

# AAAE 2022-2023 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Fellow, Final Report

## Angela Glass

### Opening Questions:

When I applied for *The Association of Arts Administration Educators* (AAAE) - Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Fellowship - my key inquiries were:

1. Who is being invited to the table, what does the table look like and in what language(s) is the invitation even in?
2. Do the latest EDI cultural government initiatives (federal and city) focus more on programming and not enough on the administration and technical fields? If so, why and what are some steps to fix this?
3. As students, are we engaging robustly enough with real and up to date data that highlights the genuine commercial potential in seeking projects that have a diverse audience?
4. What are the “plans of action” by heads of Arts Administration programs across the country, when trying to recruit more diverse faculty? What is the connective tissue between hiring the professors who have expertise in dealing with the intersectionality of arts administration and EDI, and attracting the students who are uniquely interested in this cross-sectionality of subjects?

### Beginning of the Research process:

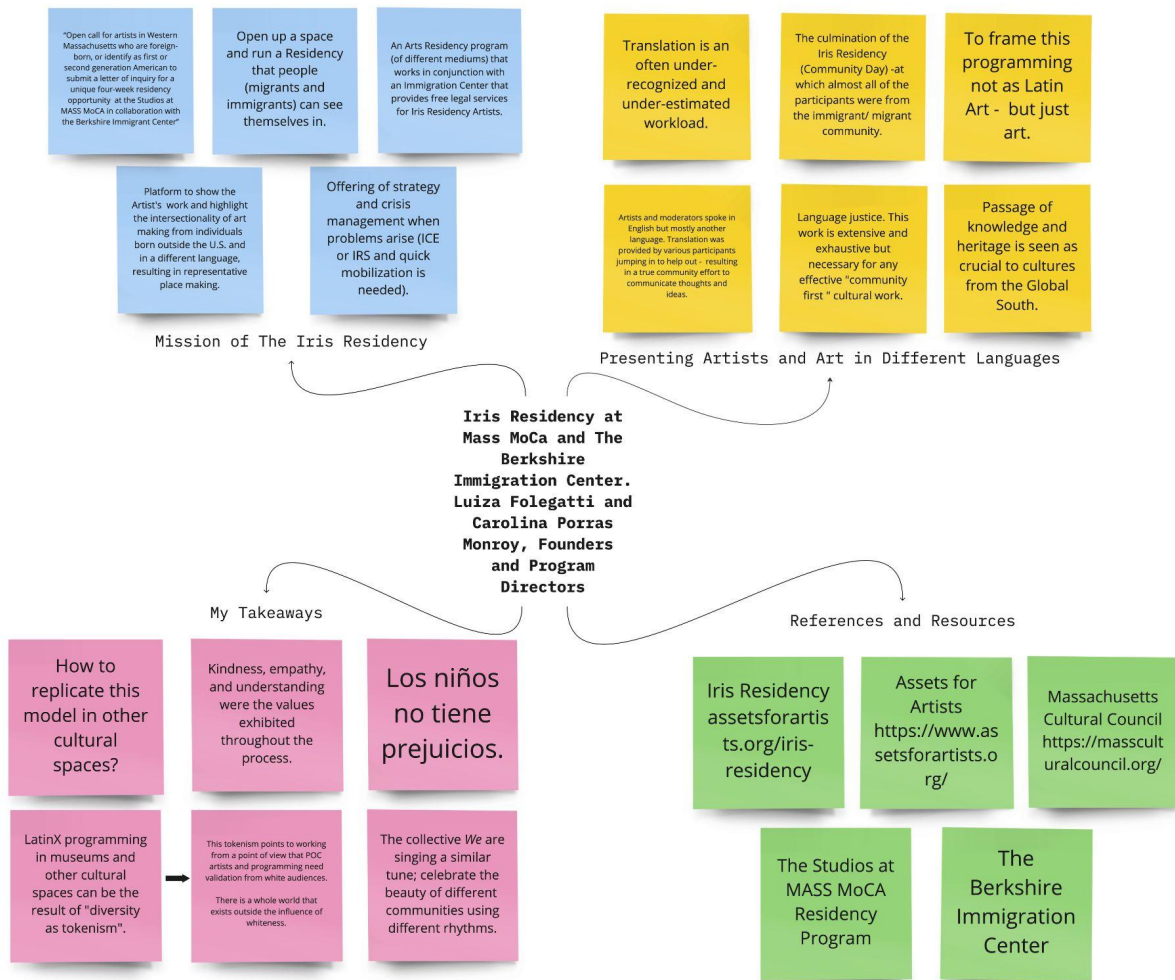
Once accepted as the EDI Fellow, I was paired with Dr. Jaleesa Wells who is an Assistant Professor of Arts Administration at The University of Kentucky. Dr. Wells was my advisor and mentor throughout my fellowship and at that time, also Co-chair of the AAAE Board.

