



Arts
Administrators
in Higher
Education

BEYOND OPTICS: TAKING ACTION WITH ARTS FOR DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Friday, October 25, 2019

2:00-3:30pm EDT

Charles G. Baldwin, Program Officer for the Mass Cultural Council's Universal Participation (UP) Initiative
A-lan Holt, Executive Director, Institute for Diversity in the Arts - Stanford University
Mariam B. Lam, Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer - University of California-Riverside
Moderated by Alicia Anstead, Associate Director for Programming, Office for the Arts - Harvard University

- Deb Mexicotte: Good afternoon. I'm Deb Mexicotte. I am the Program Chair for the Arts Administrators in Higher Education. And I want to welcome all of you, our panelist, our moderator, and our attendees, to our very first webinar, in what we hope will be a series for looking at issues in the arts and higher education. We have an all guest panel here today, and I just want to give you a little bit of a rundown on how the webinar will run, what the format seems like, and what you can expect as a follow up if you are an attendee or you know someone who wanted to attend and wasn't able to be here today.
- Deb Mexicotte: First of all, I want to say, again I'm Deb Mexicotte, and in addition to my duties with the Arts Administrators in Higher Education, I am the Managing Director of ArtsEngine at the University of Michigan. Our platform today is co-supported by ArtsEngine, as well as the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities, of which many of our Arts Administrators in Higher Education institutions are also members.
- Deb Mexicotte: So this is going to be a conversational format today. We will have brief intros from our panelists, and then we will be fielding not just a series of questions that we think our panelist would be excellent in answering, and you can all nod for that, but we also are going to be collecting questions from the audience. If you look at your side dashboard you should see a place that says questions. You can type in your questions there and we will relay them into the conversation as we can. If any questions don't get answered, we will certainly follow up with panelists to make sure that we make those answers available, assuming it's not an answer that would take a thesis too resolve. But perhaps there are theses that we could just forward to, or perhaps articles that would answer your question.
- Deb Mexicotte: So you can also use that question box to troubleshoot any technical difficulties you might be having because that will come to me and I should be able to help you through, kind of troubleshoot whatever you might be having in terms of audio or video. We are recording today's webinar, and so after the webinar is finished there will be an audio, as well as a text transcript available on the Arts Administrators in Higher Education website. So that's what I have for you today. Be assured that even though I'm going to turn my camera off for the majority of the conversation I will be listening in and I will be forwarding your questions as I can.
- Deb Mexicotte: So without any further ado, I would like to turn this over to our moderator today, Alicia Anstead.

Alicia Anstead: Thanks so much Debra and hello and good day to everyone who's joining us. We're so delighted that you're here. I'm so happy to be part of the programming committee for this national group. In addition to being a program director at Harvard University and the editor for Inside Arts Magazine for the Association of Performing Arts Professionals, which you may know as APAP some of you, and also a co-producer on the APAP NYC annual conference. I'm so happy to be in the room today with our three guests speakers. You do not see Charles Baldwin but he's here. Could you just say a quick hello Charles, please?

Charles Baldwin: Hello. I am here. And I appreciate low technology.

Alicia Anstead: And Charles is joining us from just across the river from where I am in Cambridge. He's in Boston. And Mariam, tell us where you're at right now.

Mariam Lam: I'm in Riverside, California, which is about an hour east of Los Angeles.

Alicia Anstead: Excellent. And A-lan Holt, tell us about where you're at.

A-lan Holt: Hi, I'm here. I'm in the Bay Area at Stanford University.

Alicia Anstead: Great. So welcome to all of you, and welcome to everyone who's joining us on the webinar. I'd like to begin by just setting a tone of this is a conversation and this is a time when the three of us can certainly, or the four of us, can certainly interrupt each other at any point, but we're hoping that you'll come up with your questions too. Deb is in the ether out there waiting for your questions and will be delivering them to us. So don't wait for some endpoint or some segue. If you have something to say think of us as being around the big virtual water cooler right now and that we're all in this conversation, because ultimately we all are in this conversation together, doing this work at universities and colleges and other places.

Alicia Anstead: So I'm going to give each of our speakers today the opportunity to just tell us a little bit about who they are and maybe why they're in this discussion, why this discussion is important to them. You have their bios, so I'm going to leave all those things for you, all of our participants to explore on your own if you haven't already. But why don't we just jump right in. Mariam, could I come to you first to tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do? What would you like folks to know about you?

Mariam Lam: Sure. I'm probably the furthest out from being a direct arts administrator, but arts is my background and I am an administrator now. So I began as regular faculty, assistant professor tenure track at UC Riverside about 18 years ago in comparative literature. I do literature, film, visual arts, and I helped, at that time, to departmentalize our film cultures into a department of media and cultural studies. But I had always had training and ethnic studies, feminist studies, critical race theory, and the nonprofit community-based organizing and NGO work as a volunteer. And then, for the past four years. I've served as our Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer for the campus. So here at Riverside, it's a lean campus. It's part of the senior leadership. UCR is racially and ethnically diverse in terms of our administration. So at least 40% are women. Many are first generation college graduates. Several were born outside of the U.S. with a wide range of religious faiths represented. Among them are also LGBT community members and formally undocumented folks.

