

## NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY BOARD COMMITTEE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Board of Directors of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) approved the following Inclusion and Diversity Board Committee Policies and Procedures effective October 6, 2011. Revisions were approved by the Board of Directors on June 27, 2015, September 3, 2015, May 22, 2016, and October 5, 2017.

1. **PURPOSE:** Within the context of the social justice framework, the purpose of the Inclusion and Diversity Board Committee (IDC) is to (a) identify the inclusion and diversity strengths, issues, and opportunities within NCFR; (b) develop strategies and plans to examine ways in which we include and exclude (however unintentionally) NCFR members; (c) systematically examine aspects of NCFR to enhance its effectiveness and ability to meet the needs of its diverse membership; and (d) respectfully celebrate and document the successes of inclusivity approaches.

It is IDC's job to: (a) make recommendations regarding inclusive and diverse approaches, (b) examine programs, activities, policies, publications, and practices to determine intentional or unintentional exclusiveness, and (c) engage members in scholarly dialogues.

2. **RELATION TO THE NCFR BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** The IDC is a committee of the NCFR Board and works in consultative partnership. One member of the NCFR Board will serve as a non-voting member on the IDC at all times. The Board Liaison will communicate directly with the NCFR Board on a routine basis. The IDC and the NCFR Board will meet face-to-face at least one time per year.

All decisions and recommendations of the IDC to the NCFR Board will be by majority vote of its members. The NCFR Board will review all recommendations, and achieve agreement for enactment of any recommendations in consultative partnership with the IDC. The NCFR Board retains authority to make final decisions.

3. **SPECIFIC AREAS OF ONGOING RESPONSIBILITY:** The responsibilities of the IDC are to perform a review and make required modifications to the definitions of *diversity and social justice* for the purposes of its application to NCFR. The ongoing review of the definition of diversity (Appendix A) and social justice (Appendix B) are needed to ensure that inclusion-and diversity practices are woven into organizational practices, policies, programs, and activities under the social justice framework.
  - A. Develop and update the *social justice framework* or definition that will be used to guide the role of the IDC.
  - B. Develop and update a *diversity philosophy or principles* utilizing the *social justice framework* that will be used to guide the role of the IDC.
  - C. Provide ongoing guidance of organizational activities to ensure that inclusive practices and diversity principles under the social justice framework are woven into the fabric of NCFR by
    - Developing and updating specific *diversity and inclusion* goals and objectives.
    - Developing strategic plans to enhance the organization's capacity to advance an awareness of diversity and inclusiveness in all aspects of the NCFR.
    - Developing and updating methods of evaluation to determine the effectiveness of NCFR's *diversity and inclusion* initiatives in these areas: programs, activities, policies, publications, and practices.

**4. MEMBERSHIP, OFFICERS, AND TERMS OF OFFICE:** The IDC shall consist of seven members elected by the NCFR membership and two non-voting members. The non-voting members will be a member of the NCFR Board and a Staff Liaison. The members of the IDC shall serve staggered two or three-year terms.

The Elections Council shall nominate the candidates for the open offices. The Elections Council will work to nominate a slate of diverse candidates with regards to ability and disability; age; bilingualism and multiculturalism/English language learners; body size and condition; customs and traditions; educational, disciplinary, or career status; ethnicity, race, national origin, or cultural identity; gender, gender identity, and gender expression; geographical background and location; marital status, relational status (including singlehood), and family structure or identity; objective and subjective worldviews and standpoints; political ideologies and affiliations; religion/no religion, spirituality and affiliations, and faith; sexual orientation, identities, and expressions; socioeconomic status, residential status, social class, employment, and national service.

IDC members will select the Chair-elect from the IDC Members-at-Large who will serve as Chair-elect during his/her second year on the IDC. The Chair-elect becomes the chair during his/her third year on the IDC.

IDC members will determine their own process for selecting the liaison to the Annual Conference Program Planning Committee at each annual meeting.

Committee members may be re-elected after being off the committee for one year.

