer.
5. Download meeting app and use it.
6. Use the Quiet Room, 202, if you need a break from the meeting to recharge.

Recommendations to the executive board:

1. Improve food allergen signs (based on Saturday and Sunday receptions):
 - a. increase font size of allergen text and placement so it's easy to see
 - b. improve accuracy for better understanding
 - c. be consistent in how allergens are listed(Good first start, but needs improvement)
2. Allow DEI Council (in conjunction with other relevant PDGs) to formulate clear food allergen labeling instructions to be used by caterers or food preparers (both at convention centers and hotels at which receptions and breakfasts are held) at IAFP annual meetings to ensure safety of food-allergic/sensitive/intolerant attendees and they have something to eat.
3. Provide comments on previously submitted poster/presentation guide revision.
4. In 2023 the DEI Council developed guidance on submitting symposia/RT/workshops and relayed to the board. We request this resource be mentioned and/or a link be provided to it when soliciting proposals for the 2027 and future annual meetings (both on IAFP proposal submission webpage and any emails sent to members about submitting proposals).