

Executive Summary and Recommended Equity Action Plan from the CDSS Cultural Equity Advisory Group

Submitted to the CDSS Board of Directors February 2022

Note from the CDSS Board of Directors: This was written as an internal document for the CDSS board and staff. We are sharing it publicly because we believe that transparency is an important piece of equity work. With permission of the author, we reordered some sections of this report to direct the narrative flow toward the advisory group's recommendations (see page 10). We also included footnotes with links to some of the outside documents referenced in the report. We recognize that most people outside the CDSS staff and board may be less familiar with these references. If you would like any additional information, please contact Katy German, Executive Director (katy@cdss.org) or Gaye Fifer, Board President (gayefifer@gmail.com).

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Special thanks to the CDSS Board of Directors and staff for asking the hard questions of the organization in these changing times, to the CDSS Equity Advisory Group for their time and insight that could be gained only by being alert and aware in a noisy world, to the readers who will utilize the information in this report to make a stronger more compassionate organization dedicated to song and dance.

This report was prepared by Dr. Dena Jennings of Imani Works who also facilitated the work of the Cultural Equity Advisory Group.

Introduction

This is the report of the work of the Country Dance & Song Society Cultural Equity Advisory Group (CEAG) that was assembled by the Board of Directors of CDSS in March of 2021 under the facilitation of Dr. Dena Jennings of Imani Works Corporation.

The CEAG convened to address the tasks described in the job description on the CDSS website in early 2021. The goal of CEAG was to meet regularly, review organization documents, and to report the findings of the work to CDSS.¹

CDSS selected nine CEAG members from the 39 applications received for one year of service. The CEAG was composed of Hannah Assefa, Cayley Buckner, Rima Dael (until May 2021), Ezra Fischer, Nadia Gaya, Aravind Natarajan, Stephanie Vocannon, Bailey Walton, and Earl White. Thank you for spending your time and energy to explore the impact of equity and diversity with integrity, ingenuity, and grace.

CEAG carefully considered the task before them with its opportunities and challenges. In the same spirit of clarity and conscience, they make the suggestions that you will find in the following sections. We hope that the same spirit in which this advice is given by the CEAG is received by CDSS leadership.

This document is the work of consensus. The names of individual group members are not linked to specific comments. Where possible, the words of the group members are used to convey the content of the dialogue and are clearly distinguished from when the facilitator provides opinions or suggestions.

Scope, Goals, and Process

The scope and vision of our work was clearly outlined in the job description.¹ It is important to remember this while reading the report. The group was able to meet CDSS's expectations as follows:

Scope and Goals (what are we expecting the CEAG to have done by the end of their term)

- **The CEAG will be a primarily internally focused group, evaluating the operations and programs of CDSS *within the context of its current mission statement***

¹ <https://cdss.org/about-us/cultural-equity-advisory-group>

- **CEAG will provide CDSS with recommendations to improve cultural equity in these areas:**
 - **Help CDSS prioritize these recommendations and suggest action steps.**
 - **Reflect on our self-analysis and point us to areas and issues that we have overlooked.**

The group was asked to work independently of CDSS and its leadership. This was fulfilled. At no time did the group feel influenced or pressured by CDSS to modify our observations. The work of the group was not intended to be a to-do list with boxes to be checked off as CDSS reaches goals in equity and fairness. Nor was the group hired to tell CDSS nice things that any organization would want to hear.

It was clear in all interactions with the leadership of CDSS that the work of the group is just a beginning. Plans for future consultation are in order whether those projects are with these CEAG members, the facilitator, or other professional organizations. It will take the community pulling together to lead CDSS into an equitable future.

Process

The CEAG was asked to commit to one year of service, which included attending monthly remote group meetings, and some research and preparation between meetings. The facilitator worked with the Cultural Equity Task Group (staff and board) to create a timeline and benchmarks.

The CEAG held their first meeting March 12, 2021. Members of CDSS staff and board were present to introduce the project and welcome the group. Introductions and CDSS history were provided by CDSS leadership. The facilitator outlined the structure of future meetings and a group development exercise was done.

Monthly meetings continued through the year covering topics that are covered in more depth below. Group members reviewed recent public-facing communications and online content from CDSS. In the fall, the CEAG met with CDSS leadership for 20-minute interviews. The leaders were invited to meet independently for confidential and candid dialogue. CEAG met with Katy German, Executive Director; Joanna Reiner Wilkinson, Director of Programs; Crispin Youngberg, Office and Registrations Manager who oversees scholarships; Gaye Fifer, CDSS Board Chair; and Joel Bluestein, CDSS Board Treasurer.