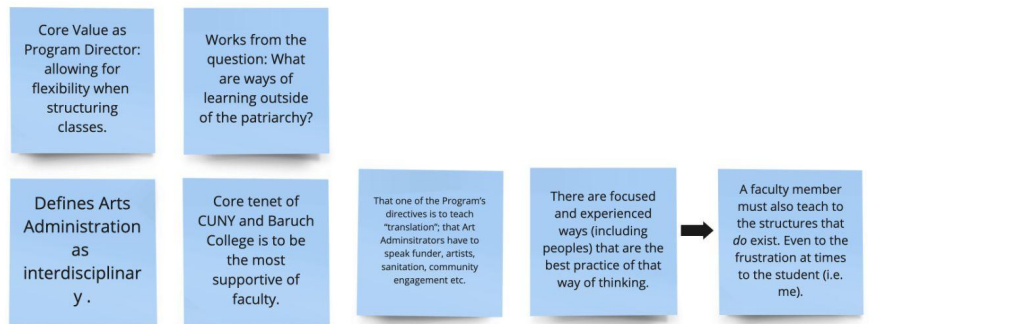
From the start, my conversations with Dr. Wells initiated a transformation in my understanding and my approach to the work before me. While I still believe in the original questions I proposed in my application, I immediately recognized the need for a more comprehensive understanding of the frameworks I would be working with—both historically and critically—to better comprehend the origins and various iterations of DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) in the context of Arts Administration and Education. Dr. Wells and I agreed that this foundational knowledge was crucial for my - and likely others - ability to address any questions relating to the intersections of cultural work, art education and DEI, EDI, JAEDI (Justice, Accessibility, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) and DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging). Context matters and that quickly became the focus of my investigation, even

if difficult to achieve fully and even if I ended up with more questions than answers. I've come to realize that the work ahead extends beyond the fellowship, and these early steps mark the beginning of my journey towards future research.

Below, you'll find visual representations of a significant portion of the topics covered during my participation in various interviews, meetings, and symposiums with Professors, Artists, Arts Administrators, and non-profit and grassroots organizations.







POV Leading Arts Administration Graduate Program at Baruch College, CUNY

David Milch, Program Director of the Arts Administration Graduate Program at Baruch College, CUNY

Views his role and responsibilities as program director, when hiring and working with faculty. That he is cautious not to overstep, but is trying to move things towards inclusive pedagogy.

Wonders how to do this in a digital world versus an analog world?

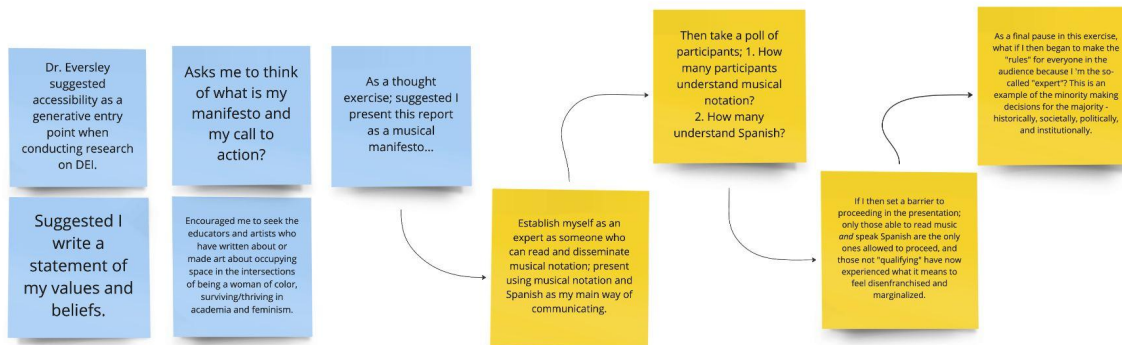
My New Frameworks and Questions

References and Resources



The BlackSpace Manifesto  
<https://www.multiplecities.org/home/2019/1/31/the-blackspace-manifesto>

"Straight White Men" Play by Young Jean Lee.



