



Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Annual Report
2020-2021



Harvard University
Graduate School of Design

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2020, the murders of Ahmad Aubrey, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Rayshard Brooks and so many other Black Americans sparked righteous rage and a deep desire to see change in our community and in the world. Simultaneously, COVID-19 continued to halt and alter life as we knew it, leaving our community in immense exhaustion from stress, uncertainty, and loss. The residual effects of rhetoric blaming China for the pandemic brought to the forefront acts of hate targeting Asians and Pacific Islanders. It has been and continues to be a tumultuous year for all of us.

In a year that has unearthed the structural inequities and racism that mark American society, we found ourselves in a pivotal moment. A chance for our community to build “**Toward a New GSD.**” A GSD community that is resilient, leads by conscience design, and is not afraid of doing the hard work of confronting what is fundamentally wrong and advocating for truth.

Committed to addressing systemic racism and inequity at the GSD, the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) implemented programming and initiatives to promote anti-racist practices, expand recruitment and retention strategies of historically marginalized individuals, and deepen internal DIB competences as part of a holistic approach to institutional transformation. By doing this work in partnership with the full community, our office hopes to co-create a GSD where all can thrive and feel a sense of belonging.

OVERVIEW

Established in Spring 2019, the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) serves as a place of consultation, strategic partnership, and accountability to ensure that all in our community have equitable access to its resources and can share in its benefits.

Mission

The mission of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging is to cultivate and sustain an environment at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD) that increases diversity, deepens inclusion, and advances a sense of belonging among students, faculty, staff, and our extended community. The GSD believes in equipping students with the skills to design spaces for all people to navigate. To accomplish this, we prioritize the innovation and reflection that comes from recognizing diverse perspectives and experiences and creating space for them in our community.

Focus Areas

Recruitment and Retention: We work in partnership with other GSD offices to ensure diverse recruitment of faculty, staff, and students and advocate for retention practices that foster inclusion.

Community Engagement: We collaborate and support faculty, staff, and students who organize identity-based programming that seeks to advance conversations about DIB. We do this by helping to create avenues for diversity in community programs, conferences, and symposia.

Representation: We strive to ensure that our community is an accurate reflection of the diversity in our world, and we accomplish this in two ways:

1. We review and develop GSD policies to ensure recognition of a diverse and inclusive community while providing accountability to the GSD community values.

2. We seek to encourage a consistent review of curriculum to maintain an academic voice that highlights the diversity of the field and that can be far-reaching to our current and prospective students.

Assessment: We seek to advance our work and mark our movement using data driven and evidence-based approaches to diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

People



Naisha Bradley serves as the Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging at the Graduate School of Design. This inaugural position involves developing and implementing a school-wide strategy to increase diversity, deepen inclusion, and advance a sense of belonging among students, faculty, and staff. Her portfolio includes senior level advisement, strategic planning, operational management, and financial planning.

Esther Chong Weathers serves as the Associate Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging at the Graduate School of Design. She is responsible for the creation, development, implementation, and evaluation of office programming that raises awareness of the impact of diversity in design. In addition to her programming portfolio, Esther facilitates partnerships between the DIB Office and departments throughout the GSD to ensure that diversity and inclusion is present throughout our community.



PROGRAMMING

The Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) is committed to cultivating and sustaining a design community that holds multiple identities and conflicting perspectives in a respectful way. To accomplish this endeavor, we develop programming that is in alignment with community needs and the focus areas of the office.

DEEP Training

Beginning in August 2020 the Office of DIB organized a series of professional development trainings through the **Disruptive Equity Education Project** (DEEP) for faculty and staff centered on developing a better understanding of structural racism and issues of equity. **Dr. Darnisa Amante-Jackson** of DEEP, facilitated *The Reckoning* training series throughout the academic year with a focus on the following competencies: defining why DEI is personally important, understanding macro and micro aggressions, and building a classroom and workplace grounded in belonging.

DIB Community Keynote

To expand the scope and reach of DEEP's work for the entire GSD community, the Office of DIB hosted a keynote featuring Dr. Darnisa Amante-Jackson at the start of the academic year. Her address titled, *When Health, Well-Being and Social Justice Became the Same Conversation*, discussed adding awareness and hope to the conversation about unrest during the pandemic. She highlighted how we can leverage diversity to create equity in higher education communities.

2020:
**WHEN HEALTH, WELL-BEING,
 AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
 BECAME THE SAME
 CONVERSATION**



2020 has been a year of heartbreak, chaos, and unrest, and while we should feel all those raw emotions, we should add two more feelings to the mix: awareness and hope.

In this keynote, Dr. Darnisa Amante-Jackson will discuss holding our institutions more accountable and rebuilding them from the inside out by leveraging awareness and diversity to establish a foundation of equity and inclusion within the faculty, student body, and the design community at large.