In early 2022, the draft of this report was created and amended until the final form was accepted by consensus and without dissent. Group members were invited to express their thoughts on our work together and our process. The CEAG was formally dismissed.

Executive Summary

Strategic Plan and Organizational Structure

Think back to around one hundred years ago. Women had just won the constitutional right to vote and work as secretaries outside of the home. Transatlantic flight was still a dream. Jim Crow laws were firmly established. Blackface minstrelsy was still the most popular form of entertainment across the United States and the degrading art form was being gleefully exported around the world. All Native Americans were still not considered citizens of the United States. The first registered gay rights organization in the United States was dissolved after all of its members were arrested. Some of the first Irish immigrants who arrived on Ellis Island were becoming young adults. And the notions of class and Whiteness were being defined in a rapidly changing nation. It is in this environment that Country Dance & Song Society was founded.

What was the original vision of CDSS? Was it a club of music lovers excited about a specific genre? Or a group of cohorts of the same class who wanted to solidify their identity as a learned society? Whatever the goal, times and influences were different from what they are now. What are the responsibilities to members, affiliates, leaders, and the general public that a nonprofit seeking “to promote participatory dance, music, and song with English and North American roots” has to fulfill in the 21st century? And what is meant by “English” and “North American roots”?

The answers to these questions are beyond the scope of the Cultural Equity Advisory Group. They are best addressed by a formal strategic planning process which includes detailed attention to organizational structure and an action plan for organizations looking to the future. All professional strategic planning services offer a clear navigation of equity for organizations that find themselves on the cusp of change.

From the facilitator’s analysis, CDSS has a strategic plan and organizational structure that has served some well until now – but not everyone. According to the writings of Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD,² who has written extensively on the life cycles of Boards of Directors and organizations, this is exactly where a one hundred year old organization should find itself. This is a time in the life of an organization that questions of identity and how to carry out its mission come to the surface. The methods and means of business are not enough to sustain the growing entity. So the board revisits its mission and its role in doing the work of the organization.

Solid strategic planning, including equity provisions and a comprehensive action plan, is essential as CDSS navigates its way through the next one hundred years. To remain relevant, CDSS needs to decide what the leadership needs to provide its members and affiliates, especially in answering the question, “Does anyone need a Country Dance & Song Society?” As CDSS looks to the future, the leadership will need to rely on those who have an understanding of the cultural diversity found in the United States and an interest in CDSS. The members of CEAG spent a year getting to know the organization better. Realizing that the work of the group is a beginning, some members have expressed an interest in remaining engaged with CDSS as the work of equity building unfolds. The facilitator suggests that the leadership

² <https://www.authenticityconsulting.com/>

accept this offer of continued assistance by performing an independent exit interview with each member of CEAG to learn areas of interest and experience. The detailed notes taken during these interviews will provide a consultation resource for those tasked with assuring the work is continued.

Two Open Letters from the CDSS Community

The timing of forming the CEAG and the receipt of the letters from community members influenced the initial work of the group. Understanding the concern of leadership, it was important to review and comment on the letters. However, as it was pointed out by a few group members, it was imperative that we get to the work for which the CEAG was convened. Given that our meetings began nearly a year from the composition of one letter, this critique made sense.

Because of the urgency to review the letters as expressed by CDSS leadership, dialogue about the letters, listening to one another, and developing a rapport and trust as a team happened quickly for this group. The open letters presented a unique opportunity for cohesion and understanding as we addressed the task before us. Time, energy, attention, and often emotions are stretched doing the work of equity, cultural harmony, and justice. The group agreed to refer to the letters as “the longer” by Dana Parkinson and Dela Murphy, and “the shorter” by Julian Brubaker, Imogen Mills, and Rachel Fifer.³

First impressions of the “longer letter” included appreciation for the authors asking CDSS to be accountable, and for pointing out that there is work to be done by the organization. Though the intention of the letter seemed constructive, there was a notable distance between the authors and the organization. There was a passion and even a sense of anger when advocating for marginalized groups. However, some CEAG members wondered who gave the authors permission to speak on their behalf. Where are the voices of those marginalized and why are they not speaking? With whom did the authors consult? The difference between observations and advocacy seemed unclear.