#### Insights and Pathways of Inquiries

**Dr. Shelly Eversley**  
**Interim Chair of the**  
**Department of Black**  
**and Latinx Studies,**  
**Baruch College, CUNY**

#### Poignant Conclusions

Currently we have the most percentage of women enrolled in colleges and universities. This will likely decline with the reversal of Roe v Wade.

Nationally, 58% of kids are BIPOC. In ten years they will vote.

Although colleges like Baruch College are now recognized as an HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution), the reversal of Affirmative Action by the Supreme Court will be hard to overcome but not impossible.

This is my call to action; to buttress this institutional violence with a dope music school.

#### References and Resources

"Community as Rebellion: A Syllabus for Surviving Academia as a Woman of Color" by Lorgia García Peña

"Translating Blackness: Latinx Colonialities in Global Perspective" by Lorgia García Peña

"The Souls of Black Folk" by W.E.B. Du bois

White Institutional Spaces like Academia organize and imbed white norms which are funneled disproportionately to white individuals therefore exclude People of Color from the curriculum.

This leads to a disenfranchisement of POC in these spaces.

Posits that all Academic spaces are white that routinely require POC to navigate and negotiate them. This is exhausting.

A result is the honest assessment and acknowledgement that walking into an institutional space as a POC can make you a target, even if there is a signal of DEI awareness to that space.

We must analytically correct for methodological errors in our knowledge production.

This can be done in macro and micro ways: one way of accomplishing the latter with "Everyday Revolutions" and "Micro Resistance".

The symposium is an example of correction: her feeling like she can enter the space that is safe and unfetters her eagerness for meaningful connection and thoughtful discourse.

Participants in the symposium also emphasized capitalism and its relation to racial injustice.

As a frightening example of the macro, she pauses to hold back tears to offer that that morning, she received information that Texas Gov. Greg Abbott was to sign (and since, has signed) a bill aimed at dismantling diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI, offices and programs in higher education. Beginning in January 2024, Texas colleges and universities must eliminate DEI offices, mandatory DEI statements and DEI training.

### Important Topics Covered

**Symposium with Dr. Wendy Moore**  
**Professor of Sociology and Law**  
**the from University of Texas, A&M on**  
**"White Institutional Spaces", March 10, 2023.**

Dr. Moore uses Critical Race Theory as a main tool for tackling her main tenet: That institutional spaces of Education must center the knowledge of people of color.

### My Takeaways

Dr. Moore seemed to signal that this symposium was yet another example of Impact. Of Belonging. Of Well Being.

As a way of resistance, counteract this violence by imbedding my values into any and all places where I am teaching, being a student, making or working in art.

The scope of resistance needs to also involve an analysis of capitalism and the constraints that capitalism places on the possibilities for liberation.

How does one craft solutions to make these spaces more equitable?

One way is to center the knowledge and history of people of color, individuals with different gender expressions, different learning abilities and different body abilities.

When you center a people - who then is marginalized?

### References and Resources

"Racism from Slavery to Capitalism" by Carter Wilson.

"Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic" by Jennifer L. Morgan.

"Mechanisms of White Space," Dr. Wendy Moore, Journal of American Behavioral Scientist, 2020.

"Reproducing Racism; White Space, Elite Law Schools and Racial Inequality" by Dr. Wendy Moore.

## Mid-Point: arrival questions and pathways of inquiries:

As a result of my ongoing meetings with Dr. Wells and the interviews conducted thus far, a set of new frameworks and lines of inquiry emerged, such as:

It is important to recognize that DEI is primarily an institutional endeavor rather than a grassroots movement. However, initiatives and policies rooted in DEI can still have a positive personal impact, even if they originate from institutional motives. These efforts have sometimes resulted in the creation of spaces that were previously absent due to the pervasive influence of white supremacy. Despite their origin, the emergence of such spaces has played a part in fostering a more inclusive and just society.

We, as BIPOC individuals, have the power to shape the conversation around DEI, shedding light on the fact that there is a whole world beyond white influence. While some may criticize DEI as an attempt to be/stay relevant, it actually provides a pathway to examine instances of justice or injustices. We can explore situations where cultures or groups of people are marginalized outside the dominant white narrative. These spaces may emerge organically from within our communities or be fostered by DEI initiatives, sometimes unintentionally, and that is a good thing.

