

Like many institutions across the United States, performing and visual arts programs in higher education are currently at a crossroads: ideas about professional practice within the arts and the role of arts in society are rapidly changing; the student body is more demographically diverse; and universities are challenged to radically rethink how college degree programs unfold to serve a broader range of interests, backgrounds, and family contexts in relation to the current economic and cultural landscape. At this critical juncture, many within arts programs are questioning long standing, and perhaps unexamined, assumptions about how arts education operates in academia, particularly in relation to diversity, inclusion, and equity. If collegiate programs are to serve the diverse needs and interests of today's students and their communities, and actively contribute to the ongoing evolution of professional practice beyond academia, then faculty and administrators must critically examine how their curricula, policies and procedures, and institutional frameworks relate to diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity are key areas of concern to me as an educator, researcher, and leader. As a tenured faculty member with administrative responsibilities and as a leading scholar in my field, I am deeply committed to consistently and critically approaching equity within postsecondary arts education. I say "approaching" because as a White woman with expertise conventionally represented in performing arts program (i.e., postmodern dance), I do not believe it is for me to determine when equity is fully actualized. However it is my ethical responsibility to facilitate frameworks for advancing equity in solidarity and partnership with others. It is also my duty to acknowledge that my own education in this area is iterative. I recognize that myself and others, particularly those of us with multiple layers of privilege, need to rethink or let go of long held conventional practices within academia to dismantle White heteropatriarchy and achieve greater equity and inclusion.

Diversity, inclusion, and equity need to be visible on every level of the college experience and within university infrastructure; only in this way can our intentions and impacts align. In the classroom, students should engage with a range of viewpoints and practices. For example, in my graduate dance teaching praxis course, instead of focusing on best practices for teaching dance, students investigate their values in relation to a range pedagogical theories (Freire, hooks, Ladson-Billings, and others) to determine what approaches work best for their own cultural values, contexts, and students. This approach has been inclusive of several dance practices and has exposed students to a breadth of emancipatory and critical pedagogical frameworks for teaching dance. Changing the content and approach to this course allows for greater possible equity as graduate students develop into our future colleagues and educators.

Internal frameworks that hold academia together such as course evaluations, curricula, faculty hiring practices, and policies and procedures also warrant close examination through a diversity, inclusion, and equity lens. There are inherent biases built into our institutional and governance structures, yet there is great potential for alignment between many of our policies and procedures and advancing equity. For example, faculty searches usually require candidates to submit names of references. This can unintentionally awaken committee members' hidden affinity biases. This is an opportunity to think about if and when names of references are needed and when that information truly needs to enter the hiring process. I have witnessed the successful implementation of this approach, which demonstrates how making one small change to a conventional practice can allow for a more demographically diverse short list and faculty.

Student course evaluations are another example of where unexamined hidden biases come into play. Research indicates that course evaluations are inherently biased against women, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA+ faculty members. We need to create a course evaluation metrics that limit inherent bias. With a team, I have facilitated the development of course evaluation metrics where students first self-assess their participation in a course before moving onto student-centered and evidence-based evaluation questions. Another possible solution for evaluating teaching effectiveness would be a more holistic candidate-centered approach. Peer reviews of teaching combined with self reflections and action plans would allow all faculty members to self direct their own growth as educators in the contexts of their expertise, cultural values, and subject areas. Using this in combination with a revised course evaluation

metric could limit inherent biases, thereby changing the perception of women, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA+ faculty members' effectiveness in the classroom to administrators.

Faculty research, creative activity, and scholarship should also consider diversity, inclusion, and equity. For many faculty, their research, creative activity, and scholarship is the way that they maintain currency in and contribute to advancing their fields of professional practice. It is not enough to work for equity in our teaching spaces but to be passive in our work as makers, authors, organizers, and advocates. My own scholarship, both as an individual author and collaborator, has focused on issues including the misalignment of intentions and impacts around cultural diversity in dance programs and on university campuses, how Whiteness and heteropatriarchy operate in dance competition culture, and how to ethically and responsibly approach diversity, inclusion, and equity across the span of dance education. I am certainly not alone in work, as there are many others in the field dedicated to consistently reevaluating what arts education and practices include, whom it is for, how it unfolds, and why that matters.

Much of my own diversity, inclusion, and equity commitments center questioning what practices and assumptions across academia need to be retired to make room for new or revised approaches to the arts so that postsecondary arts education is culturally relevant to all students. Arts programs need to regularly and critically examine the connections and disconnections between their aspirations and current practices, between intentions and impacts. There is no simple or straightforward pathway to approaching equity, as each step forward or new practice will reveal new assumptions to examine and questions to answer. In this way, approaching equity in postsecondary arts education is iterative. As artists, we are well versed in our abilities to revise, refine, edit, and to start again; to be reflective practitioners; and to comfortably hold and respect divergent thoughts. It is these skills that are inherent to our work as artists and educators, and these same aptitudes will allow arts programs to center equity on our campuses, fields of practice, and communities.