The same was assessed for the “shorter letter.” It was pointed out by a group member that some signatures were not obtained in support of this letter as requested because other affiliates wanted to know the responses of marginalized groups first. This letter was action based. However the attempt to address the leadership’s comfort was not viewed as beneficial to some group members. Questions in our dialogue continued to emerge, “Can CDSS be rehabilitated?” “Does it need or want to be?” That the organization invested in the CEAG is an indication that the desire to change is evident. The question is how? The CEAG hoped to guide that work with observations and suggestions.

³ [Open Letter on \(Anti-\)Racism to the CDSS Board](#), referred to as “the short letter,” from Julie Brubaker, Imogen Mills, and Rachel Fifer, June 2022

Open Letter from Dela Murphy and Dana Parkinson, referred to as “the longer letter,” no longer publicly available.

Review of CDSS Background Document

To assist the CEAG with the work of advising CDSS, a document called “Background and Context for the CDSS Cultural Advisory Group” was given to the CEAG.⁴ To everyone’s surprise, many problems regarding the organization’s perspective and understanding of equity were uncovered. First impressions expressed by the CEAG centered on three observations: who is the “we” mentioned in the document, the language sounds more like that of a club than an organization, and there seemed to be a lack of respect for diversity.

Although this document was provided by CDSS leadership as a snapshot of the organization, it was generally accepted by the CEAG that the document reflects the mindset of the staff and board at this moment in time. The group decided to address the concerning components as a part of our work. In addition to content, the areas of attention are: language used to express ideas, the culture of the organization, historical personalities v. experience of those who encounter CDSS, and weaknesses that hinder the organization’s progress. Once these areas of concern were outlined, CEAG expounded on each of the areas in greater detail.

Language used to express ideas

Although this is presented as an internal document used to help the CEAG with the task of advising CDSS, the language used in the document seemed reflective of the current mindset of the organization. Here are the thoughts and observations of the CEAG. The voice of the document reflected a passivity that avoids ownership in the challenges facing the organization. The wording named obvious states of the organization such as, “At this point in time, most of our Affiliates are predominantly white.” The question from the group is, “Well, how did [CDSS] get to this point and what are you doing about it?”

The structure of the document was confusing because it moved from a chronology that missed crucial dates to a narration without a cause. This may seem an odd critique. However, it resembles the lack of cohesion and understanding of the organization’s structure as it relates to its past. This is essential to understand if CDSS is to move into the future intact.

The name of the organization was raised by a member of the group stating that the use of the word “Country” in “Country Dance & Song Society” feels self-defeating when the majority of people in the United States think of country line dancing if they hear “Country Dance.” It was thought that the original meaning of the term “Country Dance” was explicitly imperialist/white identity-creating so why hold on to it at all? This is another indication that Whiteness and the development of a club may have been on the minds of the founders. If so, is that what CDSS wants to maintain and promote 100 years after its founding?

⁴ The “Background” document referred to here was a compilation of several authors on the board and staff that was meant to give a brief history of the organization and the way it has changed over time.

The culture of the organization

CDSS has an advantage that other organizations lack — a collective knowledge of affiliates and members who have been engaged for enormous lengths of time. From the contents of this document, this rich resource appears as a footnote. A dialogue about the culture of CDSS as it appears in the document produced some insightful remarks. Successes and failures of attempts at bringing people and groups together are available to the organization. Innovative thoughts that harken back to previous practices like social dancing as a form of courting. Some of the shared values of CDSS communities that are anti-modern, pro-rural, or other such descriptors that are not explicitly about race and diversity can be alienating as well. It was agreed that “converging cultures” misses opportunities to experience the benefits of diversity.

Historical personalities v. experience of those who encounter CDSS

Cecil Sharp looms large in the identity of CDSS. This is evident in most of my encounters with the organization. In fairness, it could be due to my work in conflict transformation that people readily and easily talk about him to me even at first encounters. It was the opinion of CEAG that there is just too much focus on this historical personality. At times, his presence seems to be used (consciously or not) to remove accountability for the language and lack of equity. The document presents a group of people from a time different from now, but still in a club. It is noted that some things cannot be taught but experienced. So, how does CDSS broaden the image of the people who engage in this tradition? How does CDSS invite communities to experience the things that are best about the organization? How do you share what you appreciate while appropriately acknowledging the past?