DR. AMANTE-JACKSON
 CEO & co-founder of
 The Disruptive Equity
 Education Project
 (DEEP)

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1
 4:00PM EDT**
ZOOM REGISTRATION REQUIRED



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GSD Town Halls

GSD Town Halls are dynamic public spaces for discussion and reflection. Prioritizing emotional and mental wellbeing, GSD Town Halls promote collaborative relationships among faculty, staff, students, and researchers around current issues of policy and social inequity impacting our community at the domestic and international levels.

2020 Election

In advance of the 2020 presidential election, the Office of DIB hosted a town hall to create a space for community members to share their thoughts and concerns around the political landscape of the United States and the impact a shift in the leadership could have on the country and world.



GSD COMMUNITY TOWN HALL

We join our Pan-Asian community in mourning and solidarity following the senseless shootings in Atlanta.

We invite the GSD community to a town hall for reflection and healing.

Friday | March 19
10:00am-11:00am EST
[Zoom Registration](#)

During these difficult times, it is important that we prioritize emotional and mental wellbeing by supporting one another individually and collectively.

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IMAGES ARE FROM THE POSTER SERIES "I STILL BELIEVE IN OUR CITY," BY THE ARTIST AMANDA PHINGBODHIPAKKIYA.



GSD COMMUNITY TOWN HALL 2020 ELECTION

A community gathering featuring small group conversations for those who are experiencing heightened emotions in response to this current moment

WED, NOV 4 | 7:00PM EST | ZOOM

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

What are your feelings or biggest concerns around the election?

Submit your anonymous response [here](#) (use code 7615385) to participate in the community word cloud

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Office Hours

[Naisha Bradley](#)
Asst. Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

[Esther Chong Weathers](#)
Asst. Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

[Laura Snowden](#)
Dean of Student Services

[John Aslanian](#)
Director of Recruitment and Student Affairs

Schedule by clicking on the name of who you would like to meet with. Spots are first come first serve.

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Anti-Asian Racism

In the wake of several attacks against Asian Americans, the Office of DIB hosted a town hall focused on addressing Anti-Asian Racism by reaffirming our community values as an act of solidarity and providing an opportunity for the GSD community to connect, listen, process, and better understand each other.

Brave Conversations Across Difference

BRAVE CONVERSATIONS ACROSS DIFFERENCE Workshop


The workshop explores how issues of difference and power inform difficult conversations. Participants will gain strategies on how to engage in *brave conversations* rooted in social emotional intelligence, resilience and risk taking, and partnership building.

Faculty, Researchers, and Staff
[Workshop Registration](#)
 TUES | MAR 23 | 3:30PM – 5:00PM EST

Students
[Workshop Registration](#)
 THURS | MAR 25 | 4:00PM – 5:30PM EST

Advance registration required, workshop will be limited to 25 participants





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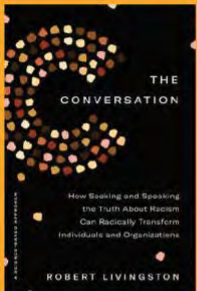
In alignment with our goal to cultivate a community that holds multiple identities and conflicting perspectives in a respectful way, the Office of DIB offered two **Brave Conversations Across Difference** workshops for faculty, researchers, staff, and students. Leaning on the work of Brené Brown (*Dare to Lead*) and Stone, Patton, and Heen (*Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*) we developed a workshop that unpacked the structure of difficult conversations and shared a guide for how to engage in brave conversations rooted in social emotional intelligence, resilience and risk taking, and partnership building.

The Conversation: Fireside Chat with Dr. Robert Livingston

Following the release of his book, *The Conversation: How Speaking the Truth about Racism can Transform Individuals and Organizations*, Robert Livingston spoke to the GSD community about how to eradicate racism using his PRESS model. The GSD offered a copy of the book to all community members prior to the fireside chat and encouraged participants to engage with Livingston about his model (**P**roblem Awareness, **R**oot Cause Analysis, **E**mpathy, **S**trategy, **S**acrifice) and how following it could address the societal ills caused by racism.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION







In the wake of social unrest and the growing calls for racial justice, organizations and individuals are asking: *how can I be part of the solution?*

"The Conversation" by Dr. Livingston addresses three simple yet profound questions: *What is racism? Why should everyone be more concerned about it? What can we do to eradicate it?*

Fireside Chat with Dr. Livingston
 Tuesday | April 6
 1:00pm-2:00pm (EST)
[Zoom Registration Required](#)

Event will include a Q&A, submit your questions [here](#)





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SIGNATURE INITIATIVES

Learning Community

IDEA LEARNING COMMUNITY

Inclusion Diversity Equity Awareness (IDEA) Learning Community is a proactive approach to DIB education, centering a collective reading as an entry point to foster constructive dialogue and develop competencies on identity, power, and privilege. Small cohorts of the GSD community meet bi-weekly for 90 minutes.