Mariam Lam: So in this position I directly report to the chancellor and provost, serving as their primary discussant on all matters related to diversity, equity, inclusion, campus climate. I'm supposed to promote innovative leadership in these areas for the campus, and fostering a university environment that believes in difference, improving communication across groups, and leading different strategic initiatives. So in this role, I have to partner with other senior administrators because we believe diversity is everyone's role, not just

the most minoritized folks. So helping other administrators to up their game, so to speak, assist all the units from student services to human resources to academic personnel in their efforts to recruit, retain diverse faculty, staff and students. And this of course includes our arts faculty recruitment and retention, visibility of the arts in the larger communities we serve and on campus, and then cultural climates in our arts departments and disciplines and the like. So that's what I do.

Alicia Anstead: Wow, that's a lot. You're a busy woman. Thank you for giving us that synopsis. Charles, do you want to jump in and give us a thumbnail about the work that you do, please?

Charles Baldwin: Sure. I'm currently the Program Officer for the Universal Participation Initiative at the Mass Cultural Council. Big title, sounds very fancy, but it really is about the work to explicitly include artists with disabilities in the cultural sector. And this comes from having been at an institution for the last 15 years, the Wheelock Family Theatre, and the Family Theatre's mission of inclusion, sadly, is probably considered still radical, although it certainly isn't. But the mission of inclusion puts everyone on stage, and that's professionals, non-professionals, youth, seniors, all the colors, sizes, ages. And the audience reflects that. So the work at Wheelock is really what led to the work that I'm doing now with the council.

Charles Baldwin: But it's been interesting because if I think about the continuum, I'm a theater professional, I don't have a lot of degrees, but I have been on the streets for a long time. I was involved in doing provocations with ACT UP and Queer Nation back in San Francisco when I was there a long time ago. And that really directly leads into the work that Wheelock did in its notion and its intention about being intentionally inclusive. So now the work that I do is very exciting and I get to work with a range of artists who either live with or identify by their functional limitations or disabilities. And the range of that, once you embrace the spectrum, that range of that gives you a sense of all the different people that I have the opportunity to work with, either amplifying their voices or giving them a platform to speak loudly on their own. So that's my quick overview.

Alicia Anstead: Thank, Charles, that's, like with Mariam, very important work that you're doing. A-lan, can you tell us a little bit about who you are, where you are and what's going on with you?

A-lan Holt: Absolutely. Hello everybody. My name is A-lan Holt. I'm an artist, primarily a playwright and a filmmaker. And I'm also the Director here at IDA, which is Stanford's Institute for Diversity in the Arts. So I'm coming to this work both as a practitioner and also as an administrator. And our organization is really thinking about how do we build the capacity for visionary arts leadership using the arts not just as a tool for wealth, power and privilege, but also as a tool for social change and social justice. So a lot of the work that we do is working with students, especially students of color. But also working with the local community and working with professional artists to really think about the work that we do in the arts as creating the material conditioned to make our lives better. Not just by the art that we're creating and putting on stages and putting in galleries, but by the way that we're modeling what we can be as a culture and how we can redress the harms that have happened, especially in the United States, especially in our higher education institutions, and also create the conditions where we can all thrive.

A-lan Holt: So thinking very, very deeply from an equity model. So cultural equity. How can we all have the abundance that is present, and how can we shift the power and prejudices that prevent us from being better with one another. So thinking about art very, very broadly. And thinking about students, especially in my role here at Stanford, but students as being the compass and the North Star towards the directions we should be going as an institution.