Gaps that hinder the organization’s progress

There are gaps of information in the document that prevent the full story of CDSS’s history from being told. Out of 100 years of history, what was included in the document reflects what is in the forefront for CDSS, or it is at least the loudest part of the story that the CEAG heard. An origin story of a White Anglocentric organization automatically generates groups of “others” in the minds of people outside of the organization. This becomes an obstacle for those within the organization who desire to see more diversity and equity. The content of this document falls short of celebrating and sharing the multicultural and diverse success stories that do exist. The only way in which minoritized groups are mentioned is by outlining the problems faced in attempts to engage them.

In acknowledging that CDSS does not regulate their affiliates or hold them to a set of standards, CDSS misses that they made choices to become an organization that doesn't regulate. The organization could choose to change that rather than use a “hands off” approach. For example, it could decide not to have affiliates that use gendered calling. Ultimately, the board may choose not to implement such an idea/restriction, but to think that CDSS cannot do this kind of thing is a limiting assumption.

Problems exist in many dance communities. CDSS is no exception. Older men gravitate towards younger newer female dancers, and at gender-calling events, dancers not dancing in the role that matches their gender presentation get corrected. There are other concerns that need to be addressed by the leadership for the safety of existing participants.

CDSS seems to lose the "why" in striving for action. There is a clear need to balance the "doing" and the reason "why" the organization exists.

The review of the "Background" document generated several questions we hope the organization will endeavor to answer as the work of equity in CDSS continues.

- What is your mission now? How do you share your mission?
- How does your use of marketing welcome diversity?
- What use of resources are you dedicating to the work?
- What resources will it take for the scope and vision?
- What are your values? And can you rank them?
- What is your plan to bring in more diverse communities? Why do you want to bring them in?
- Why can't you enforce standards for your affiliates? Why do you want or not want to regulate as an organization?
- How much care and intentionality was put into this document? It's difficult to read and interpret intent and without consistent structure.
- How does CDSS participate in diverse communities beyond inviting in?
- What are the values celebrated by the organization? How do you invite others to enjoy them in safe and affirming spaces? What successes can provide guiding principles for the work?

Responsibilities and Priorities

Brainstorming sessions were used to answer specific questions about responsibilities and priorities for CDSS as it looks to the future. After a birds-eye view of the organization, 75% of the group believes the responsibility for the work of equity rests with leadership. Only 12.5% of the group believes it belongs to members and affiliates. The remaining 12.5% of the group believes it belongs to others (sponsors and financiers).

High priority responsibilities suggested by the CEAG

- **Develop a respect for diversity by promoting traditions and performers of all North American cultures.** If this is not the direction of the strategic plan, then revisit the definitions of the traditions that CDSS promotes to broaden the definition beyond what the founders considered English and North American roots. This could be addressed by extending practical assistance to music and dance organizations with whom CDSS has not traditionally worked and/or that are marginalized.
- **The Board of Directors' recruitment should include a search among marginalized groups.** The board should answer fundamental questions about who/what the organization wants to be/represent and seek to reflect that in the governance structure. If this is to be a focused society, like Daughters of the American Revolution, then declare that and set a strategic plan around an identity. Otherwise, broaden the field of participation.
- **Educate participants of the full history of CDSS.** Share the strides made by affiliates in the West who opened the way to introspect on performance practices to make gender-neutral dances the standard, combining culture of consent with culture of community, and assist individual communities as they create or rewrite their policies and procedures to make everyone feel safe and welcome.

Moderate priority responsibilities suggested by the CEAG

- Develop programming that focuses on education and thereby foster understanding as communities continue to blend cultures.
- Improve outward communications that reflect the organization's values and help affiliates that request it to develop guidelines of equity.
- Define the traditions that surround CDSS and educate those who are not familiar but interested.
- Develop standards/levels of accountability for affiliates that are recipients of the organization's resources.

Low priority responsibility suggested by the CEAG

- Assure that messaging is clear and concise when addressing the public, paying especially close attention to imagery on the website and social media.

To begin the work of addressing the suggested high, moderate, and low priority responsibilities, the CEAG primarily suggested ways to be more socially responsible such as providing a protocol or structure for responding to unsafe actions, providing training for event organizers to help them be thoughtful allies, educating affiliates on current and historical issues that affect equity within CDSS, and promoting and celebrating non-gendered terms in dancing and elsewhere.