Summer Schedule:
 July Cohort | July 8, July 22, Aug 5
 Aug Cohort | Aug 6, Aug 20, Sep 3
 Enrollment is limited.
 Must be able to participate in all 3 sessions.

Registration is required to declare interest.
 Deadline to submit is June 29.
<https://tinyurl.com/IDEALC2020>

"White Fragility" illuminates racism as a practice that is not restricted to 'bad people' by exploring how the system of racism shapes our lives, how we uphold that system, and how we might interrupt it.

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WHITE FRAGILITY
 WHY IT'S SO HARD FOR WHITE PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT RACISM
 ROBIN DIANGELO
 FOREWORD BY MICHAEL ERIC DYSON

Following the murder of George Floyd, many people in the GSD community wanted to better understand race and racism and gain insight into how it plays out in everyday life and societal systems. The Office of DIB created the Learning Community, a proactive approach to DIB education, where faculty, staff, researchers, and students explore the root of societal inequities and their current impact. Conversations juxtaposed a common reading (*White Fragility*, DiAngelo) and current public instances of racism, oppression,

discrimination, and prejudice.

Quotes from Learning Community Participants

"I would say that everything about this was valuable (the book itself, the prompts and learning materials, the discussion prompts, etc.). Hearing from my peers in the cohort was maybe the most valuable (or at least the most unexpected) part of the experience."

"Having sessions at the GSD that brought together faculty and staff to address a sensitive and uncomfortable topic of racism was a significant step to start a conversation. Most people avoid talking about racism, and the IDEA Learning sessions put it on the map."

85%

I would be interested in a follow-up, more advanced, workshop on this subject

Community Conversations

Community Conversation is an initiative for the GSD community to informally engage with each other around topics that advance discussions of identity, difference, and commonality. This academic year we advanced this initiative with a conversation focused on an episode from the 1619 Project that explored the history of Black land ownership in America and the biased strategies that led to land dispossession.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

In honor of Black History Month, we will explore the loss and dispossession of Black land ownership in America to unpack how power, privilege, and positionality impact the ethics of design

This informal conversation will center around:



[The 1619 Project](#)
Episode 5 Part 1 & 2:
The Land of Our Fathers

Open to the GSD Community
Tues Feb 23 | 12:00pm EST
Zoom Registration Required

Limited Spaces



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Racial Equity and Anti-Racism Fund

To concretely counteract institutionalized racism, the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging worked in collaboration with the Office of Development and Alumni Relations to develop the Racial Equity and Anti-Racism (REA) Fund.

Mission

Recognizing that the design fields have a cultural obligation to address injustice and discrimination, the Racial Equity and Anti-Racism (REA) Fund exists to raise awareness of how race, racism, and racial injustice affect society (with a focus on the design fields) and promote a culture of anti-racism at the GSD. The fund supports strategies that work at the individual, departmental, and/or institutional level.

Eligibility

Any current GSD faculty, researcher, staff or student. Preference will be given to proposals that: (1) strengthen the effectiveness of a GSD course, event, program or policy service, policy, or procedure that promotes a culture of anti-racism; or (2) enable the GSD to commit to the recruitment and retention of people of color more effectively within its community.

Cycle	Total # of Applicants	Breakdown by Role	Total Amount Requested
Fall 2020	7	2 Faculty 2 Staff 3 Students	\$29,045
Spring 2021	14	4 Faculty 2 Staff 8 Students	\$64,100

GSD RACIAL EQUITY AND ANTI-RACISM FUND

FALL 2020 RECIPIENTS



DESIGN MARGINS (PODCAST)

Shane Ah-Siong, Student

6-minute podcasts featuring 2-person dialogue around how racial and societal injustices impact the design world

Amount Awarded: \$1,440



ACADEMIC TEXT TRANSLATION

Gareth Doherty, Faculty

Translation of Portuguese texts by black authors to address the scarcity of publications on landscapes of the African diaspora

Amount Awarded: \$2,800



MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Bryan Ortega-Welch, Student

GSD student mentors assist DDYA alumni with their design school application, including portfolio layouts and statement of purpose

Amount Awarded: \$4,015



CODESIGN FIELD LAB

Lily Song, Faculty

Seminar course researching foodscapes and foodways in the Georgia Black Belt centered on African American communities

Amount Awarded: \$3,150



RACE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ben Demers, Student

Workshop on race dynamics during the community engagement process informed by the history of racial exclusion in design

Amount Awarded: \$1,500



BIPOC STUDENT PORTFOLIO WORKSHOPS

Frances Loeb Library, Staff

2-day workshop where GSD students walk through the portfolios they used to gain admission to the GSD (for BIPOC audience)

Amount Awarded: \$1,095

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GSD RACIAL EQUITY AND ANTI-RACISM FUND

SPRING 2021 RECIPIENTS



SHIFTING POWER IN THE BLACK BELT WORKSHOP

Lily Song, Faculty

Workshop series educates African American youth to lead just transition work in their community as emerging reparative designers and planners, well as expose GSD students to participatory design and planning methodologies.