- Alicia Anstead: Great, thanks so much A-lan. It's so great to be here with all of you. I want to talk a little bit about how we got to this topic of optics and diversity. Optics has been a word that's been floating around a lot, I would say, even in the last, maybe the last couple of years, but maybe more broadly for a number of years. And it's a word that disturbs me because of its superficiality. I wonder if we could talk about two words that are important to our discussion today: optics and diversity? And I wonder if any one of you would like to talk about the problem with optics. It's sometimes a word that's used behind closed doors more than it's used forwardly and publicly. Could you talk a little bit about how you hear the word being used and what it signifies to you? Would anyone like to jump in?
- Charles Baldwin: Well, this is Charles and I'm going to jump in on this idea that optics reminds me of marketing language. The idea that the... I worked for a short time for a film company, and they were very focused on marketing the story and getting audience response and then changing the story. So that moves away from the passion of an individual with something to say and then starts becoming this pablum. So for me, optics sometime seem to be marketing speak. Make sure you've got one of everybody in that photo.
- Charles Baldwin: There is of course... Being seen is important. But I do sometimes think that optics can be problematic in that sense of is it drifting over into marketing spiel and not hitting that authentic I need to be seen and I need to be heard. I don't know. It's-
- Alicia Anstead: Essentially you're saying there's optics and there's optics?
- Charles Baldwin: ... exactly. Alicia.
- Alicia Anstead: Well A-lan or Mariam, would you like to weigh in on are you hearing this word in your institutions? And maybe even the next step, when you hear the word, do you have ways of addressing it in conversation?
- Mariam Lam: I was going to say when you first mentioned the word optics I was also thinking along the lines of what Charles was thinking. But on our campus, our students, and I think this is a national issue, they think of optics in terms of branding. So if you're going to put all the faces of our black and brown students on all your brochures to promote the diversity of your campus then you better follow that up with regulation, graduation rates, lowering the achievement gap and all of that. So they are very vigilant, even though they love our campus, to really force the walk to match the talk. And so for me, optics is a kind of superficial vision. And they want to definitely move beyond the surface. And so I think when we get to the term diversity there's a similar problem where it can mean everything and nothing at once. It's sort of a Seinfeld episode and you really have to put the substance behind it.
- Alicia Anstead: And Mariam, one of the things I like about what you're saying is that students do not buy the word optics. They will police that and keep you honest in every way. I'm so grateful to be working in a community where there are young people who say, excuse me, please. There's another part to this. So A-lan, go ahead.
- A-lan Holt: Echoing a lot of what's been said already. Something that I'm remembering from a mentor of mine, Jeff Chang, who was our former director, he says, "Diversity without equity is a lie waiting to be exposed," which means that... I mean optics are really the last thing that comes, and that is like the should be the most organic thing that comes. And if you are looking and pulling and creating an image that brings us further from our perception and our reality, I think that's not only a dangerous move, but also a very violent move, especially for students of color that often we do have a very real history of the dehumanization of folks of color. And so to bring someone who's a real student and a real person into this very publicized moment without a true sense of their experiences

in a space, which oftentimes are very different from their smiling faces on the front of your admissions covers, things like that.

A-lan Holt: But we really, I think, start to see the kind of violence and slippages with optics if it's not backed up by true equity, and very rarely is it. We often want our optics to be the first step when truly it should be the final step. And so I think about that quote a lot. "Diversity without equity is a lie waiting to be exposed." And we see that very quickly oftentimes in these moments where what's being perceived isn't as close to the reality as we'd like it to be.

Alicia Anstead: Yes. And I want to thank you very much for that, A-lan. I want to remind everyone who's a participant that if you are having questions that are bubbling up as we're having this conversation, please send them to Deb and she'll make sure that we put them in the mix as well. Let's talk about equity, A-lan. How do you define that when people come to you and say equality, equity, diversity? What are the definitions that you use? Do you have quick ones or is it always a longer conversation?

A-lan Holt: Always a longer conversation, but I will try to pull it together for our conversation. But for me, equity is one understanding that the systems of power in this country have provided a landscape that does not give equal opportunity. So we can't even get to a question of equality without really addressing the historical and present day harms that are still going on. And so equity tries to bring that politicized history into the framework. It often is coming from a racial equity point of view. Oftentimes when we think about diversity we are not comfortable just talking about race. We often try to shift it to gender, shift it to all these other metrics of what we're missing. But when we go through a critical race lens and we think about race as our primary North Star of which everything else can also be discovered and uncovered through, then we're able to really get a lot clearer of a picture.

A-lan Holt: And so for me, equity is thinking about the crucial ways in which we're categorized, which is, in this country, always race. And if we can start from that point of view then we can understand gender, we can understand ability, we can understand access. But it is like addressing and being very clear about the historical politicization of people and why certain people are not here and why others are overrepresented. So for me, equity versus equality is more of a politicized term.

Alicia Anstead: Mariam or Charles, would you like to jump in on this same topic?

Charles Baldwin: ... and I'll be brief, Mariam. But I think, A-lan, you hit on it because I know that within the movement of folks with disabilities that again, it's seen as a white, middle class movement. And that many of the ideas behind it we're just like you. And I think that's the wrong construct because it's really our differences that should be celebrated. And certainly the racism that exists in helping people with disabilities of color, you can keep going further down the line. I like connecting it to power and constructs of oppression. Anyway, that's a two thumbs up, you just can't see either of my thumbs.

Alicia Anstead: Mariam, go ahead. Thanks, Charles. Go ahead.

Mariam Lam: I was just going to say when you do DEI work, diversity equity inclusion work, those three terms have very clear, concrete definitions. And of course they gesture towards everything A-lan and Charles just described. But equity in that context is different from equality in the sense that if you just treat everyone the same way you're actually going to perpetuate the inequities in the system and for all of the historical forms of discrimination and power and balances that A-lan and Charles mentioned. But it really is more also about access, which I think is very appropriate when we're talking about

the arts in terms of who has access to arts, high arts community, all the different versions of arts and arts programming. And so when we talk about equity in DEI work, it's about giving the students, the community, the practitioners, the faculty, what they need to actually have everyone succeed in that arts space or where have you. So equity work is really about getting folks to the level playing field because we're not at the level playing field.

