Facing Change: Insights from AAM’s DEAI Working Group

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion

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Facing Change: Insights from AAM’s DEAI Working Group

Resources on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion

Articles about Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion

A living document.
Working Group Participants

AAM enthusiastically thanks the members of the Working Group on Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion for their generosity and wisdom:

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Working Group Charge

• Learn from how other sectors have successfully overcome DEAI challenges

• Identify steps that museum professionals can take to advance DEAI

• Outline opportunities for collaboration and further work
Working Group Charge

• Identify current DEAI activities in the field

• Understand key challenges, issues, and opportunities related to promoting DEAI
Five Insights

Every museum professional must do personal work to face unconscious bias

As we have seen in #DEAI, all people who have an impact on our museums—our visitors and our communities—do not see the term diversity. While institutions help to organize our interests, what we do and why truly demonstrates the institutional commitment to our audiences. Recognizing unconscious bias is the first step. Unconscious bias affects our decisions, even in the subconscious, often-unspoken beliefs or implicit or unintended biases influence how we evaluate others’ competencies. This shapes our expectations for human interaction and the basis of professional actions.

We all have unconscious biases. Through to evaluate our own human biases, social and behavioral scientists note that the ability to do unconscious bias training helps people understand that everyone is biased. Unconscious bias training can be trusted and effective, but it’s important to do personal work before participating.

Unconscious bias training is essential for museums because it affects our decisions around who to hire, in what leadership role, and how we reach out to audiences. All the ways in which we set salaries, craft job descriptions, promote employees, and design interior and exterior spaces. Learning to identify our biases can help in intentionally think about our actions. Our personal work will help us to be more intentional about how we interact with others.

**CALL TO ACTION**

You and your team can identify available resources for personal development that can help to develop professional skills. It’s important to take #DEAI seriously and to address the biases and assumptions we may have. Learning to identify unconscious biases is the first step in personal work.

**NOTE**

1. See www.museum.org/professional-development/enshrinement
2. See https://museum.org/blog/101-questions-ask-yourself-about-your-museum

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"If your museum is large or small, old or young, famous or not so famous, the need for making and maintaining diversity in your museum has never been greater. If we are to be relevant in this ever-changing world, we must recognize and financially support all of our museums, not just the most visible. To do that, we must be committed to rethinking what it means to be a museum." — Dr. Johnatha Borges Cole
Every museum professional must do personal work to face their unconscious bias
Debate on definitions must not hinder progress
Inclusion is central to the effectiveness and sustainability of museums
Systemic change is vital to long-term, genuine progress
Empowered, inclusive leadership is essential at all levels of an organization.
DIVERSITY
Diversity is all the ways that people are different and the same at the individual and group levels. Even when people appear the same, they are different. Organizational diversity requires examining and questioning the makeup of a group to ensure that multiple perspectives are represented.

EQUITY
Equity is the fair and just treatment of all members of a community. Equity requires commitment to strategic priorities, resources, respect, and civility, as well as ongoing action and assessment of progress toward achieving specified goals.

ACCESSIBILITY
Accessibility is giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the characteristics that each person brings.

INCLUSION
Inclusion refers to the intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse individuals fully participate in all aspects of organizational work, including decision-making processes.

It also refers to the ways that diverse participants are valued as respected members of an organization and/or community.
1. What would a DEAI working group look like in my organization?

2. How can we document the work already happening and needed in our organization?

3. How can we practically use Facing Change at our organization?

4. What are some signs of success for DEAI work at my museum? What metrics for benchmarking and measuring progress can/do we use?

5. Other?