

# *Philbrook Museum of Art*

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ASSESSMENT**



# **FINAL REPORT**

WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

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# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## A. INTRODUCTION

[T]he possibilities for an exponential explosion of creativity, innovation, and life-improving products and services birthed through the union of diversity, equity, and inclusion [are evident]. Embracing the mix and knowing how to make it work will give us the power to create an alternative, uplifting, and creative vision.

[C]orporations, not-for-profits, government, law enforcement, and the military will have to attract and retain the best talent from multiple labor pools if they are to survive the talent war. The key to attraction lies in creating truly inclusive environments. Don't be fooled by how soft and effortless that sounds. Inclusion is one of the hardest things to achieve.

ANDRES T. TAPIA, *THE INCLUSION PARADOX—THE OBAMA ERA AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF GLOBAL DIVERSITY* (Lincolnshire, Illinois: Hewitt Associates 2009), at 15.

Attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion (“DEI”) jibes with the overarching Philbrook Museum of Art (“Philbrook”) philosophy and value system, as reflected in its diversity, equity, and inclusion policy statement:

*Philbrook respects, values, and celebrates the unique attributes, characteristics, and perspectives that make each person who they are. We believe that our chief strength lies in human diversity, both within our organization and among the clients and communities with whom we engage. We seek out diversity of participation, thought, and action, and work affirmatively and strategically to be inclusive. For us, diversity, equity, and inclusion are drivers of organizational excellence.*

This DEI Assessment (“Assessment”) revealed that Philbrook-affiliated individuals appreciate the importance of DEI and are overwhelmingly willing to work collaboratively to improve the organization in that regard. While many believe Philbrook leadership shares their commitment to DEI, a substantial number remain leery about the depth of that leadership commitment and, specifically, the determination of the part of leadership to translate words into deeds. The doubters frequently cited the lack of significant, timely, and consistent actions that back up leadership’s embrace of DEI and the failure of leadership to take advantage of internal bench strength--individuals who are knowledgeable in and/or passionate about DEI--who could help advance and sustain DEI initiatives. Few questioned the genuineness and authenticity of leadership on matters of DEI, but a significant

number questioned the willingness of leadership to implement pragmatic, strategic, sustainable DEI measures.

While most of those who engaged with this DEI Assessment expressed the view that awareness of the DEI imperative resonates throughout the organization, many feel Philbrook is still in its DEI infancy, struggling with practical implementation measures and not yet having crafted a powerful strategic plan for DEI.

Getting to the ideal state will require a long-term commitment, integration of DEI into all aspects of Philbrook's existence and work, and systems of accountability. Broad embrace of DEI, both philosophically and operationally, by all members of the Philbrook leadership team is essential.

Despite misgivings about the scope, span, and staging of DEI initiatives, the overwhelming receptivity among Philbrook-affiliated individuals to positive action on DEI matters creates a wide window of opportunity for transformative change. Now is the time to tap that momentum and energy to make the structural changes needed to advance Philbrook exponentially in the realm of DEI.

For many, this DEI Assessment put the matter front and center and provided evidence of commitment. This foundational work, to be successful in the face of roadblocks and challenges, must be internalized by Philbrook and set on a sustainable course. DEI must not be a check-the-box phenomenon; rather, Philbrook's DEI efforts demand buy-in for the long haul. Ongoing, evolving engagements, programs, and projects rank among the keys to success.

**Success will not and cannot be realized in the absence of leadership, engagement, and full support at the top of the organization. That means leaders who:**

- (1) Set positive DEI examples through their professional and personal choices;**
- (2) Deliver consistent messages affirming the centrality of DEI to organizational success;**
- (3) Champion DEI best practices;**
- (4) Encourage constructive feedback and eschew any form of retaliation for speaking out on matters of equity;**

**(5) Implement measures to integrate DEI into the organization and support, reinforce, and advance it at all levels.**

DEI, done properly, can be inspirational. That said, glossing over the tensions that differences predictably bring will set Philbrook up for unnecessary turmoil. Managing the stresses borne of conflicts over differences, real or perceived, pays dividends. It is worth the periodic discomfort experienced through the process of encountering, sizing up, and ultimately coming to accept the different and the unknown.