The members of the IDC shall consist of the following elected officers serving two or three-year terms:

- A. Members-at-Large (6) – Three-year terms
- B. Students and New Professionals Representative (Liaison to the SNP Leadership Council) – Two-year term
- C. Liaison to the NCFR Board – NCFR Board member (Non-voting)
- D. NCFR Staff member (Non-voting)

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. **Chair:** The chair shall be the official representatives of the IDC in the activities of NCFR. The chair shall preside at all meetings and shall call special meetings when necessary.
- B. **Chair-elect:** The responsibility and authority of the Chair will devolve upon the Chair-elect if the Chair becomes unable to fulfill the role as described within.
- C. **Members-at-Large:** Members-at-Large will serve to assist IDC to respond to the needs and desires of NCFR members. The Members-at-Large will help the committee send updates on the work of IDC via webpage postings, NCFR Reports, and other effective venues of communication. The Members-at-Large will provide information and suggestions to IDC, ensuring that information is documented via a report.
- D. **Students and New Professionals Representative:** The Students and New Professionals Representative shall act as a liaison between the IDC and the Students and New Professionals Leadership Council and all Student and New Professional members.
- E. **IDC Liaison to NCFR Annual Conference Program Committee:** The IDC liaison member will attend the program committee meetings. The IDC liaison shall collaborate with the Chair and members of the program committee. The liaison will provide information and suggestions to IDC, ensuring that information is documented via a report.
- F. **All IDC Members:** All committee members are expected to participate in all conference calls and face-to-face meetings; review all materials prior to meetings; and complete responsibilities as assigned.

## 5. ELIGIBILITY FOR NOMINATIONS

- Current membership in NCFR
- Knowledge and/or experience in areas reflecting broad trends in human development, family science, marriage and family practice, sociology, and related professions.
- Knowledge and/or experience in leadership roles through Sections, Affiliate Councils, Elections Council, conference planning, publishing, public policy, or other committee work.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SLATE

- Ability and disability
- Aboriginal, mixed, immigrant
- Age
- Bilingualism and multiculturalism/English language learners
- Body size and condition
- Customs and traditions
- Educational, disciplinary, or career status
- Ethnicity, race, national origin, or cultural identity
- Gender, gender identity, and gender expression
- Geographical background and location
- Marital status, relational status (including singlehood), and family structure or identity
- Objective and subjective worldviews and standpoints
- Political ideologies and affiliations
- Religion/no religion, spirituality and affiliations, and faith
- Sexual orientation, identities, and expressions
- Socioeconomic status, residential status, social class, employment, and national service

6. **RESIGNATION OR REMOVAL FROM OFFICE:** Each member is expected to fulfill responsibilities as assigned, participate in conference calls, attend agreed upon meeting(s) during the NCFR Annual Conference. If an officer determines he or she is unable or unwilling to continue in said position or to complete the term of office, then he or she may resign from office. An officer or a member may be removed prior to the end of their term for (a) failure to meet these responsibilities and/or (b) violations of the IDC Guiding Principles. Removal requires an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the other members on the IDC for failure to meet these responsibilities.
7. **VACANCIES:** If a vacancy occurs on the IDC the IDC will seek a replacement that helps maintain balanced representation of NCFR's diverse membership. The vacant position may be filled using two approaches respectively: (a) the runner-up to the vacant position may be asked to fill the position or (b) a committee member completing their three-year term on the IDC would extend their tenure by one year.

## Appendix A: National Council on Family Relations' Definition of Diversity

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS' DEFINITION OF DIVERSITY: Diversity is a descriptive term that illuminates the variety of backgrounds and contexts that are experienced by NCFR's leaders and members. Diversity is dynamic and continues to evolve over time. Respect for diversity requires openness and a sense of curiosity about all groups.

Embracing diversity means acknowledging that all groups do not live in the world in the same way. Diversity provides a lens for understanding (a) disparities of power, privilege, and access as well as the (b) exclusion of marginalized groups. The lens can also reveal that some groups are diminished by invisibility or a lack of recognition. In addition, diversity focuses attention on the strengths, wisdom and competencies of different individuals, couples, families, groups, and societies.

Aspects of diversity include but are not limited to:

- Ability and disability
- Aboriginal, mixed, immigrant
- Age
- Bilingualism and multiculturalism/English language learners
- Body size and condition
- Customs and traditions
- Educational, disciplinary, or career status
- Ethnicity, race, national origin, or cultural identity
- Gender, gender identity, and gender expression
- Geographical background and location
- Marital status, relational status (including singlehood), and family structure or identity
- Objective and subjective worldviews and standpoints
- Political ideologies and affiliations
- Religion/no religion, spirituality and affiliations, and faith
- Sexual orientation, identities, and expressions
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[Note: The aspects are listed alphabetically, but not in any order of priority.]

NCFR realizes that various aspects of identity and recognition continue to emerge over time. Thus, this list will likely be expanded as emergence occurs. The enhanced understanding of diversity and inclusion in National Council on Family Relations guides us to greater excellence in scholarship, research, practice, and outreach to the larger societies.