This led me to shift and reframe my questions to:

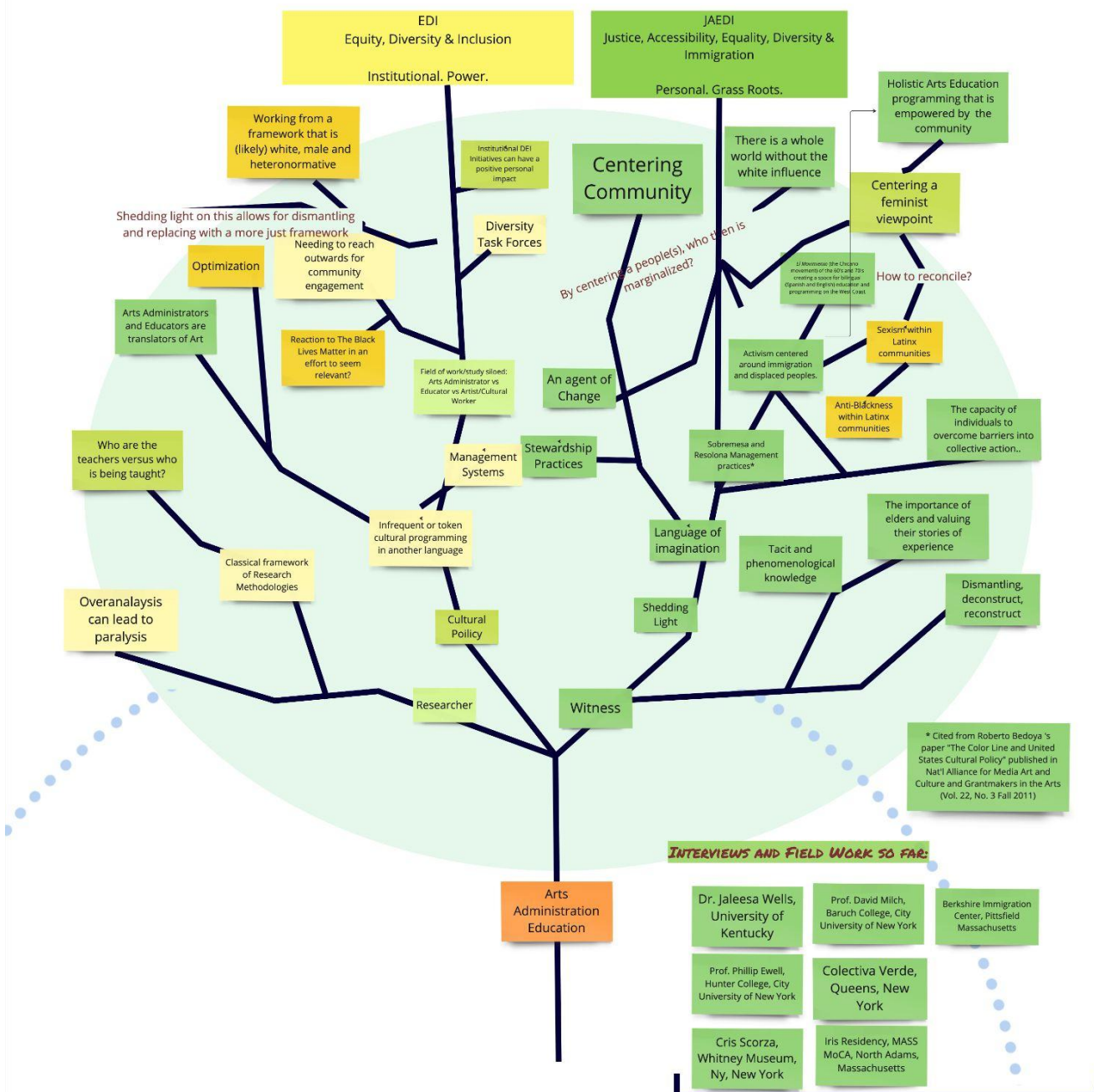
1. How can Arts Administration Education programs better walk the talk of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion? How can we lead by example?
2. Is the Classical view of the “Arts”, “Administration” and “Education” well coordinated to the cultures found within BIPOC communities? If not, how do we holistically connect these disciplines with these peoples?
3. How do we advocate for more art and culture in different languages in order to connect better to the communities who speak those languages?

And as a mid-point update to the Board on my research, I presented my findings, new (to me) frameworks and insights in the form of a visual I called “The Gemini Tree”.

