



University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

College of Fine and Applied Arts 2020-2021 (draft)

Towards Culturally Responsive Excellence and Equity (rev. Aug. 17, 2020)

Welcome, everyone!

As faculty, staff, and students in the College of Fine and Applied Arts, we are all grappling with the question “What now?” as we carry on with our work during the COVID-19 pandemic. As diversity, equity, and inclusion work continues across campus, having a shared knowledge of certain vocabulary helps us to not only identify our values, but to move forward in a most meaningful way. The goal of this study is to encourage all units to acknowledge strengths, areas to watch out for, and to encourage self-reflection for the purpose of intentional change and accountability. To this end, the aim of the Fall 2020 semester is to reflect on how we can best carry out the mission and values of the College of FAA.

As artists, architects, actors, dancers, designers, musicians, planners, educators, researchers, and scholars, we have all learned the art of the nuances in our respective fields. Whether participating in a tea ceremony at Japan House or engaging in a performance at Krannert Center, we must also be aware that conversations about social justice and racial equity also are nuanced, that details matter, and that recognizing people’s experiences at this institution matters. The National Association for Diversity Officers in Higher Education, the current organization which has set guidance and recommendations for diversity officers in higher education, uses the term “inclusive excellence.” The Association of American Colleges and Universities also embraces this term. In the process of self-reflection, it is important to recognize that we are aware of our own contribution to the climate.

It is our hope that all work to become increasingly mindful of certain practices, and that it translates to a further understanding of implicit bias. As each unit reflects upon the following prompts as well as themes that will emerge from the survey, it is important to note that the conversations may be quite uncomfortable. We encourage you all to become comfortable with being uncomfortable. Estela Mara Bensimon, Director of Center for Urban Education at University of Southern California, coined the term “equity mindedness.” Through intentional addressing of what is happening across campus and our college, we may keep focused on moving toward continuous and equitable change.

Thank you to all our unit leadership, as well as to the members of the college’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for leading the conversations. To FAA faculty, staff, and students, thank you for helping to make our work of equity and inclusion a priority as we continue moving forward.

Sincerely,

Kevin Hamilton, Dean, FAA

Rochelle Sennet, Incoming Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, FAA



I. Why Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives Matter

As you approach this process of reflection, we offer the following as a guide to why this work is so vital:

- A.** These initiatives help us acknowledge our institutional history and to move forward through continuous development and education by holding us accountable regarding our past, present, and future.
- B.** Racism and Anti-blackness are global concerns, and not merely issues in the United States.
- C.** DEI work stands to broaden curricula and create a wider range of educational experiences for all students.
- D.** This work also helps prepare faculty and staff for a multitude of classroom and meeting situations.
- E.** Add your own reasons here, as they emerge in this reflection: _____.

II. Unit Prompts

A. For the Unit Heads and Unit Governing Body (e.g., the Unit's Executive Committee)

1. What is your unit's mission statement? Note: Please feel free to use the semester to reflect on key points with faculty and staff.
2. What are some steps that have been made thus far in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion within your unit?
3. How do you define the terms "diversity," "equity," and "inclusion?"
4. If you have a DEI committee, when was your committee established, and is there an additional mission statement for it?
5. Provide a statistical breakdown of the number of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff in your unit, including some attention to how these have changed in recent years.
6. How ready is your unit to address matters relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion?
7. In your initial assessment:
 - What portion of your staff and faculty see diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence as vital concerns and part of their work? (select one)
 - (a) Most see this work as essential to the unit but few see it as part of their individual responsibilities.
 - (b) Most see this work as part of their own individual responsibilities.
 - (c) Less than half would see this work as essential to the unit or to their individual responsibilities.
 - (d) Other:_____.
 - Do faculty and staff in your unit feel comfortable talking about race? (select one)
 - (a) Many do, or are actively learning in this area.
 - (b) Some do, but most try to avoid it.
 - (c) Only a few are comfortable with it.
 - (d) Other:_____.



- Do you think that people, especially faculty, staff, and students of color, experience their unit as a place where people listen? (select one)
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No
 - (c) A few
 - (d) Other: _____.

8. How do you encourage people to be mindful regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives?

B. For Faculty, Staff, and Students

****To unit leadership:** Once you have responded to section A above, we recommend anonymously surveying faculty, staff, and students with at least questions 6, 7, and 8 above. If you are moved, please feel free to add 1–2 more questions. Then convene meetings of faculty, staff, and students to review the results of this internal survey as well as the following prompts, summarizing the discussions in your final report.

1. What unit/college/campus structures currently exist for underrepresented students to be successful?
2. Across the following areas, where do you think your unit is doing better or worse with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion discussions:
 - (a) Race, ethnicity
 - (b) Gender identity and equity
 - (c) Mental health
 - (d) Those who are differently abled
 - (e) LGBTQIA+ community
 - (f) Immigrants, undocumented status
3. What agency do you feel you have to address bias and discrimination, and how does it impact your teaching?
4. Do you think that diversity training and implicit bias training work? Why or why not?
5. How are the words diversity, equity, and inclusion connected?
6. Does your unit conflict over definitions of “excellence?”
7. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “Black Lives Matter?”
8. The following three questions represent broad areas of work we will be pursuing over the course of the year. (Note to unit leadership: Use your convenings to explore them initially, and report back on the focus of the conversations):
 - How would you define “racism” and “anti-racism?”
 - What are the distinct differences between “anti-racism” and “I don’t see color?”
 - What is meant by “white privilege” and “being an ally?”



College of Fine & Applied Arts

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

College of Fine and Applied Arts Diversity Statement, as of April 10, 2018

The University of Illinois College of Fine and Applied Arts recognizes a broad and inclusive concept of diversity as a springboard toward mutual understanding. Diversity encompasses complex differences and similarities in identities and perspectives among members of our college, as well as among individuals who make up the broader global community.* The college's concept of diversity retains the capacity to continually evolve, embracing a wide spectrum of viewpoints.

*Diversity may include commonly recognized considerations such as Race and Ethnicity, Gender, Gender Identity and Expression, Age, Sexual Orientation, Disability Status, Religion, National and Geographic Origin, Language Use, Socio-Economic Status, First Generation, Military Veterans, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Undocumented Immigrants, Illinois Low-Sending Counties, Criminal Conviction History, and Political Ideology.

Selected References

Books

McNair, Tia Brown and Estela Mara Bensimon. *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk*. 1st edition. San Francisco: Josey Bass, 2020.

Stein, Tobie. *Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Performing Arts*. New York and London: Routledge, 2020.

Symonette, Hazel. "Culturally Responsive Evaluation as a Resource for Helpful-Help" in *Continuing the Journey to Reposition Culture and Cultural Context in Evaluation Theory and Practice*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2014.

Links

All links below last accessed August 14, 2020

Advancing the Mission: Tools for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (Annie Casey Foundation):

<https://www.aecf.org/resources/advancing-the-mission-tools-for-equity-diversity-and-inclusion/>

American Association of Colleges and Universities: Diversity page:

<https://www.aacu.org/diversity-equity-and-student-success>

Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit:

<https://www.asianamtoolkit.org>

Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture:

<https://www.equityinthecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Equity-in-Center-Awake-Woke-Work-2019-final-1.pdf>

Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment at Illinois:

<https://crea.education.illinois.edu>

Disability Resources and Educational Services at Illinois:

<https://www.disability.illinois.edu>

ICARE Racial Equity Toolkit:

<https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/sites/default/files/attachments/ICARE%20Race%20Equity%20Toolkit.pdf>

University of Southern California LGBT Resource Page:

<https://lgbtrc.usc.edu>