Mariam Lam: So there are these typical iconography and symbolic images that we use when we talk about equity and equality. But then there's an extended version that includes what does the reality really look like? The rich get richer and the poor get poorer. And then what would it mean to have a social justice liberation framework for equity work. That it's much closer to tying it back to the power and historical dynamics that A-lan talked about in terms of restorative justice, what would real equity look like holistically.

Alicia Anstead: So all of you raise so many interesting ideas, and I think we work in higher ed, we work in the realm of ideas. And the realm of action is sometimes such a snail's pace in the institutions where we work. That's just the way higher education is. I wonder if you could talk about what you have seen happen along the lines of, let's just stick with equity for a moment. I mean you could take it to diversity if you wanted to make it broader. But is there something that you have seen as a success story in any one of your institutions that you might be able to share with someone on our participant group who can maybe take it and say, I can maybe see the application for that in the work that I do? Is there any one little tip you can give us that might be helpful to all of us who are working in higher ed? I'm going to guess that our list of participants have all been thinking about all of the things we're talking about. For some it's a great reminder. For some it may be new. But for all of us, it's like how can I do this work? How can I act? How can I be an actor?

Alicia Anstead: So that's a long way round to saying do you have a toolbox you can share with us a little bit?

A-lan Holt: Yeah, I'll share a few things. I think we're really comfortable talking about under representation and less comfortable talking about over representation. And so one of the tools that I love, especially for white folks, for non-folks-of-color, is if you find yourself in a room where it's nothing but white people, to just call that to attention. And there's many ways to do that and ways to do that that's non-confrontational, but ways that are just bringing the question and putting it onto the table.

A-lan Holt: We often know that the places where the power is most concentrated, folks of color are not in those rooms. So how from outside of those rooms are we to make change? And I don't think that power shift happens that way. Power shift happens when we recognize and step into the places in which we are already invited and to shift those places. So one very, very, very, I think foundational thing that I've seen work, is when my white colleagues just call to attention the over representation, especially in rooms and situations where decisions are being made. That is the way. And then also, too, as you're making decisions, which is an everyday thing, from a small to a large, just thinking about, I call it "who are the canaries". Who are the folks that are most vulnerable that these decisions will impact way more than they will impact those who are coming from better resourced environments. So thinking about those canaries in all of our actions and decision makings.

A-lan Holt: And really, too, that's one thing, but the first thing I think is just to call attention to over representation in spaces where decisions are being made. I've seen that happen in board rooms. I've seen that happen in terms of the board of trustees in our various arts organizations. I've seen that happen in terms of even our history of Stanford, which is

the first black student that was admitted to Stanford was actually a part of the first class, the next one was 50 years later, or 150 years later. But the first-

Alicia Anstead: That was a big difference.

A-lan Holt: ... sorry, 150. I want to be clear about that. 150 years later in the 1960s. But the first black student that came to Stanford was a part of the original class. And the only reason that he was a part of the original class was because Jane Stanford, who of course is one of the co-founders of the university said yes, in a moment when of course, this is 1891. And so it's those moments of utilizing and stepping into the power of which you already have access to and giving over that to the folks that are not in the room, that are not in the university, that are not in the classroom. And so for me [inaudible 00:26:56].

Alicia Anstead: Excuse me for interrupting. Before we leave you, I wonder if you might give us some language for those of us who may not know how to say wait, a second, this room is this way. I want to say something. I'm not sure how to say it.

A-lan Holt: Absolutely. So I'm in a meeting, I'm just giving an example, I'm in a meeting and I'm noticing that we're making decisions that are going to impact large groups of our community. I'm uncomfortable with the fact that there is not a true representation of the communities that we're serving in this particular room. Is there a moment that we can discuss that reality or discuss the truth that I'm seeing around this table. So it's even that. Noticing that everyone around this room looks like me and I'm uncomfortable making a decision for a group of students, a population, a community that doesn't represent what I'm seeing around this table. Are there other people that we can bring into this conversation so that we can make better, more informed decisions.

A-lan Holt: Whatever language you need to use. But it's just that simple calling it to attention because oftentimes we just haven't even gotten to that first step of saying that. And it's scary and unnatural, but the more that we do it, the more natural it becomes. And also, I think about an activist Adrienne Maree Brown. She says, "Trust the people and the people become trustworthy." And for me that means if you trust that folks can meet you in that space oftentimes they will. It's just we haven't been really given the invitation or we're not so practiced in offering the invitation to transform and to change. So I think about that a lot.

Alicia Anstead: One of the questions that I've asked artist repeatedly through the years about what they know that we civilians... I'm not an artist, I don't know who else in the room is an artist, but I am not an artist. And I wanted to learn from artists because I know that they know things that we either don't allow ourselves to know or don't know. And one of the points that every artist has said to me in one way or another is get comfortable with being uncomfortable. And I think that's also good advice in this conversation. It's okay to be uncomfortable and it's okay to make other people be uncomfortable. You don't want to be mean-spirited, although sometimes I guess you have to be, but I think it's okay to say I'm uncomfortable and is that going to make everybody else feel uncomfortable, is the risk worth taking.