# GEMINI TREE

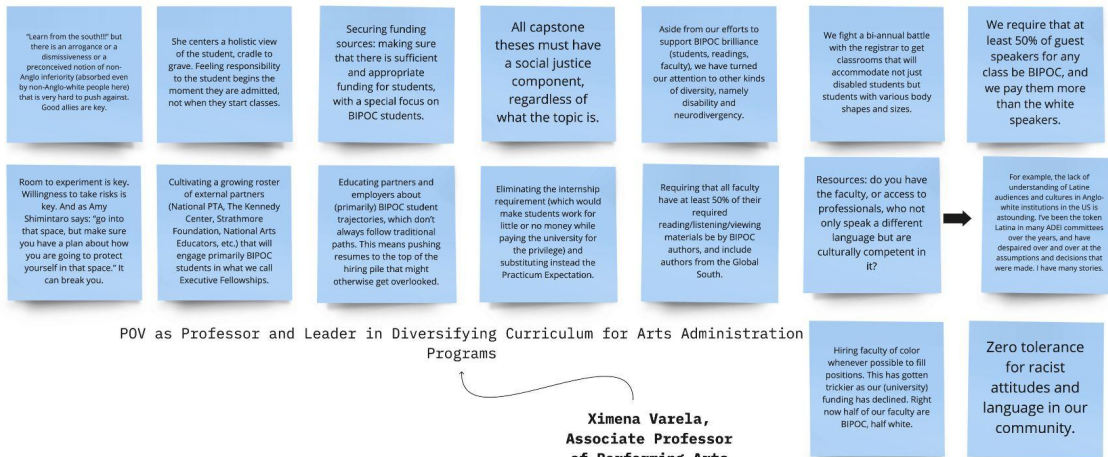
by Angela Glass

I'm presenting my research thus far as a "Gemini Tree". The idea and framework being that there are two parts of the tree - EDI which is institutional and its twin, JAEDI which is more personal. The greener "leaves" post-its are healthy whereas the closer to brown "leaves" are wilting (dated, not substantive enough, additive, ineffective etc).



# Proceeding and utilizing these frameworks in the subsequent interviews.



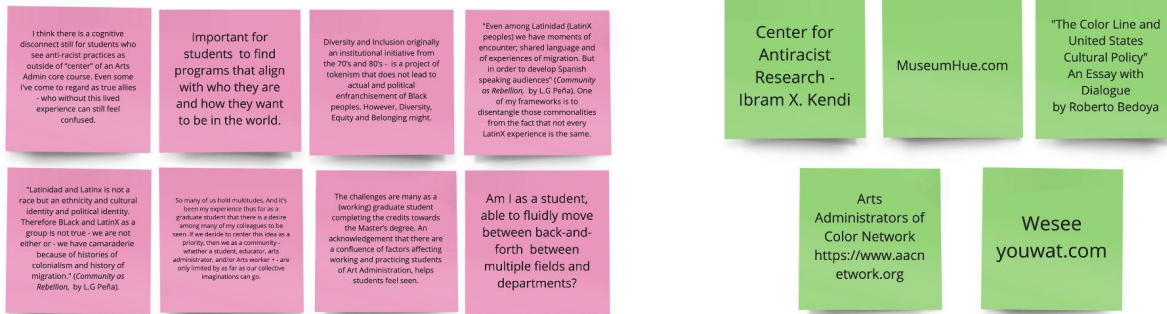


POV as Professor and Leader in Diversifying Curriculum for Arts Administration Programs

**Ximena Varela,**  
Associate Professor  
of Performing Arts  
and Arts  
Administration at  
The American  
University in  
Washington D.C.

My New Frameworks and Questions

References and Resources







## Exit

As my meetings with Dr. Wells reached their conclusion and I wrapped up the research process for this Fellowship, my theory of change (along with some answers) crystallized. On June 3rd, 2023 I had the opportunity to present this theory at the AAAE Yearly Board Meeting during their annual conference held in New York City. Here are the key highlights from that presentation:

- I felt heard and seen during our monthly milestones check-in with Dr. Wells. I found myself becoming centered and grounded as I grappled with the profound scope of the subject I was about to delve into.
- Dr. Wells attentively listened and made me feel to be understood. I made an effort to reciprocate the same understanding.

