CEHD Equity and Social Justice Collective
Call for Participation-Summer 2020

As we continue to experience the devastating health and economic impact of COVID-19, we are also confronted with the continued systemic racism and other forms of social injustice that has gripped the United States for centuries. The nationwide and worldwide protests against systemic racism and police brutality we have witnessed since the senseless and unjust killing of George Floyd (and several other Black people before him) has garnered a great deal of attention. A resounding cry for justice has prompted leaders and other people across different racial and ethnic backgrounds to speak up and speak out specifically against racial injustice. We are indeed at yet another pivotal moment in history, and the time is ripe to move forward with bold conversations and concrete actions to effectuate meaningful change in society and its many social institutions, including institutions of higher education like Texas A&M University (TAMU).

Given our mission to *enhance equity in educational achievement and health outcomes, foster innovation and development, and influence policy and practice in the fields of education, health, sport, business, and government*, CEHD should be at the forefront of leading these conversations and actions toward this meaningful change. Since the establishment of the Office of Organization Development and Diversity Initiatives (ODDI) in 2008 to help lead our strategic goal to *enhance, recognize and reward diversity and a climate of inclusion, equity and respect for students, faculty, and staff*, CEHD has certainly made some progress toward this goal. Our most recent Diversity and Accountability Reports from 2018 and 2019, which can be accessed on the ODDI website via the CEHD homepage, demonstrate progress over the years in the areas of *recruitment* and *retention* of faculty, staff, and students, efforts to enhance the *climate*, and some attention to *equity* in policies, processes, and practices. However, we still have much more work to do in these areas to fulfill our mission and our vision to transform lives through the collective work that we do.

In light of this reality, the primary purpose of this message is to introduce and launch The CEHD Equity and Social Justice Collective to help centralize and further expand our existing diversity,
equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in and through the college. The Collective will serve as an umbrella under or through which academic departments and program areas, offices and units, centers and labs, groups and committees, and individuals in the college can magnify and continue to do important work to advance climate, diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice in and through the college. Born out of initial meetings and conversations between faculty in EPSY and leadership in ODDI in 2019, the Collective was created with the following long-term aims in mind:

1. Identify faculty, staff, and students across CEHD whose scholarly and other interests are (in)directly tied to equity issues
2. Provide supportive collaborations between and among individuals across CEHD doing equity and social justice minded work
3. Produce technical, practical, and emancipatory knowledge that can help inform policy, processes, and practices related to racial and other forms of justice in CEHD and beyond

As an important first step in launching the Collective in summer 2020, CEHD leadership will be assembling a cohort of faculty, staff, and students to help create a tangible plan of action to address racial injustice and other relevant matters in the college. The specific focus and charge of The Collective during summer 2020 into and through the 2020-21 academic year is to:

- Assess CEHD’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) by conducting a SWOT analysis of the DEI work in academic departments and other units
- Evaluate CEHD’s progress on addressing challenges and meeting goals related to recruitment, retention, climate, and equity
- Identify key goals and priorities to address over the next year, and work toward progress in these areas

If you are interested in being a part of this initial cohort, please email a short application to both Patrice French (pfrench@tamu.edu), program manager for ODDI and John N. Singer (singerjn@tamu.edu), associate dean for diversity and inclusion. For full consideration, applications should be received by no later than Thursday, July 2. Applications will be reviewed by the ODDI team and other leaders in CEHD. The application should include the following:
1. Resume or curriculum vitae
2. 1 to 2 page statement on:
   a. Why you want to participate
   b. Examples of work you have done (are doing) to demonstrate commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, climate, and social justice
   c. Ideas you have to move your respective unit and the college forward in these areas.

In efforts to move forward with the initial charge and make a more immediate impact, members who are appointed to this initial cohort must be available to commit roughly 2 to 3 hours per week during the summer, and at least 1 year of service to the Collective going forward. Ideally, **work will commence the week after the July 4 holiday.** Compensation for participation will come in the form of professional development funds and other resources. Please direct any questions you might have to Patrice and John.