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TEAMWORK

# MUSEUM

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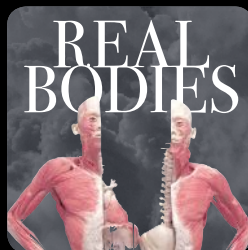






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**MAMMOTH**

**Welcome to the Land of the Mammoth**

10,000 years ago, the mammoth roamed the northern plains of North America. It was a massive animal, standing up to 12 feet tall and weighing up to 15,000 pounds. Its most striking feature was its long, curved tusks, which could grow to over 10 feet in length. Mammoths were hunted by Native Americans for their meat and hides. Today, their remains are preserved in museums around the world, providing a window into the prehistoric past.

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Mammoths were part of a group of large mammals that lived in North America during the Pleistocene epoch. Other members of this group include the woolly mammoth and the American mastodon. These animals were adapted to cold climates and were able to survive in harsh environments. Their extinction is a result of a combination of factors, including climate change and human hunting.



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SEPTEMBER  
OCTOBER  
2019  
ISSUE

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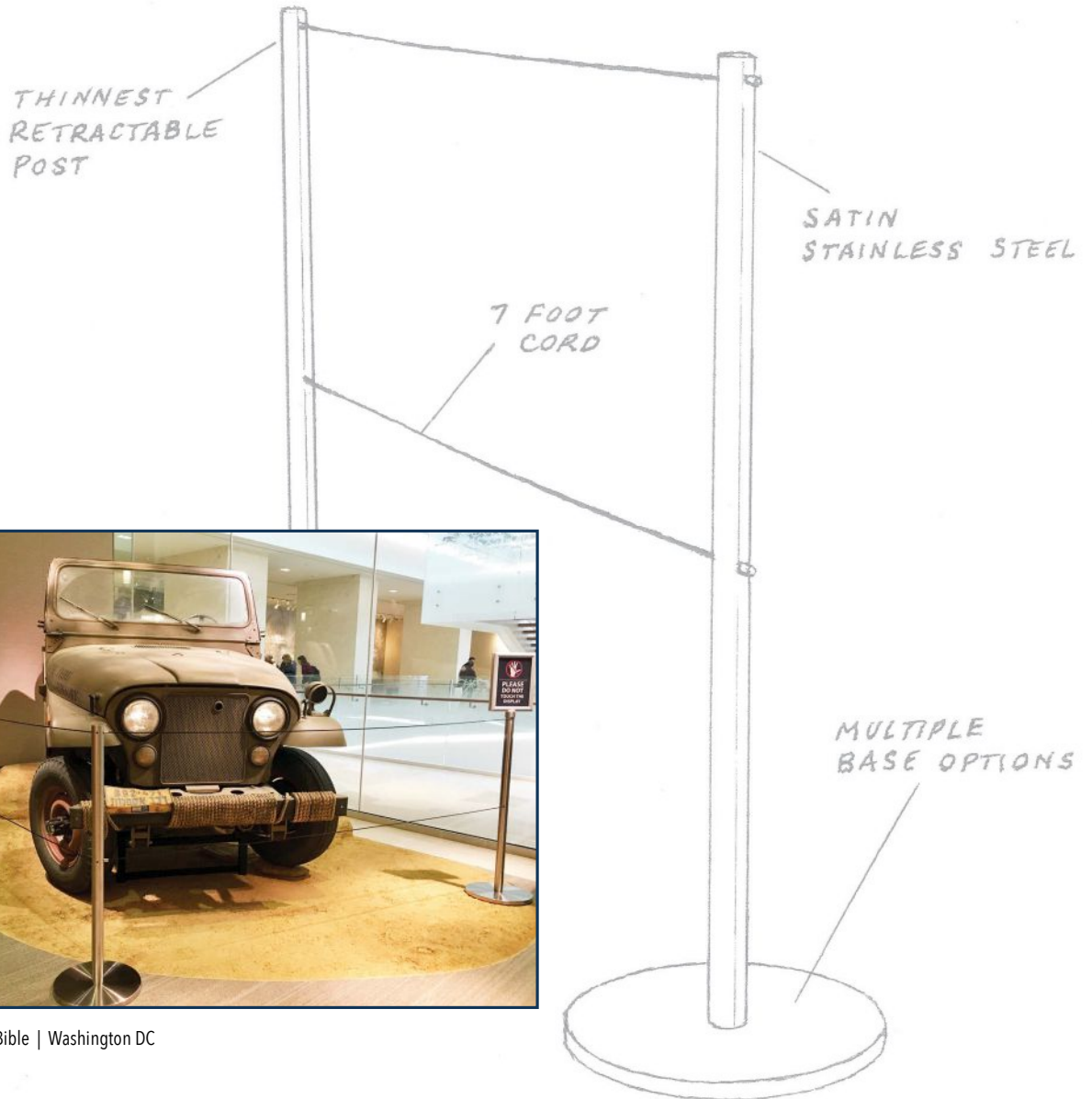
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# Champions for Equity

**In the museum field**, money and missions require one another, which is why one of AAM's greatest goals is sustaining vibrant museums by ensuring their financial health. While financial sustainability is everyone's responsibility, not everyone can contribute if they are not invited to share their experiences, knowledge, and ideas.