- And because of this, a *process* began to emerge. An organism began to form, and it was organic. As I look back and try to identify this living and breathing thing that was at times unquantifiable, the language that best describes this experience comes down to a few words: **there was the building of trust which resulted in a sense of belonging.**
- *Who* do the umbrella terms EDI, DEI, JEDI, IDEAS, DEIB center and who perhaps is then left on the margins? An expanded frame that has emerged for me, is the idea of an **ecosystem of belonging.**
- As a performer, music has always been my vehicle for communication. Music makes me come alive. Singing and playing piano in Spanish or Quechua (yes, in my mind, you can play an instrument in a different language:), has always and literally been my voice. I have always viewed sounds - hearing them and producing them - as the vehicle for my unique contribution to this world. It's how I best connect to the people around me, near and far.
- So in the Spring of 2021, one morning when I woke up and was suddenly deaf in one ear, and quickly experiencing hearing loss in the other - not only was I thrown into a physical upheaval but what I perceived as *my* center, collapsed.
- Ironically though, the moment I lost what was by all accounts excellent hearing to the outside world - by becoming somewhat deaf to that external noise - I actually began to attune to an inner voice and an essential truth. And that voice was asking for one thing; **belonging.**
- I wasn't sure what my expectations were coming into the Graduate Program of Arts Administration at Baruch College: post-pandemic, post hearing loss, post solely identifying as a pianist and a music educator.
- One assumption however was that I would come into this program, and sincerely express (and let's be real, perhaps also virtue signal) to my new peers - many of whom are born outside of the U.S., and/or People of Color, and/or LGBTQIA+, and/or neurodivergent and and/or individuals with disabilities (which now included me) and we would all become super friends because I'm signaling that I care deeply about Equity and Equality and Justice! Afterall, I was in the process of a metamorphosis! Becoming woke if you will.
- However, attempting to convey my values to my peers and colleagues, often labeled as virtue signaling, doesn't always ensure a meaningful connection, especially when

striving to navigate the intricate nuances encompassed by the term EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion)

- Just because I believe my intentions are good - I may go up to someone and say “ I too have experienced disenfranchisement” or “I want to better understand your experience as a historically marginalized minority”.
- This alone does not engender trust. Nor should it.
- I’ve learned it’s also useful to look for the life experiences - more broadly - that connect many of us.
- For example, a generative seed that can lead to connection with my student cohort is when discussing the hustle inherent when living, working, studying, and making art in New York City.
- Class and earning seem to be at the center of that conversation, not just race and gender.
- When there is acknowledgement of an individual, they will not only feel seen but might be activated. This has been what the fellowship has done; it has activated me to use my critical lens, that I’ve developed as a trained musician, and look at how EDI affects me?
- **“Lying, Thinking, last night, how to find my soul a home. Where water is not thirsty and bread - loaf is not of stone. I came up with one thing, and I don’t believe I’m wrong. That nobody, but nobody. Can make it out here alone.”** This is the opening of Maya Angelou’s poem “Alone” and which I felt compelled to set to music almost 10 years ago.
- I approached this work however with hesitation - how could I possibly presume to set this great Artist’s work to music? I now wonder if it was a call, that I am now trying to answer more fully.
- Lorgia Garcia Peña says in her book *Community as Rebellion, a Syllabus for Surviving Academia as a Woman of Color*, that when the DEI project, posits “The One” that “its worthwhile to examine critically whether DEI may actually be used as a system of exclusion that leaves many of us competing for a handful of opportunities”.
- Sarah Ahmed in her seminal book *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* says “Whiteness can be a situation we have or are; when we can name

that situation (and even make jokes about it) we recognize each other as strangers to the institution and find, in that estrangement, a bond...We also want there to be more than one; we want not to be the one".