A-lan Holt: This is going to be my last comment because I feel like I've said a lot. But this is the 400th anniversary of what is known as the first enslaved peoples coming to the United States, coming to the 13 colonies. And it's the beautiful irony of them arriving in a place called Comfort, Point Comfort. And comfort really is the root of a lot of the ills and unequal distribution of power that's led us to this place. And so we really actively have to... Comfort has been a politicized and weaponized condition in which all of our strivings are to make one group of people comfortable. Like literally. Think about the service industry. Folks of color are here and have been put into a caste system of providing comfort for white folks.

- A-lan Holt: And so really I love that you bring us back to that place called Comfort because that is really the thing that we have to actively dismantle in order to move forward. And comfort has to be pushed to the side at this moment if we're going to really survive. Because at the moment we can connect everything to comfort. From climate change to disproportionate deaths, maternity deaths, human life. It all comes back to that, so thank you.
- Alicia Anstead: Thanks, A-lan. Charles, I'm sure you're shaking your head. I'm watching Mariam shake her head. Mariam, do you want to jump into this part of it about some concrete step we can take to do this work?
- Mariam Lam: It's interesting because listening to A-lan talk about over representation and under representation and comfort, I think I'll take it to questions of faculty of color, diverse faculty and such. Because while our undergrad student demographics are quite diverse, and our staff is the second most diverse demographic on campus, our faculty is always the weakest in terms of diversity. And so we've been doing a lot of work around hiring, recruitment. So the UC system already requires mandatory diversity statements from faculty candidates. And then on top of that we do mandatory online and in-person workshops and trainings for all Search Committee members. And we're about to extend it to all department faculty who get lines, who get faculty lines in a given year.
- Mariam Lam: And so the online portion includes affirmative action, equal opportunity laws, federal as well as state regulations because in California we have to deal with prop 209, which just allows particular considerations of [inaudible 00:32:32] and deliberation ranking phases and admissions processes. And then in the in-person workshops we have a hiring toolkit that takes them through everything from how to create a good committee membership, who you want on the Search committees is important, how to write a good job ad that promotes diversity, inclusivity. And then we take them through unconscious bias training, how this plays out in the deliberations process. We all know that most diversity drops out at two moments. The lack of efforts in the recruitment pool itself, and people always blame national availability pools. So now we incorporate these are your availability pools and are you living up to it every couple of weeks. And then also, between the long short list and the short list. So you know the diversity drops out there because of unconscious bias during deliberations and people just go with whom they like who are most like them and such.
- Mariam Lam: And then we also take them through how to read diversity statements, how to spot BS and how to find actually people who are invested in it and are not just talking the talk again. And so having done this the last four years now, we are able to increase our percentage rates from around 13%, which is kind of the national incoming cohorts of under-represented minority faculty, to about 24, 25%, which matches the national availability pools. And we always think we can do better given our undergrad and grad demographics if we were better at pipeline building into the professoriate. And then of course once you're able to make strides into the representation at the hiring level, then you still have to deal with retention because we can get the numbers in here but then if they're facing climate issues in their own departments or disciplines or in the arts itself, they're not going to stay because these are folks who can get jobs elsewhere and they come here because they love our particular student demographics. But you want a supportive collegiality there, and this requires not just building intellectual community for under-represented faculty and women in STEM and such also, but actually dealing with climate issues when there are issues of micro-aggressions and bias playing out in instruction, at department meetings and such.
- Mariam Lam: So I loved when A-lan and Alicia were talking about comfort because during our interactive trainings we put up these statements that are ripped from the headlines that get reported to our office about things people say during deliberation meetings. And

one of them is "This is a minority candidate who would be great because she doesn't make white people feel uncomfortable." And this was something that a department chair, a woman said, thinking she was supporting this candidate, and of course it turned off everybody in the department faculty, none of whom said anything in that moment, but three of whom then reported it to our office after. And so we also train them to do the immediate non-confrontational call out so that this doesn't affect the ranking process in the moment and we don't hear about it after the fact when there's nothing we can do. So just to add to A-lan's comments around specifically faculty hiring and retention.

Alicia Anstead: I'm really glad that you brought up the hiring part because embedded in that is the imperative of language and the language we use to communicate with each other, especially in moments of hiring and investigating another person's credentials and how they fit into our community. And also the immediate non-confrontational approach, which tips its hat a little bit to what A-lan was saying. But I wonder in that room where the person said this candidate would be easier for white people, what might you have said to that person in that moment to put that discomfort back in the mix?