A 2010 HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW article summed it up nicely:

Diversity is a strong asset. [D]ifferences of ideas, methods, and competencies are advantages for teamwork and problem solving. These differences, however, can also cause stress and strain. Don't try to minimize that tension. Instead, use it as a force for productivity and creativity. Prepare [people] to understand others without judging differences; create an inclusive environment where people feel valued for their skills; and emphasize the complementary skills that diversity brings. Finally, recognize and reward successes that are a result of diversity. By embracing the tension instead of trying to mitigate it, [you] will be able to produce more imaginative and creative results.

Source: HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW, *Embrace Diversity Tension*, Management Tip of the Day, (September 20, 2010).

DEI makes for tough and never-ending work. There will always be detractors and challenges. Nonetheless, if Philbrook is to maximize its incredible potential, this is work that must be done.

Dr. Robert Putnam, a Harvard political scientist best known for his bestselling book *Bowling Alone*, examined the concept of community. His research indicated that diversity is inevitable and imperative, and that it takes leadership to foster the spirit of inclusion needed to reap optimal benefits from diversity. We must, Philbrook must, in Dr. Putnam's view, develop "*a new, broader sense of 'we,'*" in order to take full advantage of diversity.

Too much of an "us" and "them" mentality still persists, not just among individuals, but systemically, between and among organizations. We see ourselves as different from "the other"; we attribute positive characteristics to ourselves, and negative ones to "the other"; we look for information that confirms and reinforces our preconceived notions. It is this difference in perception that allows gulfs between people to widen.

Once again, effective, supportive leadership bridges interpersonal and organizational divides. A strategically deployed DEI initiative can play a critical role.

## B. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

“Relevance” is an important concept in the museum space. Relevance, in the face of rapid, ongoing demographic change, demands that museums be both discerning and nimble. To be discerning is to be aware of the forces pushing and pulling actors in the industry. To be nimble is to be fluid and flexible enough to adapt and evolve as that push and pull inevitably occurs.

Traditional museum audiences--white, older, and affluent--will increasingly comprise a smaller share of patrons. Museums must recognize this reality and act accordingly. Museums should consider the following five strategies:

### **1. PHILBROOK SHOULD REFLECT THE AUDIENCES IT WISHES TO ATTRACT.**

*Make sure all media--print ads, social media content, website content, and more--reflect the demographic diversity in the community. All Tulsans need to see themselves reflected in Philbrook media mosaic.*

### **2. PHILBROOK SHOULD REMOVE ALL BARRIERS TO ENTRY.**

*Make sure people understand what is expected on them at Philbrook. Address issues about accessibility, attire, food, children, talking/ language etiquette, photography, and other general concerns explicitly and in writing. Find other creative ways to established what is expected in the context and culture of Philbrook.*

### **3. PHILBROOK SHOULD HOST/SPONSOR EVENTS THAT CHALLENGE EXISTING PERCEPTIONS.**

*Find ways to attract diverse audience to Philbrook (e.g., hosting private and/ or corporate events). This will demystify the space and make it less forbidding and foreboding for those not among the traditional audience.*

#### **4. PHILBROOK SHOULD INCORPORATE USER-GENERATED CONTENT INTO THE GALLERY EXPERIENCE.**

*Encourage visitors to take pictures at Philbrook and share them on social media. This and other creative user-generated content will make the museum feel more welcoming for a variety of audience.*

#### **5. PHILBROOK SHOULD TAKE THE SHOW ON THE ROAD.**

*Take Philbrook to the people--to various types of people in different places and spaces. For example, Philbrook might consider an art-on-wheels project whereby it takes a photographic collection to various neighborhoods. This fosters accessibility and comfortability.\**

\*Adapted from Amrita Gurney, *Cultural Diversity in Museums: 5 Tactics for Inclusive Marketing*, June 4, 2019, <https://crowdriff.com/resources/authors/amrita-gurney>.

