

## I. OVERVIEW

The first meeting of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's (SAIC) Anti-Racism Committee (ARC), Curriculum and Resource Share Subcommittee, was held on Monday, November 9, 2020 online from 4:30–6:00 p.m.

### A. ATTENDING

Sally Alatalo, professor; Gregg Bordowitz, professor; Olivia Gude, professor (co-chair); Paul Jackson, associate dean of undergraduate studies; Dwayne Moser, associate dean of graduate studies; David Norris, academic advisor; Jacob Ristau, associate professor, adjunct; Shawn Smith, interim dean of faculty and vice president of academic affairs (co-chair); Alan Strathmann, assistant professor, adjunct; Kirin Wachter-Grene, assistant professor; 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

- Introductions
- Discussion

## II. CURRICULUM BRAINSTORM AND DISCUSSION

After introductions, the subcommittee members shared examples of existing strategies for an anti-racist curriculum, brainstormed projects they could take on, and suggested recommendations they could endorse. During their conversation, they also discussed approaches, objectives, and strategy for their work. Both their ideas and discussion are summarized below:

### A. IDEAS

Ideas to pursue in advancing an anti-racist curriculum included:

- Faculty training and support would be valuable in support of curricular change, and the planning for a center for teaching and learning—developed during an earlier strategic planning process, but put on hold due to the pandemic—should be revisited.
- Establishing and periodically evaluating guidelines and expectations around an anti-racist classroom is a practice already used in some departments (e.g., low-residency MFA) and classrooms (e.g., Wachter-Grene has developed a lesson plan where students determine healthy community priorities in a course), and several members referred to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* among resources for building a non-hierarchical classroom. Such guidelines would be instrumental in sharing the burden of enacting an anti-

racist curriculum throughout the faculty, as opposed to replying on BIPOC faculty to enforce that vision.

- Mandatory reading lists for incoming students or a “campus read,” like in fall 2016 when Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen* was distributed on campus and discussed prior to her lecture and interview on campus, would be a way to build a shared anti-racism discussion. The first 150 pages of Isabel Wilkerson’s *Caste* would make a useful text for the School, especially because of its international perspective.
- A keywords document or institutional glossary of relevant terms, e.g., anti-racism, structural racism, could aid in setting goals and coordinating efforts school-wide. A shared vocabulary could help make acknowledging existing shortcomings at the School easier, and solidify a progressive vision.
- Constituent surveys or other data collection could help identify areas of strength and need in the curriculum, but a variety of approaches may be best. Surveying faculty about diverse content in courses might help gather additional ideas worth replicating more broadly; meanwhile, student focus groups with existing representatives (e.g., graduate student senate) might gather more valuable feedback than a survey.
- Required content tied to the academic spine would be certain to reach all undergraduate students.
- A service learning requirement would allow students to practice anti-racism, which complements the making and practice-building of art and design learning.
- The post-election reader developed in 2016 is a model for a resource guide for an anti-racist curriculum.

## B. DISCUSSION

Salient points from the subcommittee’s discussion included:

- The ARC subcommittee would keep in contact with the regular senate curriculum committee. As they, too, were working on anti-racism in the curriculum. Many members serve on both committees.
- In addition to proposals to invest in new initiatives and resources, faculty talent and experience should be seen as a primary resource.
- In strategizing their work, particularly in terms of setting guidelines and vocabulary, there was a debate on where the approach should originate. School leadership could provide a definition for anti-racism and clearly



pinpoint how structural violence is enacted at the institution, and this step may need to precede proposals for structural change. Alternatively, the subcommittee could concentrate on the preponderance of dean's staff and curricular expertise among its membership to propose actionable items to change the curriculum, even if the project of defining terms is ongoing.

- While counteracting anti-Blackness in terms of curriculum was the immediate priority for the subcommittee, support for anti-racism more broadly is also a goal. In particular, international students often experienced frustration due to cultural misrecognition.