Mariam Lam: This is great. So we asked the faculty in the room what would you do in that moment, and then we actually give them what the recommendations are for what you should say. And often the first easiest thing to say is "What do you mean by that," because that gives them a moment to realize what they've said is offensive or problematic and they usually backpedal very quickly. But the next sort of things that folks often throw out will say to point back to the job description. So "Is that part of the requirements, to make white people feel comfortable?" Because other folks are uncomfortable all the time throughout the day, given different meetings. And other folks will say, "Actually, if that was said to me about a candidate I wouldn't want to hire them because I don't want an under represented colleague who's just going to tow the party line and maintain the status quo and be afraid to say anything that's uncomfortable."

Mariam Lam: And so we rehearse several different things, but one of the recommendations for search committees to avoid unconscious bias is actually using rubrics. So in most staff searches you have required set of questions that you ask every single candidate. And we try not to do that with faculty because we give them flexibility to talk about their disciplines and stuff. But actually, if you actually could sketch out what the real goals are of the position and what you want them to be able to do, and often that includes being good teachers, practitioners and such, then some folks get into even weighting the different questions, as staff searches often do. But with the faculty searches, if you actually have a set of questions and rubrics, then when folks say things that are clearly about affinities with candidates or they're clearly going off on subjective as opposed to objective qualifications, you can pull them back to oh well, which part of the job description are you talking about, or where in their CV did you see that. So pulling it back to facts and evidence, often, is a way to do the non-confrontational call out as well.

Alicia Anstead: I appreciate you saying that. And as you were talking, from the very beginning I was thinking about the number of incoming first year students who now have to take some type of training before they can register for classes, specifically about what aggression looks like, what predatory behavior looks like, and before they can take any step forward. And I think this is a good thing, but I think it would be better if it were like the Suzuki method or Kumon. Like they have to take it every week for all four years. Because you're talking about you have these one off committees that hire faculty and how could we make it more ubiquitous so that it becomes part of the practice at universities that we prioritize this enough that we don't just make you go through one slideshow, we make it an ongoing conversation that's normalized in our everyday dealings. Do you have any thoughts about that?

- Mariam Lam: I do, but I should leave it to other folks too. I don't want to take up too much of the conversation. But our students, for example, have been demanding mandatory microaggression, unconscious bias training from faculty, grad students, and administrators for the last 15 years. And so we have all these online modules that faculty and staff can take them voluntarily. But in the last three or four years, I think I've been pretty aggressive about implementing mandatory versions of training. But they're not just one off. So the UC system, as well as the California State University system has been trying to implement system wide mandatory training for faculty instructors, including grad student instructors and such. But I think the easiest place to do it is at the moment of onboarding when they're first hired, because then it's not a faculty senate issue, it's not something you have to get past. It's just if you want a job you're going to need to take these forms of training so that it's not just a one off procedure.
- Mariam Lam: For example, with the faculty Search committee trainings, they have to do it if they haven't done it, every two years. So now that we've been doing it for four years, we've captured at least 400 of the 750, 800 faculty that we have on campus. So if they're serving on search committees they're going to have to have done them. And then since we're moving to a model where the entire department faculty have to be trained, because we're finding that even when the Search committee members did a great job, when they went back to the department faculty to actually vote on the candidates, you'd still have all the inappropriate unconscious bias come out. And so we're trying to make the entire faculty in a given department do it now.
- Mariam Lam: We also have faculty equity advisors, which we just piloted last year, and this is our second year. Where these are faculty from the colleges meant to actually help in these situations where tensions do arise, where people are complaining about search committee membership and such. There's an extra resource for the dean's offices who often don't have the training or bandwidth to address some of these issues. And department chairs will brush things under the rug so they don't have to be withheld lines in the future and such. So these folks are actually trained by our office by affirmative action, equal opportunity, campus council, HR. So there's consistent presence in the departments, in the colleges that can help deal with climate issues that just the trainings that are online or one off, in-person trainings.
- Alicia Anstead: Thanks, Mariam. And Charles, I haven't forgotten you're there, but I do see that we have some other questions that are coming in from our participants, so I hope you won't mind if I put these on the table because I'm aware that time is ticking away. And hour is so short for this topic. Let me tell you what the questions are that have come to us and then we can see which one of you would like to jump in. So here's the first one, it's kind of a comment. Student organizations are often the arts leaders on campus, but it seems the arts groups are not the ones that are brought to the table when looking for answers to diversity and climate challenges. How have you seen student art groups or your arts schools and faculty be brought into the challenge? The question that kind of goes with that, is another one. Have you seen effective arts efforts, exhibits, performances, et cetera, that have been used to advance the diversity discussion?
- Alicia Anstead: That's open for anyone who would like to jump in on that one. Or those.
- A-lan Holt: Charles, do you want to?
- Charles Baldwin: Yeah, I will. And I think that the points about representation are critically important. And for the vast variety of people, artists, students with disabilities who may need an accommodation, they may need an enhancement or a service to bring them to the room, if they can even get in the room. So the opportunity for artists with a variety of disability to be center stage, so that could be physically because they are included in a performance and not based on disability as a metaphor but as a real live human being,

who lives the character and doesn't have to represent all pain and inspiration that the show is trying to hit. But that could be because of the paintings that are on the wall, the story that's at the center of the poetry slam, opportunity to be a part of a street provocation.

