Dr. Joyce Chen Spotlight 02/21/21

The CFAES Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion would like to welcome you to our new DEI Faculty and Staff Spotlight. Each month we will be celebrating our colleagues who are working to make CFAES and the community a welcoming place for all people. This month we are featuring Dr. Joyce Chen, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics, Chair-Elect for the President and Provost’s Committee on Women (PPCW), and member of both the CFAES DEI Action Council and Ohio State’s Task Force on Racism and Racial Inequities.

Why is engaging in diversity, equity, and inclusion, important to your work?
Diversity, equity, and inclusion are necessary for excellence... I only wish that I had realized this earlier in my career! The voices that we do not get to hear limit the breadth and depth of our work, not only our individual research and teaching but our ability to engage with stakeholders and the broader community.

How do you contribute to DEI work within CFAES and or the greater university or community?
I feel very fortunate to serve on the University’s Task Force on Racism and Racial Inequities, the College’s DEI Action Council, and as the Chair-Elect for the President and Provost’s Committee on Women (PPCW), and the Chair of the Committee on Women in Agricultural Economics for the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association. For more information on this work, please visit https://www.joycejchen.com/dei. I love having the opportunity to link my DEI work across different levels, to see how initiatives can be aligned and to identify where we have gaps that can or should be filled. My aim is to identify policies and processes that can be changed to create environments that not only value but actively promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

How did your career path lead to this type of advocacy work?
To be honest, I was afraid to engage in this work before I was tenured. But after a complicated tenure case and a pay equity appeal, I began to really see how much our policies and processes needed to be changed to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. I also learned that this work could be impactful in ways that my (purely) scholarly research could not and have found it to be extremely rewarding.
What do you see as strengths within CFAES related to DEI?
I am so excited to have Kathy Lechman back at CFAES and to see DEI elevated within the College, as well as to have fantastic staff in our DEI office. The range of disciplines and approaches in our College creates so many opportunities for us to further DEI, ranging from food security to environmental justice.

In what areas would you like to see growth within our college related to DEI?
I would love to see CFAES broaden their extension and outreach efforts to include more dimensions of food systems and a more diverse set of stakeholders – for example, urban consumers, agricultural laborers, immigrant workers, and inner city youth with little exposure to agriculture.

What advice do you have for other faculty or staff who are interested in getting involved in DEI work?
Do it! You will learn so much and meet so many amazing people. But do recognize that the work can be very emotionally taxing and can sometimes compromise both professional and personal relationships. So pace yourself and make sure you have a support network to help keep you grounded.