

## I. OVERVIEW

The first meeting of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's (SAIC) Anti-Racism Committee (ARC) was held on Thursday, September 3, 2020 online from 4:00-5:30 p.m.

### A. ATTENDING

Dio Aldrige, special assistant to the dean and provost on diversity, equity, and inclusion; Sampada Aranke, assistant professor; Robyn Besana, disability specialist; Michael Blackman, assistant dean of student affairs for student support and conflict resolution; Delinda Collier, interim dean of graduate studies (co-chair); James Connolly, assistant professor, adjunct; Craig Downs, executive director of media and instructional resources; Dawn Gavin, dean of undergraduate studies; Olivia Gude, professor; Jaclyn Jacunski, director of civic engagement; Jenny Lee, assistant professor; Zemaye Okediji, graduate student; Jefferson Pinder, director of diversity, equity, and inclusion for academic affairs (co-chair); Dan Price, associate professor; Maria Gaspar, associate professor; Daniel Quiles, associate professor; Molly Scranton, associate director of faculty affairs; Roberto Sifuentes, professor; Jimmie Swaggerty, senior administrative director; Carly Trujilo, undergraduate student; Katrina Valera, director of student affairs for diversity and inclusion; Kirin Wachter-Grene, assistant professor; Jeff Ward, special assistant for executive communication (notetaker); Martine Whitehead, assistant professor, adjunct; Adrian Wong, assistant professor; Timeka Young, employee relations and training manager.

### B. VISITING

Leah Gipson, assistant professor; Elissa Tenny, president.

### C. AGENDA

- Introductions
- Scope
- Subgroups

### D. ENCLOSURES

Charge of ARC; community guidelines for discussion.

## II. INTRODUCTIONS

After Pinder called the meeting to order, Tenny thanked everyone for their participation and reviewed the charge of the committee (encl.). Then, everyone briefly introduced themselves by stating their role at the School and their interest in participating on the committee. For many, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and anti-racism was already an active part of their job duties or artistic and scholarly practices; it was also part of the approach people brought to their work, study, and classrooms. There was hope that the committee could bring about substantive change to SAIC as well as a healthy skepticism that the committee would get mired

down in deliberation and only produce minor improvements. After the introduction, Tenny departed so that the committee could conduct the rest of their meeting.

### III. SCOPE

To help define the scope of the committee's work, Pinder began by inviting his DEI colleagues to make brief presentations: Aldridge presented community guidelines that discussions would adhere to in ARC meetings (encl.); Valera presented on her work in student affairs, which included the Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs and a deep interaction with student groups. Pinder thanked Aldridge and Valera for their long-term service as DEI staff and talked about how the committee should help make their work more central to campus life and effective, including advocating for more DEI positions.

Pinder continued, noting the call for racial justice and the groundswell of support for change at SAIC. He encouraged committee members to channel their skepticism and disappointment to take advantage of the historic moment by helping the committee push for ambitious changes. Salient points he made include:

- A board member is still being sought for the committee
- Would ask representatives from advancement and legal counsel to present to ARC to strategize recruitment and support initiatives
- Need to communicate work of ARC throughout shared governance structure (e.g., department heads, faculty senate) to catalyze DEI and anti-racism in all leadership areas
- While being mindful of an intersectional framework and the breadth of DEI concerns, the current semester would prioritize addressing anti-Black racism
- Potential to keep connections with diverse, full-time faculty candidate hires from last year as part of ongoing diverse recruitment strategy

### IV. SUBCOMMITTEES

ARC will form subcommittees to do in-depth research and propose initiatives on particular topics. Subgroups will be composed of committee members, personnel working in specific topic areas, and other community members who want to be involved. Collier initiated a conversation about sub-group categories, suggesting forming subgroups dedicated to the following topics:

- Retention and Climate
- Law and Ethics
- Tuition, Equity, and Finances
- Curriculum and Resource Share
- Homan Square
- Communication

During the conversation, another subgroup was suggested, dedicated to:

- Grievances and Space

This sub-group could be tasked with being a sounding board and guide to help community members currently facing DEI-related hardship, acknowledge past incidence, and help secure dedicated space for BIPOC community members. This group would not seek to circumvent existing grievance structures already existing in the faculty or student handbook or Employee Guidelines; rather, this group could help address incidence of racism and inequity not currently addressed by that system and help work toward an ombudsperson function at SAIC.