## Appendix B: Working Definition of Social Justice

Social justice – and operating under a social justice framework – refers to individuals and organizations actively identifying the dynamics of socially structured and institutionalized oppression and privilege; self-reflecting on our own socialization linked to social locations (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.); and acting on systematic and hidden disparities with meaningful leadership in the field of family science.

\* Note. The IDC is also currently working on a developing a working definition of a social justice framework in the field of family science and will share our suggestions in the near future.

Reference information: NCFR IDC SUMMER REPORT ARTICLE - 2016

### What does social justice mean in the context of family science?

One job of the Inclusion and Diversity Committee (IDC) is to engage the membership in scholarly dialogue pertaining to issues of inclusion and diversity. Like many other organizations, and society at large, NCFR is grappling with issues of social justice. The 2015 conference feedback revealed that many members are calling for NCFR to be more active in discussing and doing social justice work both within and outside the organization. For example, the IDC conducted a session on “Social Justice Strategies in the Age of Ferguson” at the 2015 conference, which clearly resonated with people based on the great attendance and the positive feedback given by attendees. We recognize, however, that social justice may be conceptualized in a number of ways, across a diverse sample of people. Therefore, as we contemplate how to make NCFR a more inclusive organization to serve diverse populations, especially marginalized and less visible families and their members, the IDC has investigated how researchers, practitioners, and educators have conceptualized and applied social justice in the field of family science.

### Social justice missions in academic programs

Many academic programs use the term *social justice* to guide their departments and the work that they do. The IDC reviewed the 302 degree programs in family science listed on the NCFR website ([www.ncfr.org/degree-programs](http://www.ncfr.org/degree-programs)) and cross-checked the program information via a Google search. Twenty programs explicitly stated social justice in their mission statements or program information. These programs advocate students’ learning through awareness of diversity, injustice and inequalities, self-reflection, and a firm understanding of societal influences on families in order to prepare students to have professional capacities to serve all families, including diverse and marginalized families within multicultural contexts.

### Social justice in pedagogy

Family science scholars have also been writing about *social justice* in higher education for some time (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2009; Speight, & Vera, 2004; McDowell & Shelton, 2002; McGeorge, Carlson, Erikson, & Guttormson, 2006). These pedagogical writings were part of endeavors to help students understand how social injustice (i.e., oppression, differential privilege and power, structural inequalities, etc.) influences the lives of all families. Through experiential and reflective learning processes, instructors who utilize a *social justice* framework in their classrooms emphasize providing an environment for future professionals that allows students to investigate their own positionalities and lived experiences of power, privilege, and oppression.

### Social justice in research

A social justice framework has been used by scholars to conduct methodologically, conceptually, and purposefully various research studies (De Reus & Blume, 2011; Moore, 2011). These researchers argue that societal structures can influence research methods, interpretation of research findings, and theoretical development and application. In addition, biases, power, and privilege exist in science, and inattentive research may reinforce these inequalities (Russell, 2016). Therefore, many scholars have concluded that the effective utilization of scientific knowledge, grounded in a social justice framework, can help researchers contextualize the situations that individuals and families are facing. By extension, this knowledge will also help

practitioners and policymakers find better solutions and promote positive development among all individuals, families, and communities (Lerner, 2015).

### Future directions

In summary, there is an increasing movement to apply a social justice framework to research, practice, and education in the field of family science. Although there are various notions about the term *social justice* among professionals in the fields mentioned above, it seems that there is a general consensus that dissemination of scientific knowledge and appropriate training among professionals in our field can be a powerful source of social change to promote more equal rights and improved well-being among the diverse families whom we serve. These scholars also emphasize the importance of scientific knowledge-based action to produce humane and just world. Based upon these literatures, social justice—and operating under a social justice framework—refers to:

individuals and organizations actively (1) identifying the dynamics of socially structured and institutionalized oppression and privilege; (2) self-reflecting on our own socialization linked to social locations (e.g., race, class, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.); and (3) acting on systematic and hidden disparities with meaningful leadership in the field of family science.

Our hope is that this article helps open up the discussion as to what social justice means in a context of family science. Based on the current literature, the IDC is currently developing a working definition of social justice and a social justice framework in the field of family science. As always, we welcome your input on defining social justice and social justice framework ([www.ncfr.org/idc-webform](http://www.ncfr.org/idc-webform)) because this discussion strengthens the mission of NCFR. In addition, we hope to continue this discussion at the IDC-related sessions during the 2016 annual conference. Keep an eye out for announcements about our sessions so you can join us in continuing a discussion about social justice in the context of family science.

### Selected References

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