- And I will add - because being "the one" is often very exhausting.
- That bond however - of being strangers walking through the system of institution - is one that can grow to great effect!
- One of my professors I interviewed said to me that she believes that prescriptions may not work - or not entirely - for there is much that we do not have control over.
- However, one must work towards a "theory of change" and hers, is to try to change the material circumstances and to work very hard on the removal barriers.
- And as I think on my theory of change for me and my peers - whether we're friends or frenemies:) - a framework that's been useful to me is to understand that systemic racism and disenfranchisement is the result of a soil that has been toiled for someone else. The collective We cannot grow. We've not only been uprooted, but we cannot take root in a soil that does not contain the nutrients for us!!!
- And in this - there is a violence. A rotting if you will.
- As Arts Administrators and by extension educators and the students of Arts Administration, we are amongst the stewards of this landscape.
- We prune and we tend. And as we look to make our academic environments more inclusive, it is helpful to understand that we are uniquely positioned to advocate and conserve. We are the root system that transfers knowledge from these multitudes of area: Audience development, Fundraising, Grant management, Arts Education, Cultural Policy etc.
- As we anticipate needing to increasingly mitigate, incorporate and just generally deal with the potentially invasive species that is Artificial intelligence, of course it is our practice as Humans - our creativity and our art and the management of this - that will be vital for us to lean on as we navigate the coming winds.
- And for those of us that have been forced many times into the shadows - our Sun and Moon, and our North stars having been continually blocked - we have not only preserved but have cultivated a great strength.

- And it was cultivated by - nosotros mismos - by us! And it is formidable and connected to a great spirit!
- My hearing loss was one of the more traumatic but also edifying events in my life . They say when you experience a diminishing of one sense another sense steps up. For me, it's been a more esoteric sense that has been honed - related to my vision but it's been more my second sight - a truth goggles if you will.
- My experience is singular, but it is not unique. I hold multitudes as do many of my classmates. As do many of my teachers and professors, advisors, and administrators, as my community at large.
- We need to challenge systems and institutions that insist that their narrative is rooted in diversity and inclusion but whose cultural, education, and civic programming does not grow beyond the representational.
- I also can't help wondering that if I'm being asked to be a leader - I have to also ask, who is going to follow me? My race and gender historically work against me. Again referring to Lorgia Garcia Peña "If DEI initiatives have not created a right and plentiful history of faculty of color then perhaps it's not the right model."
- After this year, I do know that **creating a place of BELONGING as a result of growing trustworthiness - is a part of my theory for change**. And this theory activates me, and I'm at my best when I'm activated.
- Not perfect but my best - a pretty good gardener. For when I'm tending towards growth, I find freedom for myself.

Muchisimas gracias - a heartfelt thank you.

## Additional Interviews and Seminars:

Seminar held on March 23rd, 2023 at Baruch College with **Graham Parker**, CEO of Louisville Orchestra.

### Key takeaways:

1. What are the better structures for arts production?

2. Constantly asks “what is the impact of their work?”
3. Data versus impact – institutional versus personal.
4. Solve a problem in the community – might take 22 generations – nonetheless that is impact.
5. Example of identifying a need/having an impact – Queens museum hosting on site food distribution. Height of the pandemic there was food instability for undocumented, immigrants locally and incoming migrants.
6. Value alignment across the organization is crucial for success.
7. Artist driven, civic leadership - this is his theory of change.
8. The artist brings a particular audience.
9. Need a big problem that everyone has tried to tackle - “a nasty complex problem.”
10. For Example, Louisville has experienced white flight
11. He found an intersectionality of Black/African Americans and the Jewish community; The Orchestra worked with preachers and rabbis and hosted study groups of the Old Testament (about 150 congregants from various religious backgrounds attended).
12. This was a way to help break down preconceived notions and barriers.
13. Find the people who can help you do that programming
14. Where does it go? Year 3? Year 4?
15. Wellness is the qualitative and quantitative
16. Wellness benefit of culture
17. Important point for future development for cultural org’s: well-being and health
18. In discussion with Hospital’s conducting an impact study of culture and well-being
19. This can lead to grants and funding opportunities.
20. Ask patients: Do you want to go to hear a performance? Do you play? Act? Do you draw?
21. Ask how this makes them feel? Part of something bigger? Do you feel better after?
22. Belonging (my word not his, but this is what he’s getting at)
23. Cultural well-being = emotional well-being = overall well-being .
24. Price is a huge impact on cultural well-being and cultural participation

**Collective Verde:** A grassroots organization dedicated to providing mutual aid and advocacy for recent migrants to New York City, as well as championing the rights of immigrant workers.

1. Core tenet: Guerilla advocacy for the migrant community in NYC.
2. Mobilize mutual aid and food distribution.
3. Reclaim the word “anarchy”: this is the root for anything/anyone that disrupts.
4. Must center feminist perspective when mitigating patriarchal forces found within Latinx communities.
5. Please connect with your local mutual aid group. These groups are the boots on the ground and doing excellent work.

6. Colectiva Verde is doing it right: immediate connection and having a positive impact with the migrant community which is in constant flux to outside forces beyond their control. All the while creatively making space for Artists of all mediums.