This highlights another AAM goal for museums—to become diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive places for all. This is long and complicated work, but together we are making progress by devoting more focus and dedicating more resources to making real and lasting change.

These two areas are inextricably connected. Rapidly shifting demographics and the demands of evolving economic models threaten museums' long-term financial sustainability if they do not pay greater attention to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI).

Research shows the makeup of museums' core audience is stuck in the 1970s. People of color comprise 39 percent of the US population, while visitors of color make up an average 11 percent of museum audiences. Museums will find it increasingly difficult to survive if they're only serving half the population. In business terms, this means declining market share as many museums face increased disruption and competition.

Additionally, most museums, as nonprofit or quasi-governmental organizations, have a legal and moral obligation to serve the entire public, not just a segment of it. Our field's lack of racial and ethnic diversity calls into question how well we're actually fulfilling our missions and puts public funding and tax advantages at risk.

Museums' viability and financial sustainability depend largely on their ability to be relevant, magnetic, and inclusive—reflections of our communities. If you

visit a museum and it doesn't reflect you, your history, or your cultural identity, you're probably not going back.

DEAI work is about museum excellence—it is a moral, political, and business imperative. Because it is vital to museum sustainability, it challenges museum leaders to ask difficult questions, broaden our thinking, and open ourselves to unprecedented opportunities.

This work is an enormous undertaking, but as part of the Alliance, you are not alone. Dozens of resources are available to help guide your strategy and celebrate your accomplishments, including the pages of this issue and the year-round tools available on our website.

Many of you saw the national news coverage earlier this year of our new initiative, *Facing Change: Advancing Museum Board Diversity & Inclusion*. We recently announced the museums that are leading the way in this work. We are thrilled that this initiative is taking root and by the overwhelming interest in it so far. We look forward to its real and lasting impact on our entire field.

I hope you will continue to follow the progress of *Facing Change* and join us in congratulating the 51 museums participating in this unprecedented national initiative.



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Laura L. Lott is the Alliance's president and CEO. Follow Laura on Twitter at [@LottLaura](#).



# The Museum Workforce



**\$0.82**  
vs.  
**\$1.00**

Amount female directors earn compared with male directors (controlling for museum budget size)

**2/3**

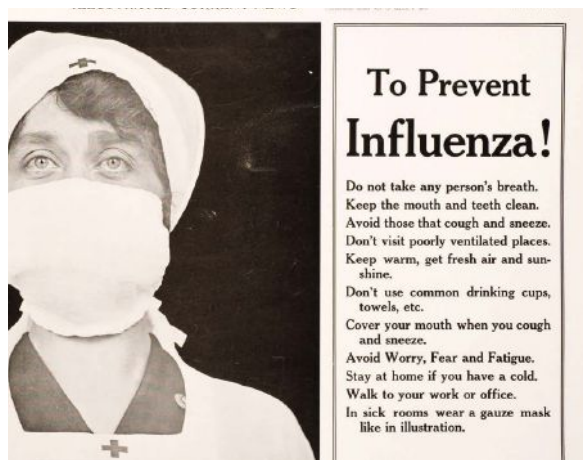
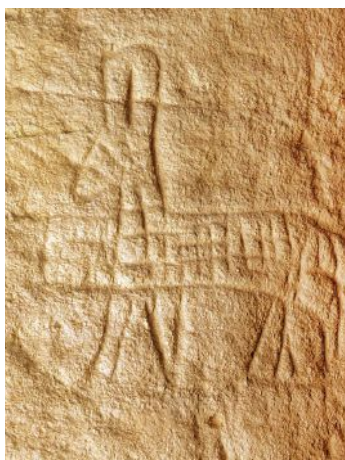
Proportion of full-time paid museum professionals who are women

**44%**

Percentage of museum employees who have a graduate degree

**Sources:** All data from AAM's 2017 National Museum Salary Survey  
By the Numbers was compiled by Susie Wilkening, principal of Wilkening Consulting, wilkeningconsulting.com. Reach Susie at Susie@wilkeningconsulting.com.  
Thank you to Anne Ackerson and Dawn Salerno for contributing to this edition of By the Numbers.





