

I. OVERVIEW

The first meeting of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's (SAIC) Anti-Racism Committee (ARC), Communications and Outreach Subcommittee, was held on Monday, November 9, 2020 online from 2:00–3:00 p.m.

A. ATTENDING

Michael Blackman, assistant dean of student affairs for student support and conflict resolution; Maura Frana, assistant professor; Scott Hendrickson, vice president of marketing and communications (co-chair); Jake Linn, undergraduate student; Allie n Steve Mullen, associate professor; Sarah Ross, assistant professor; Jimmie Swaggerty, administrative director; Katrina Valera, director of student affairs for diversity and inclusion (co-chair); Jeff Ward, special assistant for executive communications (notetaker).

B. VISITING

Jefferson Pinder, director of diversity, equity, and inclusion for academic affairs (ARC co-chair)

C. AGENDA

- Introduction
- Prioritize Action Items

D. ENCLOSURE

Community guidelines to guide discussion

II. PRIORITIZE ACTION ITEMS

After brief introductions and a review of the community guidelines—i.e., reminders for discussion, like “respect,” “be open to being challenged,” and “what is said stays, what is learned leaves”—subcommittee members reviewed their charge and prioritized their four action items, which they prioritized in this order:

1. ARC Communications Strategy - Consider what communications will help support the work of the committee and bolster its aims toward transparency; establish cadence of internal messages re: ARC to general community and ensures shared governance awareness/involvement in ARC activity
2. Land-Acknowledgement Strategy - While a strategy has been announced that will not permit renaming the 280 building, there is still strong interest throughout the School community, including the administration, to develop a venue for an indigenous land acknowledgement. This could include naming the land in front of 280 (grounds and amphitheater); plaque(s) or similar demarcation in owned campus buildings; etc.; also could include a curricular component (foundry course to make plaque/demarcation). Subcommittee could support the eventual event, but further format for further discussion will require dialogue with invested groups, e.g., Native American Student

Association.

3. Messaging Sensitivity – Revisit existing messaging guidance and review for best DEI and anti-racism practices
4. SAIC.edu section update – Continue to formalize information on website

During the prioritization discussion, members made the following salient points:

- The subcommittee can see itself as a working group, achieving what initiatives it has the resources to advance, and also make recommendations to the main ARC committee for setting more complex goals. The subcommittee could also be a consultative body, helping to ideate and provide feedback on communication strategies and drafts.
- The subcommittee was not changed with determining a land acknowledgement strategy, *per se*; rather, it was hoped that the committee could suggest and help facilitate a process by which all interested parties—and most especially the Native American Student Organization—could help the School formally recognize the unceded Indigenous lands upon which it stands.
- When discussing the “outreach” portion of their work, suggested by the subcommittee’s title, outreach to the School’s internal population was deemed most important.
- As part of a communications plan, there should be a regular cadence of reporting out on ARC’s activities to the School community through easily identifiable messaging, similar to the *NEXT* former strategic planning messages.
- Many members want a two-way communication, e.g., an email exchange or online forum, where individuals could feel like they were being heard and responded to be a human being. Some members were already involved in similar activities and discussions: Linn was soliciting feedback from his peers in student groups; Mullen also sits on the faculty senate’s climate committee, which has also discussed participatory forums.
- Communications should be candid about ongoing struggles and opportunities for growth, embracing critical feedback rather than being self-congratulatory.

III. NEXT STEPS

At their next meeting, members would further outline the form and style for their communications strategy.

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES

Valera reviewed a series of community guidelines ARC's communication and outreach subcommittee meeting sessions would follow to ensure everyone who wanted to had the opportunity to speak. They were:

- Respect: Build a respectful conversation
- Intention vs. Impact: Take responsibility for effect of words, even if the impact is unintentional
- Oops, ouch: Respectfully call attention to slights in the moment
- Take space; make space for diverse voices: Contribute to the conversation, while being attentive to making space for others
- Intersectional intervention and advocacy: Build a conversation that recognizes and supports individuals' multiplicity of identities
- One Lizzo, one flute: One person should speak at a time
- Land the plane: Be focused, so there can be time for more voices
- Understand before you're understood: Listen
- Be open to being challenged: Welcome feedback, especially about assumptions and generalizations
- Green, yellow, red—expect and accept discomfort: You will encounter discomfort in a space of learning
- Be committed to changing your opinion: It is okay to have your ideas challenged, and change them in the face of more information and reflection
- What is said, stays; what is learned, leaves: The integrity of the story made in discussion, and the individual narrative people may share, stays at the meeting; what we learn and decide can be shared with the community.