Charles Baldwin: So what I have seen work, and this is because I am a theater practitioner and I believe that our ability to congregate and hear stories that are from people who are either like us or unlike, but touch upon the human experience, that does work but it does mean we need a variety of people center stage. We did a production of Susan Zeder's *The Ware Trilogy* when I was at Wheelock, and it was vast and was inclusive of a large number of students and professional theater practitioners who were deaf. And deafness comes for the administrator, often a fear of all the extra expenses because of translation and needing ASL interpreters, and this notion of again, of the human expense. And so people are just chucking it off. But what you see, not only... So the audience loved it, great. But it was the actors, hearing, non-hearing, hard of hearing, disabled. We actually had a performer who's deaf and blind in the show. It's what happens to the ensemble that's so important.

Charles Baldwin: And so whether it is getting over the fear of what do I say to a deaf person or how could a deaf blind person even be in the show. To get through that fear and create the energy of the ensemble where everyone is sharing a natural language that emerges from the production, to me, that's where it works. The audience gets it, great. They might leave with new ideas. Maybe they'll think a little bit differently. But sometimes, and this is the hard part, but sometimes it's just the incremental step that has the effect that you need. And so the young people who are in that show, who are working with actors who are deaf and deaf blind, they've changed. And wherever they go, whether it is onto the stage or they're gone into some corporate career, they're going to remember that. To me, that's when it works. And it sometimes is these little stages that hopefully, we're all working on these little stages so they accumulate to become the movement that we're striving for.

Alicia Anstead: Thank you, Charles. A-lan or Mariam, did you want to address either of those questions?

A-lan Holt: Just I appreciate Charles, what you said, because it's we often think of this thing as shifting quick. We want it to just change tomorrow and we-

Charles Baldwin: As we do.

A-lan Holt: ... don't realize that the question has been something that's been perfected over for a 100 years in this country and hundreds of more prior to that. And so we have to think about it as an intergenerational recalibration. Something that is going to take time, but I think focusing on those incremental steps are huge. Focusing on our children. I feel like I'm talking in a lot of quotes, but sometimes they're helpful for me to just bite them down, which is we're borrowing our future from our children. We're not inheriting it from our ancestors, we're borrowing it from our children. And so thinking about what legacies are we leaving behind for those who are coming after us, I think is so important.

A-lan Holt: To pivot it really quickly back to the topic of discussion, which is students, for my experience, students have been the ones that have pushed the university to change quicker than any other organizing body I have ever seen. I think it unfortunately puts a lot of onus on students who their first priorities should never be making the conditions of their institutional environment better. That really should not happen from a student perspective, but it does, and that's where the university really starts to pick up and take notice and to make some change. So I-

Alicia Anstead: And it kind of always has, A-lan, right?

A-lan Holt: ... always. If you especially look at the history of activism on university campus across California, across the coasts. So a lot of our work in particular is working to build the leadership capacity for students, especially for students of color. And then oftentimes too, in our programming, we're thinking about art as not just what we're doing in the theater and what we're doing in the galleries, and what we're doing in the studios, but also how can we initiate opportunities, as Charles said, for folks to get together that normally have not gotten the opportunity to get together. So a lot of the courses that we initiate are always interdisciplinary. So we're thinking about art as community garden work. So working with our urban systems department and thinking about sustainability. And thinking about sovereignty, especially for indigenous students and black students. Knowing that land holds very violent histories for communities of color, how do we reintegrate new understandings and new abilities to engage with the land, to engage with knowledges around how do we feed ourselves or how do we feed ourselves if all of our systems fail.

A-lan Holt: This past year we did a public mural project. We did research on the university and saw that 83% of the public art at Stanford was commissioned by white men. None were commissioned by black artists, none were commissioned by Asian-American artists. Two were commissioned by indigenous artists, but that's coming through a very anthropology lens. And so a lot of work was how do we intervene into those demographics. So we commissioned a very public art mural on the side of our building, which was featuring black and indigenous students and community members and initiated by a queer Asian-American artist. So things like that. It's really rooting where you stand using the resources that you have available. Of course, those resources are not equally distributed, and of course the policies around public displays of art and expression will always be policed, as were finding now. But it still makes a difference.

A-lan Holt: This summer we had a very public news incident on our campus and I'd like to think that we can also create art that also speaks to so much more of the black experience than the kind of spontaneous gestures that sometimes arise. So just being really proactive about where, from my point of view as an administrator, can I intervene on the things that I am finding to be nonproductive and unhelpful, and sometimes just very violent. So trust students, trust yourself as an administrator, and start to just put...

Alicia Anstead: So I'm aware of the time, and Mariam I know you have something to say. Do you want to say it quickly or can I move onto a final question for all of us?