International Kurru Archaeological Project, 2016; The Mütter Museum; architectural rendering by Ennead Architects, courtesy of Peabody Essex Museum

## Kelsey Museum of Archaeology

“Graffiti as Devotion along the Nile” explores a series of graffiti newly discovered by Kelsey Museum archaeologists on a pyramid and in an underground temple at the site of El-Kurru, Sudan. The graffiti include clear symbols of ancient Kush; intricate textile designs; and beautiful horses, birds, camels, and giraffes. Through photographs, text, and interactive media presentations, this exhibition explores the times and places in which Kushite graffiti were inscribed.

**Location:** Ann Arbor, MI

**Dates:** through March 29

**Learn more:** [Isa.umich.edu/kelsey/exhibitions/special-exhibitions.html](http://Isa.umich.edu/kelsey/exhibitions/special-exhibitions.html)

## The Mütter Museum

The influenza pandemic of 1918–19, the global epidemic often called the “Spanish flu,” killed 50 million to 100 million people worldwide. “Spit Spreads Death” explores how neighborhoods in Philadelphia were impacted, how the disease spread, and what could happen in future pandemics. The exhibition and artist project explore both this devastating historic event and the connections to contemporary health issues.

**Location:** Philadelphia, PA

**Dates:** opens Oct. 17

**Learn more:** [muttermuseum.org/exhibitions/going-viral-behind-the-scenes-at-a-medical-museum/](http://muttermuseum.org/exhibitions/going-viral-behind-the-scenes-at-a-medical-museum/)

## Peabody Essex Museum

On September 28, 2019, the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) will open a 40,000-square-foot wing. The expansion and renovation features new installations, a light-filled atrium, an entry and facilities for school and group tours, new linkages and traffic flow to existing galleries, and a 5,000-square-foot garden. As part of a \$16 million museum-wide initiative to create entirely new experiences for virtually all of the museum’s collections by 2022, PEM is unveiling 13 new exhibitions and collection-based art experiences by September.

**Location:** Salem, MA

**Learn more:** [pem.org/press-news/peabody-essex-museum-details-opening-of-its-new-125m-wing](http://pem.org/press-news/peabody-essex-museum-details-opening-of-its-new-125m-wing)

## What’s New at Your Museum?

Do you have a new temporary or permanent exhibition, education program, partnership/initiative, or building/wing? Tell us at [bit.ly/MuseumNewsAAM](http://bit.ly/MuseumNewsAAM), and it might be featured in an upcoming issue.



### History of Diving Museum

“Diving With a Purpose 15 Year Odyssey: Restoring Our Oceans, Preserving Our Heritage” showcases the projects, accomplishments, programs, and partnerships of Diving With a Purpose (DWP), an international nonprofit organization that conserves and protects submerged heritage resources by providing education, training, certification, and field experience in maritime archaeology and ocean conservation. DWP’s work focuses on African slave trade shipwrecks and the maritime history and culture of African Americans.

**Location:** Islamorada, FL  
**Dates:** through Dec. 31

**Partners:** Diving With a Purpose, National Association of Black Scuba Divers, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Biscayne National Park

**Learn more:** [divingmuseum.org/](http://divingmuseum.org/)

### Denver Art Museum

In “Shantell Martin: Words and Lines,” the international contemporary artist creates an installation that addresses intersectionality, identity, and play. The multimedia exhibition is comprised of three primary sections, including an interactive wall with triangular boxes that rotate, an animated video projection—the first of its kind created by the artist—and a third section focused solely on Martin’s renowned black-and-white drawings.

**Location:** Denver, CO  
**Dates:** opens Sept. 27

**Learn more:** [denverartmuseum.org/exhibitions/shantell-martin](http://denverartmuseum.org/exhibitions/shantell-martin)

### The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis

Featuring more than 150 objects, including scientific inventions, sculptures, jewelry, armor, vases, and more, “Treasures of Ancient Greece” lets visitors explore the history and mythology of the ancient Greeks. One extraordinary story is that of the famed Antikythera Mechanism, which is believed to be the world’s first computer and was used to predict eclipses of the sun and moon to help plan big events like the ancient Olympics.

**Location:** Indianapolis, IN  
**Dates:** through Jan. 5

**Partners:** One America, Ice Miller LLP

**Learn more:** [childrensmuseum.org/exhibits/ancient-greece](http://childrensmuseum.org/exhibits/ancient-greece)

History of Diving Museum; Florida Keys; Shantell Martin © 2017; photo by Anton & Irene; The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis





Ed Bereal, *Untitled Self Portrait*, courtesy of the artist; courtesy of Statue of Liberty Museum; Dominique Muñoz for the International Spy Museum

## Whatcom Museum

“Wanted: Ed Bereal for Disturbing the Peace” is the first solo retrospective exhibition featuring the work of local artist Ed Bereal, a draftsman and object maker. Bereal significantly contributed to the arts of assemblage and performance in L.A. during the 1960s and 1970s with work that contains provocative imagery and thought-provoking messages, addressing identity and racial inequity, violence and war, and political and corporate power. The exhibition will include key works in various media that blend Bereal’s synthesis of abstraction and representation and the melding of art with science and new technologies.