CDSS staff, members, and affiliates can engage with members of the community to have a dialogue on important topics around equity, figure out how to raise funds or how much from the current budget could go to support music and dance organizations that have been marginalized by CDSS, create an organization "dictionary" that can be referenced so that equitable language is used in all settings. This could be accessed by members and leaders. CDSS could meet leaders of music and dance groups outside of CDSS's historical traditions and actively invite people from other communities, especially marginalized communities to community activities. CDSS could update the history page to include the true history of the curating and sharing of traditions as part of a way to educate members and the community.

It is understood among the CEAG members that some members, affiliates, and leaders in CDSS are already doing some of the things suggested. That is to be applauded and celebrated. Indeed, it was stated during this exercise and for many times to come, the CEAG sees a more responsible role for CDSS than it has taken in the past in supporting and celebrating the affiliates that exemplify equity.

Equity Action Plan Recommended by the CEAG

This action plan suggested by the CEAG is not a comprehensive action plan for CDSS. Rather it should be one part of the development of a strong strategic plan as recommended previously. The CEAG suggests clear and concrete actions that can get CDSS leadership started. However, the work of dedicated staff hired to address equity under the guidance of the Board of Directors (after they expand the diversity of their members) is when the true and enduring work of equity will begin.

The language here comes from the CEAG members. Diversity is a new world for the nation and some of these terms are not entirely comfortable for all people. The intention of the CEAG is to be clear without causing harm. Sometimes we miss the mark.

Leadership could use a 1, 5, and 10-year plan to incorporate this action plan in the regular operations of CDSS. Check points and mile markers can be monitored and celebrated along the way. If CDSS is able and willing to invest in this, a foundation will be laid for a more diverse and equitable future.

CDSS Website's Cultural Equity Page

<https://cdss.org/about-our-cultural-equity-work-march-21>⁵

Recommended immediate actions

- The site only mentions issues of race, which is important, but completely overlooks other marginalized identities. Implement inclusivity plans that are for all identities
- Center and place focus on the inclusivity statement itself
- The most meaningful immediate thing on this website is that CDSS is willing to give grants to affiliates for anti-racist/diversity work — that should be at the top
- Explanation of or concrete items about action planned for implementation of inclusivity statement
- The CEAG should not be used to buy good will. That should be clear on the site.
- Create links for: “Share anti-racism resources with your community,” “Organize equity training sessions for your board and volunteers,” and “We are amplifying the work of Black traditional music and dance artists on our Facebook page.”
- I think starting with a statement of commitment to equity and inclusion, and what that means will help anchor the rest of the content. This can be followed by a section on: a) Ongoing efforts, and b) How you can be a valuable ally.
- We need to think carefully about whether the harm perpetuated to different racial and ethnic groups of people are sufficiently captured here. For instance, the acknowledgement of the occupation of native lands is glaringly absent. Beyond Cecil Sharp’s legacy, it is unclear what else CDSS acknowledges as harm perpetuated on underrepresented minorities in a tangible way. In the absence of clear acknowledgement of the harm caused, the current page comes across as virtue signaling.
- CEAG overwhelms all the other content. Surely, the value added through CEAG cannot be greater than the sum total of all other efforts by CDSS and opportunities for allies. Content on CEAG should be in a linked subpage.
- The section on ongoing efforts can be theme based rather than chronological because it doesn’t matter much the month and year a training event took place. The themes could be: a) Acknowledgement of harm, b) Skill and knowledge building, c) Resource allocation, d) Amplifying underrepresented minorities based on existing content.

Recommended future actions

- Tell us what you’re going to do about Cecil Sharp
- Help identify the racist parts of our traditions (that we still enact)
- Provide guidelines/education to address microaggressions/racism at dances/jams, etc
- Reword some of the tabs in the resource list (e.g. “Romantic orientation”)

⁵ The cultural equity webpage has since been updated; the archived version of the page that the report references is linked here.

Facebook and Social Media

<https://www.facebook.com/cdss.org>

Recommended immediate actions

- Create a regular schedule and policy for social media posts
- Clarify mission across multiple platforms
- Lacking substance for visible diversity, when there is diversity (e.g. “For Native American Heritage Month, enjoy a new episode of Songs that Speak with Saro Lynch-Thomason and special guest Roo George-Warren of Catawba Indian Nation.”) it specifically tokenizes those people and events “For Native American Heritage Week”; their work needs to be shared all year
- 90% of the posts should be sharing other groups’ work — that’s one way to diversify what we see on your social media.