**The Organization of American States (OAS)** webinar, during their VI Inter-American Week for People of African Descent in the Americas.

A virtual and live event organized by representatives in OAS National Offices, that featured panelists addressing the theme, Decolonizing Education in the Americas: Mainstreaming policies and practices that engender pride in African heritage and identity.

- To provide and present a critical platform for Decolonizing Education in the Americas.
- Participants were instructed on how they could participate in either Spanish or English; there was a translation button that could be activated at any time at which point a translator's voice would be dubbed in, depending on the language selected (unless of course no translation was needed and the viewer/listener could listen to the presenter speaking in their own words and language).
- This was very much in line with the bicultural and bilingual ethos that was being highlighted and put forward as a priority by OAS and the guest speakers who were soon to present.

**The first guest speaker was Dr. Garrey Dennie who is an Associate Professor of History at St. Mary's College in Maryland and who is from St. Vincent and the Grenadines and who spoke on "the challenges and opportunities for promoting reparatory justice for indigenous peoples."**

1. One of his frame-works was to demonstrate the deliberate erasure of the Garifuna peoples (who are the descendants of an Afro-Indigenous population in St. Vincent) from history - or at least how history has been implemented and institutionalized and taught by the British - to Vincentians.
2. So, he asks, what did the Garifuna peoples do? They created a new cosmology for the next 200 years.
3. Without genuflecting to the colonizers, they begin to call themselves the "Garifuna"
4. The British imbed in their curriculum in the education of the population, they - the colonizers - attempt to show a moral inequality British versus the Garifuna.
5. His research works to discover and reclaim the transformation of Knowledge for the Garifuna.
6. And to ask the important question: in the instances of transference of knowledge, and how it has historically occurred in St. Vincent - whose knowledge is being transferred? And by whom is this knowledge being transferred?

**The next guest speaker was Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine who is a professor, consultant on public school education and also the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Graduate**

**Studies and Research at The University of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago).** I'm unable to justly summarize the wealth and breadth of information presented but her inquiry was exact and brilliant.

1. A main theme, and a continuing thread from the previous panelist, was to vigorously question the “transformation of knowledge in an academic setting; from whom and to whom is this energy occurring?”
2. Poignantly asked “ What role does Education play in the West Indies? Is it devolving into a modern-day plantation?”
3. She believes education unlocks the change necessary
4. That concrete strategic initiatives are lack in Research and Academia in the West Indies.
5. That it is no longer compulsory to teach history in the Central Caribbean.
6. This leads to a recolonizing of Education
7. That the Scholars and Scholarships in the U.S. and Europe, even though providing opportunity, nonetheless result in students residing in the West Indies to study abroad (sometimes being poached), leaving a knowledge vacuum in their home states and countries. Many of these students are Afro-Descendant.
8. Resulting in a brain -drain and break in social fabric, destabilizing the knowledge base critical for the Afro-Descendant communities to create robust futures for themselves in the West Indies.
9. Poverty is so REAL but Prof. Belle believes, the population is blinded to the external pressures that create this reality.
10. Dr. Belle speaks on the predatory relationships in Research found the Universities in the central West Indies i.e. Eco-Cannabis industry of the Global North and its taking of indigenous seeds under the guise and completely legal in Research Academic settings.
11. Climate Change creating and exacerbating vulnerabilities already acute in the region; Dr. Belle asks “where does the liability lie?” Answer: with the polluters.

**The final speaker to present was John Antón Sanchez, who is “Doctor en Ciencias Sociales, profesor titular del Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales IAEN (Ecuador), miembro del Observatorio para la Justicia Afrodescendiente en Latinoamérica (OJALA- FIU) y del Instituto para la Investigación y Desarrollo Afrodescendiente (Costa Rica).** Dr. Sanchez’s presentation was in Spanish and he was presenting from Ecuador (bilateral and bilingual audio translation with corresponding closed captions).

1. Professor Sanchez offered statistics on the demographics and psychographics of the education system in Ecuador.
2. He shared graphs and statistics demonstrating that 8% of Ecuador's population is Afrodescendiente and 10% Indígena but students enrolled in Ecuador’s Universities and Institutes show that only 1% of students are Afrodescendiente and 0.3% Indígena.

3. Among his proposals to rectify or improve this unequal and discriminatory practice was the idea of teaching a curriculum based in plurinationalism and interculturalidad principles.

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