**Location:** Bellingham, WA

**Dates:** Sept. 7, 2019–Jan. 5, 2020

**Learn more:** [whatcommuseum.org/exhibition/wanted-ed-bereal/](http://whatcommuseum.org/exhibition/wanted-ed-bereal/)

## Statue of Liberty Museum

The Statue of Liberty Museum, conceived as a garden pavilion to add to the Liberty Island visitor experience, opened May 16, 2019. The 26,000-square-foot museum features three gallery spaces, each one meant to inspire visitors and educate them about the statue in interactive and thought-provoking ways. The Immersive Theater is a 10-minute multimedia experience that surrounds visitors in the sweeping story of the statue and the ideals she represents; the Engagement Gallery explores what took place in the workshop where Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi built the statue; and the Inspiration Gallery lets visitors reflect on what they have seen and experienced.

**Location:** New York, NY

**Partners:** SBI Consultants, Diane von Furstenberg, Phelps Construction Group, ESI Design, Statue of Liberty Ellis Island Foundation, FXCollaborative

**Learn more:** [libertyellisfoundation.org/statueoflibertymuseum/](http://libertyellisfoundation.org/statueoflibertymuseum/)

## International Spy Museum

On May 12, 2019, the International Spy Museum opened in its new 140,000-square-foot purpose-built facility. The interactive exhibits and the world’s largest public display of authentic spy tools and gadgets are augmented by first-person accounts from real spies along with RFID technology that invites visitors to undertake their own spy missions. The new Spy Museum’s permanent collection features more than 7,000 unique artifacts, offering visitors the opportunity to come face-to-face with an astonishing new slate of never-before-seen intelligence tools and gadgets.

**Location:** Washington, DC

**Learn more:** [spymuseum.org](http://spymuseum.org)



### The Historic New Orleans Collection

The Historic New Orleans Collection (THNOC)—a museum, research center and publisher in the French Quarter—opened the doors to a \$38 million, 36,000-square-foot expansion of its museum facilities in April. The first major changing exhibition at the facility, “Art of the City: Postmodern to Post-Katrina,” presented by The Helis Foundation, highlights New Orleans’ thriving contemporary art scene. The museum’s goal is to change, or add to, how people think of the French Quarter and expand locals’ and visitors’ appreciation for the dynamism of the French Quarter as a historic resource.

**Location:** New Orleans, LA

**Dates:** through Oct. 6

**Learn more:** [hnoc.org/exhibitions/art-city-postmodern-post-katrina-presented-helis-foundation](http://hnoc.org/exhibitions/art-city-postmodern-post-katrina-presented-helis-foundation)

### The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art

The 1876 Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia, with its displays of fine French and Asian ceramics, helped ignite a virtual craze among American women for china painting. “Earth into Art—The Flowering of American Art Pottery” provides a window onto key developments in American art pottery, including the contributions of Mary Louise McLaughlin, Maria Longworth Nichols, and others. The Morse has drawn from its extensive collection of pottery to show the shapes, glazes, themes, techniques, and finishing methods that were second to none in the world.

**Location:** Winter Park, FL

**Dates:** through Sept. 27, 2020

**Learn more:** [morsemuseum.org/on-exhibit](http://morsemuseum.org/on-exhibit)

### Cornell Fine Arts Museum

The museum has renovated its Education Gallery and begun the Art Explorer’s Club, both inspired by the museum’s first children’s book, *Stories and Studios: Conversations and Projects*. Families that buy the book will be able to join the Art Explorer’s Club, where the youngest museum patrons can unlock special games and prizes on repeat visits to the museum. The Education Gallery offers a dress-up station, a reading nook with carefully curated bookshelves mirroring the exhibitions, and a new miniature museum.

**Location:** Winter Park, FL

**Learn more:** [rollins.edu/cornell-fine-arts-museum/education/index.html](http://rollins.edu/cornell-fine-arts-museum/education/index.html)

Courtesy of The Historic New Orleans Collection; courtesy of The Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art; Museum Education Coordinator Louise Buyo





Head of Suffrage Parade, Washington DC, 1913, LMM permanent collection; Collections Manager Melanie Antonelli; Joe Mendoza/Colorado State University

## Lockwood-Mathews Mansion Museum

In celebration of the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, “From Corsets to Suffrage: Victorian Women Trailblazers” features rare images and objects, memorabilia, and period costumes that illustrate the activities and contributions of women and men across Connecticut and the rest of the country. This exhibition also highlights women of national renown who are part of the mansion’s history, such as author and Titanic survivor Helen Churchill Candee, an active participant in the Washington, DC, suffrage parade; and Elsie Hill, who aided Alice Paul’s National Woman’s Party and the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association.