Recommended future actions

- Photo competition from your more diverse affiliates/members will generate authentic content
- Highlight affiliate groups that display diversity
- Share “topics we’re tackling” on some sort of schedule (if the organization pursues professional development)
- Produce segments similar to “Songs that Speak” only with musicians and singers throughout the community — a great opportunity to highlight the diversity of our community across the country
- Use social media to develop relationships so not to tokenize

Affiliates

Recommended immediate actions

- Set ground rules that reflect your values
- Publicly announce action plan, policies, and procedures that will be implemented in any instance of harassment (these can be used as frameworks for affiliates to implement in their own communities)
- Does CDSS and all its affiliate organizations have a common value system? And where in this value system does equity and inclusion lie? This is very important so decisions can be grounded through a clear value driven compass.
- It is very important to translate statements of equity and diversity into action, not just at CDSS but also in its affiliates

Recommended future actions

- Find the funds to deal with the financial loss due to “risks” of equity. This concern surfaces as an excuse for leadership.

- Work with affiliates that show strong diversity in their group. Even have them take a lead in organizing workshops, etc.
- Challenge affiliates to make subtle changes to their practice/dances (non-gender positional terms, different style music, seek diverse music groups, etc.)
- Use the power you have to influence. The actions of all affiliates reflect on CDSS, so decide what you want to be known for?
- Offer insurance access and 501(c)(3) access to dance and music groups *beyond* those that currently fit into CDSS's mission/jurisdiction
- Draft a set of best practices for diversity and equity for affiliate organizers that include recommendations for educational resources, organizer training and organizational values and actions
- Encourage affiliate dance organizations to remove barriers to access for younger/more diverse/newer groups to book gigs

Resource Portal

<https://www.cdss.org/resources/resource-portal/inclusivity>

Recommended immediate actions

- Compensate resource creators to exhibit/model commitment to equity
- Determine if the resource portal is dynamic or static
 - Narrow down by topic or number of resources (The race tab has much more than other tabs. This looks like show rather than action)
- For the "Benefits of our Shared Traditions" section, how are you defining "shared traditions"? What does that mean and whose traditions are they?

Recommended future actions

- Add a list of traditional African-American tunes with videos from artists
- Use external resources to add more resources with greater diversity
- What about intersectionality?

General/internal Issues to Address

Recommended immediate actions

- Be willing to provide more direction to affiliates.
- Bring in outside groups that specialize in diversity.
- Bring in organizational resources to educate and create an environment to support the hiring of diverse staff people/diverse board members
- Define a clear and transparent value system. CDSS needs to have a hierarchical list of values that it strives for and aims to promote. It needs to be transparent about that list and to use it as a compass. In this value system, where does equity and diversity, fundraising, and promotion of dance and music lie with regard to each other. These are three examples among many others.

After all, if equity and diversity were the top priority, the perspectives and actions of CDSS and its affiliates would be different compared to if fundraising were the top priority. A clear value system will not only align efforts at CDSS and its affiliates, but will also help patrons and participants bear clear responsibilities and expectations from being part of the CDSS community.

- Expose staff to people of diverse cultures/color
- Hire people of diverse cultures/color
- Use educational materials that market to minoritized groups. How do you make someone aware of the CDSS to entice them to be part of the organization (e.g., CDSS attracts contra dancers, but what about bootstrap or hoofing dancers)?
 - Contact dance organizations to help provide information on those traditions (specifically from the South) and share resources and events
 - Why doesn't your "Priority Focus Areas" include anything about equity?
 - What are the "traditions that have roots in English and North American culture"? Whose traditions are they? What about North American music and dance such as blues, jazz, breaking, hoofing, and bootstrap dancing? What about tribal dances?

Recommended future actions

- Use a restorative circle approach to ensure every board/staff member is heard. Then commit to taking at least one action from that discussion.
- Opportunities for reverse mentorship⁷
- Solve the "Gordian Knot" of CDSS, a problem solvable only by bold action. How can you continue with the same mission of the last 100 years while recognizing that it could be racist? If you can't, what are you going to do about it? (Basically, are you going to change what you do, or figure out how you can do it without it being racist?)

Facilitator's Conclusion

I conclude that this last point of the action plan could be addressed now, rather than in the future. It is the most poignant of all because it points to the question of the identity of CDSS. Knowing what the organization has been and has become is important. Strategic planning and the collective work of affiliates, members, and communities will help pave the way to a relevant future.

⁶ <https://www.cdss.org/about-us/mission-statement>

⁷ <https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-patrice-gordon-on-reverse-mentorship/>