Amount Awarded: \$1,500



GLOBAL MORATORIUM ON NEW CONSTRUCTION ROUNDTABLE

Charlotte Malterre-Barthes, Faculty

Series features BIPOC designers dedicated to placing design at the forefront of initiatives reducing extractive activities, and reflecting on pivoting of practices, from building up to caring for.

Amount Awarded: \$400



EN LA CALLE SYMPOSIUM

Latin GSD, Students

Artists, designers and scholars present and speculate about the current and future state of Latinx creative practices in the context of social-political instability.

Amount Awarded: \$500



HIDDEN FIGURES COURSE SPEAKERS

Hansy Better Barraza, Faculty

BIPOC leaders who have committed their professional lives to advancing anti-racist practices address how the erasure of non-white identities have contributed to the development of urban form.

Amount Awarded: \$3,500



GSD NOMAS BIPOC SPEAKER PANEL

GSD NOMAS, Students

Speakers discuss the role of technology in architecture as an avenue for racial justice.

Amount Awarded: \$1,000

PARTNERSHIPS

Recruitment Guides

The GSD believes that diversity, inclusion and belonging can enrich the classroom and community experience. In alignment with that belief, the Office of DIB created two guides to help advance the recruitment of diverse faculty and students.

Student Services



Best Practices for Student Diversity Recruitment



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The Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD) believes in equipping students with the skills to design spaces for all people to navigate. To accomplish this, the recruitment of historically underrepresented students must be at the center of this work.

Recognizing that student recruitment requires a personalized and dynamic approach, the Office of DIB compiled a research-based guide of best practices and successful strategies to help tailor efforts in promoting a diverse student

body.

The guide includes:

- Strategies for school-to-school, department-to-school, and school-to-community outreach
- Countermeasures to Implicit Bias in Graduate Admission Toolkit

FACULTY AFFAIRS

The primary mission of the Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD) is to promote the development of design excellence through teaching, learning, and research. To accomplish this, the recruitment of historically underrepresented faculty must be prioritized.

Recognizing that faculty recruitment requires a multifaceted approach and varies depending on department, the Office of DIB compiled a research-based guide of best practices and successful strategies to support efforts in cultivating a diverse faculty.

The guide includes:

- Strategies for before, during, and beyond the faculty search process
- Countermeasures to Implicit Bias in Hiring Toolkit with sample interview and candidate evaluation sheet



Diversity Cabinet

The Diversity Cabinet, formerly the Dean's Diversity Initiative, is a 13-member cabinet focused on informing the strategies, programs, partnerships, and implementations sourced from the Office of DIB and assisting in framing DIB actions for the School. It serves as the nexus where the work of the Office can be informed by thought leaders from various corners of the GSD. The Diversity Cabinet meets once per month and is comprised of students, faculty, and staff. 2020 – 2021 membership includes:

1. **Aeshna Prasad**, *Student Forum DIB Chair*
2. **Andrew Holder**, *Associate Professor of Architecture; Director of the Master in Architecture I Program*
3. **Ann Forsyth**, *Ruth and Frank Stanton Professor of Urban Planning; Director of the Master in Urban Planning Program*
4. **Chris Reed**, *Co-director of MLA/UD Program; Professor in Practice of Landscape Architecture*
5. **Esther Weathers**, *Assoc. Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging*
6. **Gareth Doherty**, *Assoc. Professor of Landscape Architecture; Director of Masters in Landscape Architecture Program*
7. **Geri Nederhoff**, *Director of Admissions; Diversity Recruitment Manager*
8. **Naisha Bradley**, *Asst. Dean of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging*
9. **Paige Johnston**, *Asst. Director of Public Programs*
10. **Sara Wilkinson**, *Asst. Dean of Human Resources*
11. **Stephen Gray**, *Assoc. Professor of Urban Design*
12. **Wanjiku Ngare**, *Africa GSD Rep*
13. **Junainah Ahmed**, *Women in Design Rep*

Consultation

The Office of DIB has provided trainings and consultation services to offices, organizations, and individuals throughout the School. They include but are not limited to:

- Alumni Council
- Development and Alumni Relations
- Faculty Affairs
- GSD Faculty (Individual and Department)
- Human Resources
- Loeb Fellowship
- Student Services (Orientation, Recruitment, Student Organizations)