**Location:** Norwalk, CT

**Dates:** through Nov. 3

**Learn more:** [lockwoodmathewsmansion.com/exhibit/from-corsets-to-suffrage-victorian-women-trailblazers/](http://lockwoodmathewsmansion.com/exhibit/from-corsets-to-suffrage-victorian-women-trailblazers/)

## University of Mississippi Museum and Historic Houses

American book publisher Seymour “Sam” Lawrence bequeathed his collection of American art to the University of Mississippi Museum in 1994, with partial funds to construct a gallery addition. In 2011, a new space was dedicated to the permanent display of his collection. In July 2019, the collections team reinstalled the gallery, which features new interpretative text, the reorientation of the space, additional artwork, and art-conscious lighting adjustments.

**Location:** Oxford, MS

**Learn more:** [museum.olemiss.edu/collections/seymour-lawrence/](http://museum.olemiss.edu/collections/seymour-lawrence/)

## Avenir Museum of Design and Merchandising, Colorado State University

“Walking in Beauty: Designs by Orlando Dugi” presents the designer’s evolution, including his early memories with his family learning about the traditions of his Navajo ancestors, the time he spent honing his craft by returning to school for formal training, and the development of a new brand strategy and his plans for the future. The sophisticated, modern silhouettes embellished with touches of tradition are the culmination of a designer’s enduring vision.

**Location:** Fort Collins, CO

**Dates:** through Dec. 14

**Learn more:** [www.chhs.colostate.edu/avenir/exhibits-and-lectures/](http://www.chhs.colostate.edu/avenir/exhibits-and-lectures/)



# How Do We Make Change?

Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts cannot succeed without cultural competence.

By Mary-Frances Winters

**As a diversity, equity, and inclusion practitioner** for more than 35 years, I have learned that it takes more than desire to achieve a society where everyone has equal opportunity to reach their full potential.

Over the many decades that we have been attempting to realize this vision, numerous stops and starts and unproductive detours have deterred progress. In 2019, we are still addressing some of the same inequities—racial segregation and discrimination, sexual harassment, religious violence, attacks against the LGBTQ community, and underemployment for people with disabilities, to name a few—that were issues 50 years ago.

Why has advancing and sustaining organizational diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts been somewhat of a pipe dream, eluding even the best intentions? I posit that the key reason we have not been able to sustain efforts and make progress is that we underestimate the enormity of the task. With diversity, equity, and inclusion, we operate much like the book title *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. Too often I hear, “How hard can

“Museums play an important role in designing experiences to increase exposure to difference through programming.”



this be? It is not rocket science. Just treat everyone the way you want to be treated.”

However, the Golden Rule is not sufficient. We need to advance to the Platinum Rule, which advises that we treat people the way *they* want to be treated. We cannot do that without sufficient knowledge and understanding of differences. Gaining that knowledge and understanding is indeed hard work.

At The Winters Group, we believe that inclusion and equity are not possible without cultural competence, the ability to recognize patterns of cultural difference in our own and other cultures. Like any other competency, cultural

competence takes time, effort, and practice to develop.

## The 4 E's

I devised a simple model called the 4 E's that proposes what is required to become more culturally competent. The first three E's are exposure, experience, and education; those lead to the fourth E, empathy. The museum world plays an integral role in achieving each of the 4 E's, which I explain below.

### 1. Exposure

Cultural competence cannot be fully achieved in classroom training sessions. You must have



exposure to difference in your everyday life. Studies show that the US is still a very segregated nation in terms of our neighborhoods, schools, and places of worship. Other than our workplaces, we may have little exposure to people who are culturally different from ourselves.

Museums play an important role in designing experiences to increase exposure to difference through programming. For example, The Winters Group partners with the Cam Newton Foundation's Un1ted As 1 program, which exposes a diverse group of middle school students to concepts of inclusion. Cam Newton, quarterback for the NFL's Carolina Panthers team, grew up in a segregated community and was not exposed to white people until he went to college. He initially experienced extreme culture shock at some of the differences between the races. He is dedicated to ensuring that young people get earlier exposure to difference than he did.

Held at the Levine Museum of the New South in Charlotte, North Carolina, the program immerses children in things like "K(NO)W Justice K(NO)W Peace," a community-created exhibition about police-involved shootings throughout the nation and in Charlotte, and "Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers," an exhibition that uses Charlotte and its 13 surrounding counties as a case study to illustrate the profound changes in the South since the Civil War.

## 2. Experience

Exposure does not guarantee



meaningful understanding. Experience takes exposure to a deeper level. One study found that students who went abroad came home with no increased cultural competence. The students were exposed to difference but did not have experiences that challenged them to reflect on the cultural differences. When the organizers included intentional learning and reflection in the program, there was a statistically significant increase in the students' capacity to recognize and appreciate difference as measured by the Intercultural Development Inventory, a psychometric tool that assesses cultural competence.