Mariam: I was just going to give a quick two examples of how under [inaudible 00:53:08] changed something. So one was we had a theater production that involved some problematic casting and two of our faculty, actually one works on yellowface and one works on choreography of [inaudible 00:53:24] around racial profiling and policing and such. And we got together and realized that a lot of the problem stemmed from weak policies and procedures within the theater department's casting policies. And so they were able to change and fix a lot of those problems and that was completely student led. Another one had to do with grad students coming to us saying they feel like they're on the front lines with their undergrads around everything from accommodations and gender pronouns in the classroom and such. And they wanted to tools to be able to use with their faculty in advocating for the undergrads, and then also in their future job market prospects. And so we created a 10-week diversity certification program for the grad students and it's been four cohorts now and they're going back into their departments and doing all kind of great things.

Alicia Anstead: Thank you. Thank you for sharing that. Success stories are always so inspiring and help us all move forward. We have another question that's come in and I'm going to

condense it knowing that we're all arts administrators who are here listening and participating and out there doing the work. We tend to be the ones who lead from the middle. As administrators we're not faculty, we're not students. We're trying to find our way in through our work. And I'm thinking about Dr. Cornel West here at Harvard, and who says, "Be strong. Be strong in your work." What quick advice, and I hate to say quick advice because it sounds like optics, but what quick advice can you give the administrators who are participating today to be strong in their work? Charles, would you start us, and then A-lan, and then Mariam?

Charles Baldwin: Well, this is something that based on so many of the people that I work with who are considered less than for so many reasons, based on moving differently, seeing differently, hearing differently. Which is to play to people's boldness and not their perceived fragility. And that is sort of an intention that I try to always refer to.

Alicia Anstead: Excellent. Thank you, Charles. A-lan?

A-lan Holt: Just to take that pledge to be an anti-racist. So it's not enough to be non-racist, but to really be anti-racist, which is moving from passivity to activity. And it can happen very small. It can happen from where you stand. It can happen from just making observations known, like as I mentioned before. And really it's just being okay moving into activity. So just thinking about, like I said, all of your daily decisions. How does it affect the most vulnerable of our communities. To also owning what you don't know and not speaking if you're not... Just being very clear about the places that you may have to grow, and also being very open to inviting others in to teach and grow capacity. It's not about perfection. I think it's just about some action.

Alicia Anstead: Great, thank you, A-lan. Mariam, you have about a minute and a half.

Mariam Lam: I just spoke at the HACU, Hispanic Association for Colleges and Universities Leadership Institute. They asked to talk about authentic leadership and really leading with courage and vulnerability. All that Brené Brown stuff in terms of you need to really just be real and over time that's what gets you trust from other senior administrators and such. And you can't tippy toe around things for fear of upsetting folks because the folks who will really be down with the cause will be behind you anyway. And it's also not intentionally isolating folks who could be your allies or co-conspirators. Sometimes we have administrators who are folks of color who will say well, oh those folks won't get it because they're white and they won't get it the way I get it. And that actually doesn't help us build critical mass and it affects their own career development trajectory as well. And so we have to remember that critical mass does work. And so we really still need that.

Alicia Anstead: Thank you. Thank you for that. That's all such inspiring information. I want to add to it that when the last election was over, my students met for another reason, but we were all coming to the room for the first time together after the election. And each person was expressing their point of view on how they felt. And they said what can we do? What can we do? And I said you're going to go on to change the world in the ways that you'll change the world. But today, you can go out and be kind. If you're feeling like there's a kindness that hasn't been done to you, you can do the smallest act today by holding a door, by reaching out to someone you might not reach out to. So those small acts and the big acts are the business that we're all in. And I want to really encourage everyone to think on all those levels and stay strong in your work. And I also want to thank everyone for sharing their wisdom and their experience and their inspiring knowledge today. You've been an amazing group of panelists and colleagues, so thank you. And Deb, would you like to rejoin us and take us out?

Deb Mexicotte: I sure would. This has been an amazing conversation and I want to thank all of you on behalf of the Arts Administrators in Higher Education for taking the time out of your day to talk to us about this topic. We had amazing audience attention and I know that your words are going to resonate past today by the distribution of this webinar on our website and throughout our network. So thank you so much for taking the time out. I also wanted to say, again, that we have recorded this webinar and it will be available shortly on the Arts Administrators in Higher Education website. That will be both a text transcript and an audio. And so we look forward to letting you all know, and we'll let, of course, our panelists know when that will be available as well.

Deb Mexicotte: And finally, I just wanted to say this is the first, again, in our webinar series. We are hoping to develop a number of these to add professional development opportunities for arts administrators in higher education. Those that are leading from the middle. And I think we could actually have even some additional conversations on this topic on arts and the role that it can play in the diversity conversation in higher education. And so I thank you so much for kicking us off on this topic. And I don't think it's going to be the last time that we bring people together in order to discuss this very important issue on our campus. So with that, I want to thank all of our participants I want to wave goodbye. I want to thank Charles because he doesn't actually get to wave in person.