

THE EQUITY & INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

On June 1, the Fisher Center issued a statement in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, which represented our commitment to addressing issues of racial inequity in our organization. A 10-member cohort of Fisher Center staff formed in the following weeks to address matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Our group will be sharing regular updates on this page, and in [the Fisher Center e-newsletter](#).

In response to feedback from our community and internal discussions, we have since edited one part of our original statement which said we were “*re*committing to listening, examining our practices, disrupting patterns of inequity, and amplifying [Black] voices.” It now says that we are **committing** to these actions. We are initiating and engaging with this work in a dedicated and focused way for the first time.

We acknowledge that as a primarily white institution, the Fisher Center exists within systems of racism that pervade this country and the performing arts industry. The organization has not previously committed resources to address its role in that systemic inequity. While overdue, we are dedicated to this work.

One of the first actions of the Working Group was to establish our mission statement, below:

The Equity & Inclusion Working Group is dedicated to assessing the past, analyzing the present, and advising on and implementing a plan for the future in order to create a more equitable and inclusive environment at the Fisher Center. This group is made up of representatives from across the Fisher Center who engage in dialogue with key stakeholders and work with senior leadership to reveal and disrupt the influence of systemic oppression in our organization.

As of September 2020, the Working Group is in a research and analysis phase. Our work so far has included:

1. creating an organizational stakeholder map, to better understand the Fisher Center’s relationships to communities both inside and outside of Bard College;
2. starting the process of mapping our current practices, to identify avenues of implicit bias in our work and facilitate the definition of organizational goals and commitments;
3. engaging with anti-racism trainers with experience in equity issues unique to the performing arts industry, so that we can have our first staff workshop in place this fall, with subsequent educational opportunities to take place throughout the year;
4. establishing lasting channels of communication between students and staff, including the collection of student-submitted feedback pertaining to the Fisher

Center's perpetuation of inequity and white supremacist systems and ideals, and engaging in dialogues with students, alumni, and faculty;

5. compiling broader contextual research on issues of equity and inclusion related to the region and the performing arts industry in the U.S.

The work pursued and outlined above is by no means a final or complete plan ahead; there is still much more work to be done and action to take place. In the spirit of transparency and accountability, we are sharing our work and look forward to keeping our community apprised of updates.

Current members of the Equity & Inclusion Working Group include:

Elise Alexander '19, *Development Assistant*

Jesika Berry, *House Manager*

Brynn Gilchrist '17, *Executive Assistant*

Caleb Hammons, *Director of Artistic Planning and Producing*

Michael Hofmann VAP '15, *Development Operations Manager*

Sarah Jick, *Associate Production Manager*

Maia Kaufman, *Audience & Member Service Manager*

Alessandra Larson, *Director of Development*

Cathy Teixeira, *General Manager*

Claire Thiemann '11, *Senior House Manager*

If you would like to share your experience, feedback, questions, please feel free to reach out to the Fisher Center Equity & Inclusion Working Group at fcequity@bard.edu.