Museums are well-equipped to develop meaningful and transformative experiences around diversity, equity, and inclusion. One of our corporate clients took its

leadership team to a local museum to experience a race exhibition. We facilitated a dialogue during and after the event that aligned with the company's inclusive leadership goals. Even though the exhibition was available to the public, many of the leaders said they probably would not have availed themselves of the experience if not for this workplace mandate. They admitted, however, that the exhibition was transformative, sparking for several of the leaders the curiosity to delve more deeply into the history and implications of race.

### 3. Education

Needless to say, experience and education go hand-in-hand. Formal education to learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion from anthropological, sociological, and psychological perspectives

is an important aspect of increasing cultural competence. Obviously, museums play an invaluable role in offering formal educational experiences that support gaining knowledge about cultural differences. As a part of the "¡NUEVO! Latinos and the New South" exhibition, the Levine Museum of the New South developed a series of dialogue sessions for community leaders with an explicit goal of enhancing cultural competence.

### 4. Empathy

If equity is the end game, we have to be able to experience the world from the perspective of those who are culturally different. Equity requires us to distinguish and attend to needs that are different. It is impossible to empathize if you have no understanding of





another's experiences. While it is impossible to replicate actual experiences, simulations and virtual reality can provide good approximations. The Museum of Modern Art's "The New Virtual Reality: Engage, Empathize, and Educate" conversations highlighted efforts by local artists and developers to use virtual reality as a tool for inspiring social change.

### What Is Your Cultural Competence?

Museum leadership and staff have to develop their own cultural competence to be able to curate culturally competent exhibits.

Assessing your level of exposure, experience, and education is key.

As an initial step in assessing staff understanding of differences, we recommend administering the Intercultural Development

Inventory. This tool helps individuals and organizations understand whether they currently experience difference from a monocultural or an intercultural mindset. A monocultural mindset means you experience difference only from your own culture's lens. An intercultural mindset suggests you have had enough experience working across cultures to recognize cultural differences in a more complex way.

The results of the Intercultural Development Inventory inform the most appropriate learning for the individual and the group. Each person who uses the tool receives a private feedback session and an individual development plan to enhance their skills. The extent to which leadership and staff are more culturally competent will dictate the effectiveness of your museum's efforts to create

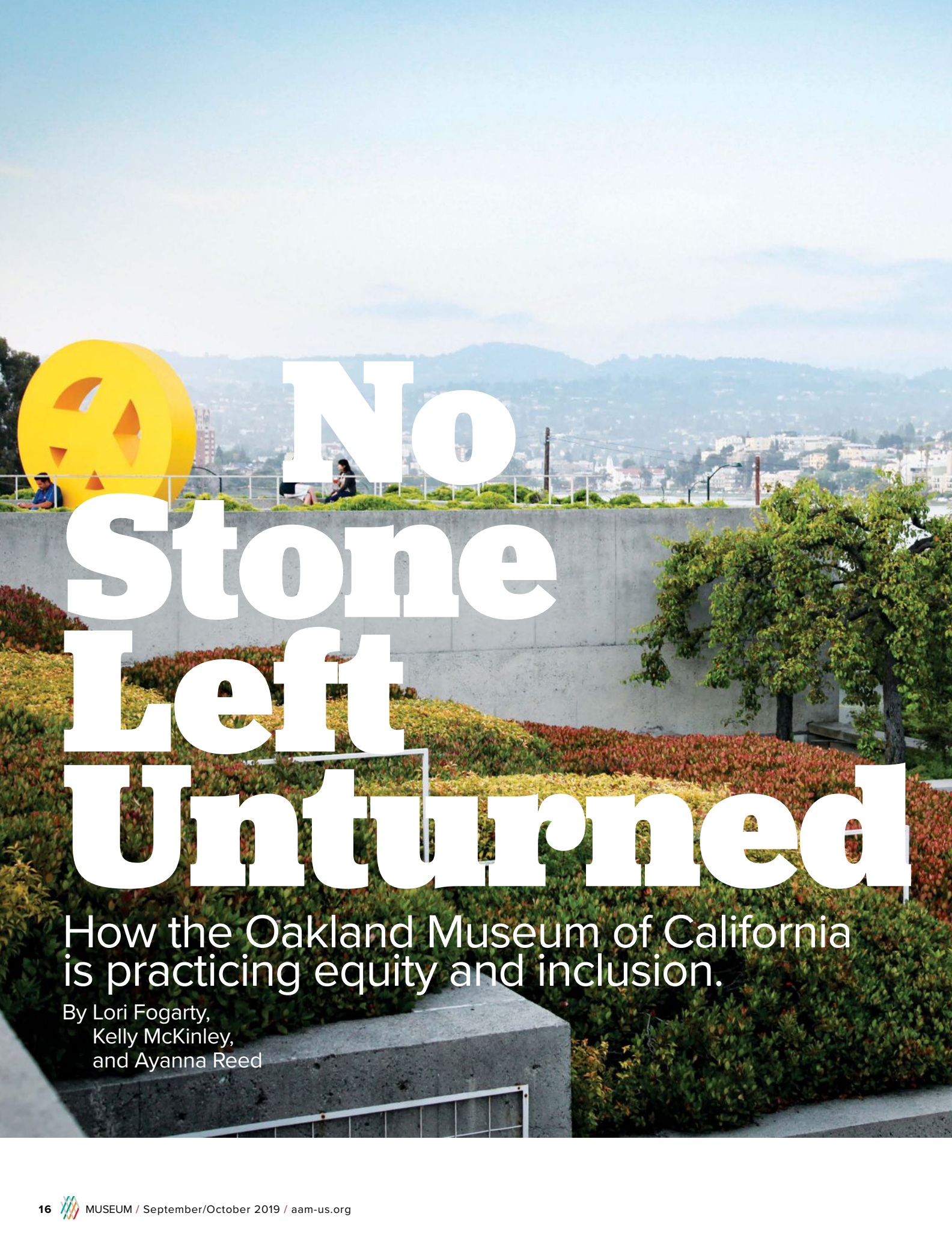
exhibitions and programs that are relevant and will move the needle on inclusion and equity.