DEI best practices offer important guidance, too. The Philbrook assessment process instruments (*i.e.*, the DEI survey data, inventory data, and information gleaned from focus groups and personal interviews) (*see* Appendices B and C) yielded contextualized insights.

Based upon the foregoing, Philbrook should explore the following strategies, strengthening those that may already be in place, in order to advance DEI. These strategies fall into five critical categories:

- (1) CEO/Management Commitment;
- (2) Supplier/Vendor Policies;
- (3) People-Building;
- (4) Internal Policies; and
- (5) Community Outreach and Engagement.

### **1. CEO/LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT**

- *Gain top-level buy-in at Philbrook to the importance of DEI and the imperative of fostering a diverse, equitable, inclusive workplace culture.*
- *Craft and announce Philbrook's commitment to DEI and the imperative of fostering a diverse, equitable, inclusive workplace culture. [This could be accomplished, at least in part, by publicizing Philbrook's DEI policy (Appendix A).]*
- *Hold Philbrook leadership accountable to specific DEI goals.*

- *List DEI among Philbrook’s core values.*
- *Define diversity broadly—inclusively—so it encompasses race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ability status, and other core dimensions of difference.*
- *Offer educational and training opportunities designed to help personnel understand the historical, moral, and business cases for DEI.*
- *Undertake affirmative efforts to confront the “myth of meritocracy”—the notion that DEI necessarily come at the expense of quality performance and services and/ or represents a “loss” for some specific demographic. DEI is not a zero-sum game.*
- *Plan strategically for DEI.*
- *Offer incentives for outstanding achievements in the area of DEI.*
- *Integrate DEI considerations into all Philbrook functions (i.e., create an organizational culture and climate that values and supports DEI).*
- *Allocate sufficient financial and human resources to DEI.*
- *Maintain an ongoing DEI council to guide the planning and implementation of a cohesive, long-term DEI strategy.*
- *Engage DEI experts to address issues related to assessment, reflection, strategic planning, implementation, and/ or troubleshooting.*

## **2. SUPPLIER/VENDOR POLICIES**

- *Work to enhance DEI among suppliers/ vendors.*
- *Audit or monitor the number of minority suppliers/ vendors (e.g., supplies/ vendors owned principally by people of color, women, or representatives of other historically underrepresented groups) and consider ways to be more inclusive.*
- *Catalogue the use of minority suppliers/ vendors and chart this utilization over time.*
- *Review procurement policies and procedures to reduce barriers to minority supplier/ vendor participation.*
- *Foster minority supplier/ vendor participation by providing relevant information on opportunities to outlets likely to reach non-traditional markets.*
- *Train key personnel on methods designed to interest additional minority suppliers/ vendors in bidding for work.*