#### V. ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

In addition to agenda topics, the following salient points were made during the meeting's discussions:

- More thorough, required anti-racism training is a key for a number of committee members who wanted additional training for ARC members and/or the entire School community. Several different approaches have been used over the past several years or are currently underway for several areas of the School (e.g., mandatory online training, C-ROAR, Chicago Freedom School), and considering training at the School would be part of ARC's work.
- Prior to the first meeting, ARC members were sent a number of petitions and letters to School leadership which made a series of DEI- and anti-racism-related demands. Several members of the committee organized and co-signed these petitions, and it was suggested the committee not stray too far from the prescriptions already laid out by these prior calls to action.

#### VI. NEXT STEPS

Pinder and Collier would reach out to committee members in the coming week to learn what subcommittees people wanted to volunteer for and a schedule for future meetings.

## MISSION AND VISION

Knowing that a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist campus is critical for the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) to fulfill its mission and institutional aspirations, the Anti-Racism Committee (ARC) has been formed to support and extend the work of existing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts and catalyze DEI and anti-racist work throughout all areas of SAIC. ARC's charge includes both identifying and implementing initiatives that will bring meaningful change in the short term as well as establishing a comprehensive, long-range plan to substantially improve the School's operations and the lived experience of all of its community members.

ARC is dedicated to addressing how systemic racism—especially as it is enacted against Black people—manifests at SAIC while recognizing the great diversity within the SAIC community. ARC acknowledges that individuals' identities exist intersectionally and believes that any initiative that furthers inclusivity—of race, ethnicity, nationality, country of origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, or other historically marginalized identities—is a meaningful step toward an anti-racist campus. To best work toward this vision, the committee's membership will include representatives from all of SAIC's primary constituencies: staff, faculty, and students as well as a board member.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

The committee is co-chaired by the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Academic Affairs and another member of the faculty. The committee reports directly to the President of the School.

## MEMBERSHIP

In addition to the co-chairs, ARC membership will include full- and part-time faculty, staff, students, and a member of the board of governors. Committee membership will count toward service requirements for full-time faculty, be considered as part of their job duties for full-time staff, and be voluntary for board members. Part-time faculty will receive additional compensation for committee work. Students will also be paid. Staff working in the president's office will provide support for the committee.

## TERM OF SERVICE

The Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Academic Affairs will chair the committee throughout their directorship. All other members are asked to serve for one-year terms, which may be renewed for up to three consecutive terms.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

It is anticipated that the committee will meet approximately once a month, and more often, as needed; additionally, sub-groups may be formed, at the discretion of the committee chair, so that committee members and colleagues in other areas of the School can work intensively in developing program initiatives and, ultimately, implementing institutional DEI and anti-racism initiatives.

## DUTIES

- Evaluate existing anti-racism/DEI strategies
- Brainstorm new anti-racism/DEI strategies
- Research efficacy of anti-racism/DEI strategies
- Identify initiatives for immediate implementation
- Build long-range, multi-year plan of action steps
- Communicate regularly with campus on achievements, projects, and actions
- Report at All-Faculty and Staff meetings
- Support affinity group meetings/space
- Support speaker series

## AREAS OF INQUIRY

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Promotion and advancement
- Professional development
- Student support
- Community climate / morale
- Curriculum
- Training and support

## TIMELINE

Summer 2020 —Committee formed and begins meeting.

Fall 2020 —Committee evaluates existing ideas for diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racist action items; establishes new ideas; and makes recommendations to the president and other appropriate departments for short-term actions to be undertaken immediately; begin first draft of comprehensive, multi-year strategic plan for DEI with medium- and long-term action items.

Spring/Summer2020— Continuetovet,iterate,finalize,andultimatelyadopt,withboard leadership approval, multi-year action plan and begin implementation.

## COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Aldridge reviewed a series of community guidelines ARC meeting sessions would follow to ensure everyone who wanted to had the opportunity to speak. They were:

- “I” statements: Everyone should speak from their own perspective
- Take space, make space: The group should work to give everyone equal time to speak
- One Aretha, on mic: There should be one speaker at a time
- Land the plane: Everyone should keep their feedback focused, and to a reasonable length
- Ouch, oops: Rather than let slights go unnoted, everyone should feel able to politely note offense to be discussed, and resolved, openly and efficiently
- In the room: Aside from the official minutes, conversations that take place in committee meetings should be confidential
- Pronouns: When in doubt of someone’s preferred pronouns, use a name and ask! You can also resort to “they” if you truly don’t know and aren’t able to find out.