I encourage museums to create a holistic strategy to develop culturally competent staff and boards. They will need to be intentional in collaborating with both the public and private sectors to develop and deliver learning that will augment any internal training on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Mary-Frances Winters** (she/her/hers) is president and CEO of The Winters Group, a global diversity and inclusion consulting firm.

rakus/Alamy Stock Photo





# No Stone Left Unturned

How the Oakland Museum of California is practicing equity and inclusion.

By Lori Fogarty,  
Kelly McKinley,  
and Ayanna Reed





Situated between Lake Merritt and downtown Oakland, the Oakland Museum of California's campus also serves as a vibrant urban park and public space.

Photo by Michael Cuffe, courtesy of the Oakland Museum of California

**Over the past decade,** the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) has begun to apply the principles of equity and inclusion across all aspects of its work. Building on several decades of community engagement programming, we have focused on dismantling the barriers to participation for low-income communities and communities of color in our surrounding area, and we have worked to reflect and authentically engage the full diversity of people living in our community.

In addressing those goals, we realized very quickly that we also needed an internal focus. We wanted to create an environment where staff members feel comfortable **bringing their whole selves** to their work; we needed to provide appropriate **resources and tools** for our staff; and we needed to **measure the effects** of the changes we're making so that we can make the appropriate staff investments.

In making these changes, we've learned how hard it is to create a "new normal." As new team members come on board, we've recognized the tendency to drift back to the status quo, and we've realized tools that worked at one point outlive their relevance over time.

Nonetheless, we believe that any museum can also do this work, albeit with a slightly different approach that fits its own culture and context. The important thing is to start and then keep going. And while we don't have all of this figured out, we hope this behind-the-scenes peek at some of the tools and techniques we're using at OMCA can be a jumping-off point for your own efforts in creating a more inclusive and relevant organization.

### Create New Roles and Structures

As new staff members of different demographics and experiences joined our ranks, and as we thought more deeply about the practice of collaboration and inclusion, we began to consider the tools and structures we would need for different kinds of interactions and decision-making.



Visitors engage in a thoughtful conversation at the museum during the weekly Friday Nights at OMCA program.

No department or function has been left untouched. Some of the changes include:

- **Redesigning our organizational structure** into a “flower” shape, a shift from the traditional hierarchical structure, to encourage more collaboration between functions and departments and to put the community at the center of our work. For example, our marketing and public programming functions are now both within the Center for Audience and Civic Engagement. This allows us to consider the full continuum of audience engagement, starting when visitors learn about the museum through marketing efforts and progressing to their deeper engagement through on-site programming.
- **Creating new roles** such as “experience developers” who work alongside curators to make exhibitions more interactive and accessible to all kinds of learning styles and experiences and support the work of community collaborators. In addition, we have “gallery guides” who are responsible for supporting visitors’ responses to exhibitions and customizing their visit and experience.
- **Shifting role responsibilities** so that our curators aren’t just the sole content experts, but instead act more as facilitators of many different kinds of knowledge from many different kinds of people.
- **Establishing frameworks for collaboration** within all aspects of our work. We have created a practice that allows stakeholders from across the organization to weigh in early and often on a range of institutional projects, from our seasonal exhibition and program calendar to revenue generation and beyond.