### 3. PEOPLE-BUILDING

- *Monitor policies and actions that affect hiring, promotion, and retention to avoid barriers such as discrimination and “glass ceilings.”*
- *Maintain a workforce that generally reflects the demographic mix of the Tulsa Region (i.e., in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender).*
- *Establish and regularly review Philbrook policies, procedures, and business practices, both formal and informal, for fairness and equity (i.e., Do certain policies have a disproportionate and negative impact on women, people of color, and/or other subgroups?).*
- *Maintain a recruitment strategy that affirmatively seeks diverse candidates at all levels.*
- *Provide an orientation program that communicates the Philbrook’s commitment to DEI and highlights DEI issues.*
- *Provide opportunities to learn more about DEI, with a view toward becoming “culturally competent”—imbued with the awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills that lead to inclusive environments.*
- *Maintain a nondiscriminatory performance appraisal system.*
- *Develop a mentoring program that addresses organizational politics, skills enhancement, career planning, and other pertinent issues.*
- *Recognize, both privately and publicly, achievements and accomplishments of individuals affiliated with Philbrook (i.e., recognition to the individual, within Philbrook, and, where appropriate, within the context of the community at large).*
- *Provide fair and equitable retirement and healthcare policies that properly value the contributions of older workers.*
- *Promote teamwork and collaboration at all levels.*
- *Offer career development opportunities.*
- *Provide avenues for seeking out additional support when people feel neglected, discriminated against, or otherwise “in trouble” in the work environment.*
- *Support and/or encourage the formation of culture-based groups (sometimes called “business resource groups” or “affinity groups”) as a means of providing peer support and mentoring, enhancing dialogue, and crystallizing and surfacing DEI issues.*
- *Sponsor DEI programming (e.g., intercultural events; educational offerings).*
- *Collaborate with other businesses, groups, and organizations to share knowledge and information about DEI matters.*

## 4. INTERNAL POLICIES

- *Enhance board diversity, keeping in mind all dimensions of diversity (e.g., race, ethnicity, color, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, religion, etc.);*
- *Provide ongoing DEI education and training on an organization-wide basis.*
- *Provide ongoing conflict resolution education and training on an organization-wide basis.*
- *Provide programs to address a wide range of DEI-related issues such as child and elder care, immigration issues, and literacy.*
- *Emphasize effective cross-cultural communication skills and a broad understanding of DEI in performance appraisal and promotional policies.*
- *Provide forums, including at least one anonymous forum, for addressing employee concerns about DEI issues.*
- *Regularly identify and recognize important achievements in Philbrook's DEI efforts.*
- *Publicize successful DEI initiatives and efforts.*
- *Explore objective ways to define success in the DEI arena.*
- *Monitor recruitment, promotion, and retention efforts with respect to people of color, women, and other diverse demographics.*
- *Regularly assess, with feedback at all levels, the DEI climate.*
- *Provide in-house publications and other media that are inclusive and reflective of America's and the community's rich diversity.*
- *Create inclusive advertising and other public media that reflect the DEI within Philbrook, among stakeholders, and within the greater marketplace.*
- *Advertise and/or recruit in media patronized and/or owned by women, persons of color, and others who represent non-majority demographics.*
- *Emphasize Philbrook's commitment to DEI on the website (e.g., with a video message from Philbrook leadership about the importance of DEI).*
- *Maintain mechanisms through which those affiliated with Philbrook may share, confidentially, if so desired, feedback about organizational media.*

## 5. COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

- *Work within the museum industry to share DEI experiences and best practices and encourage similar, industry-wide efforts.*
- *Promote involvement of Philbrook-affiliated individuals in all sectors of the community (e.g., service on various, diverse nonprofit boards of directors).*
- *Work to establish “pipelines” with local institutions (e.g., high schools) to build relations that could lead to long-term employment opportunities for a diverse array of individuals.*
- *Encourage employees and friends of Philbrook to participate in community organizations that support DEI initiatives (e.g., Leadership Tulsa and the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice).*
- *Allocate charitable contributions, including in-kind volunteerism, among a variety of constituent community organizations (i.e., those serving a variety of individuals from diverse backgrounds).*
- *Budget for DEI programs and projects.*
- *Compete for recognition, honors, and awards based on DEI performance (e.g., Tulsa Mosaic’s Inclusive Workplace Culture Award).*
- *Provide a variety of avenues through which to air/address DEI issues.*
- *Hold memberships in organizations focused, in whole or in part, on DEI in the workplace (e.g., Tulsa Area Human Resources Association (“TAHRA”); Mosaic).*
- *Participate in activities and events sponsored by DEI-focused groups (e.g., the YWCA, the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice, Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Commemoration Society, the Community Service Council of Greater Tulsa, Greenwood Rising, Mosaic, and the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation).*