“We’ve profoundly changed the way we work,” says Rene DeGuzman, our director of exhibition strategy and senior curator of art. “Curators are no longer the default experts with everyone else bowing to the altar of our knowledge. We want to learn what issues our community believes are important, what cultural forms should be represented here, how aesthetics are different across communities. We can’t do any of that without talking to, and collaborating with, each other and the people in our community.”

### Invest in Internal Capacity Building

We’re asking everyone on staff to potentially modify their behaviors and ways of thinking, so we need to provide the tools and support system for those changes to stick. Everyone comes to work with their own set of power and privilege dynamics, so we’re learning to practice the harm-reduction model of meeting people where they are and investing in knowledge-building. Specifically, we are:

- **Offering training around equity and inclusion** for all museum staff. We are using multiple strategies, including all-staff trainings, cohort learning in partnership with community facilitators, and function-specific workshops such as customized training for frontline staff and volunteers, programmers, evaluators, and more.
- **Offering training for specific exhibitions and programs** to provide all museum staff with essential cultural competency, historical context, and vocabulary. This training allows staff to connect with visitors, and each other, around potentially sensitive topics highlighted in our galleries, such as queer history, Black power, and Native genocide. For some of these trainings, we partner with community collaborators to provide deeper and personalized knowledge. The education director for Our Family Coalition, an advocacy organization for LGBTQ+ youth and families, led staff and docent training for our “Queer California: Untold Stories” exhibition, for example, and the community programs manager for the African American Male Achievement



Program of Oakland Unified School District provided training for our “Respect: Hip-Hop Style & Wisdom” exhibition.

- **Learning from peer museums**, which is critical to learning new ways of operating. We have sent staff to do field research at museums and brought people on-site from organizations we believe are at the forefront of equity and inclusion in our industry, such as the Levine Museum of the New South and the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.
- **Establishing “OMCA You,”** our learning and professional development program for, and by, our staff members. The program allows staff to practice and share the technical and people skills required to be successful in a highly collaborative, community-engaged organization. We are committed to cultivating a workforce that expresses a sense of agency, collaboration, and empathy with colleagues and the external community in an effort to advance our mission, vision, and values.

“I’ve worked in the museum’s finance department for eight years, so I’ve seen the change in the diversity of our staff and the vocabulary we’ve learned to use in conversation,” says Joan Perry, associate director, accounting and finance. “We all leave the office and carry those experiences and knowledge back to our own communities, so the changes don’t stop at the walls of our museum.”

### Measure Progress

As a nonprofit organization, we are accountable to ourselves, our stakeholders, and our community. We have found that accountability doesn’t just happen on its own. We must be more transparent about what we’re trying to achieve, measure new things in new ways, and be more intentional about our actions and decision-making related to this work. Furthermore, it’s not enough that we hold ourselves accountable for achieving true equity and inclusion; we are providing the tools and resources to help our stakeholders and community also hold us accountable. Therefore, we are:

- **Conducting evaluations of our staff and board** to survey their demographics, attitudes,

understanding of our goals, and their roles in relationship to those goals. We’ve learned that describing the difference you want to see and then measuring whether you achieved it can be transformative. For the past five years, we have conducted an annual anonymous staff survey to track agreement with statements like, “Our organization has a strong commitment to community engagement,” and “Representatives from our organization work to actively strengthen our ties to diverse communities.” We also conduct anonymous surveys of all staff involved in creating major new exhibitions to identify ways we can improve our work, and we facilitate exit interviews with all staff who leave the museum. We use all of this data to inform our planning and investments in staff training and process improvement.

- **Creating a visitor metrics dashboard** and sharing it widely across our staff. This is one of the more unusual ways we’ve tried to

## THINGS WE KEEP IN MIND EVERY DAY

1. Authentically engaging in this work takes time, practice, and investment.
2. Set a specific goal, measure it, discuss the outcome, and take action.
3. Repeat the vision and values more often than you think is necessary.
4. Look out for implicit bias in “the way things have always been done.”
5. This work is hard and ongoing. Be kind and generous to one another.
6. Dedicate resources to internal community-building if you want to see long-term change.
7. Expect and manage the tension between the self, the community, and the institution.
8. Consider generational differences in communication, working styles, and expectations.
9. The hardest work to do will always be just around the corner.

increase transparency and hold ourselves accountable. The dashboard tracks visitor demographics, attendance, and aspects of the quality of their experience, and it shows how we are performing against our goals. When we don't meet our targets, we've had difficult but fascinating conversations across the organization about what we could do differently or how we might need to set different goals.

- **Tying performance goals** to how well individual staff members have implemented and lived these values throughout their department or role. Staff members have formal personal development plans and performance goals that help them set and achieve their intentions, plan their work, and measure the impact they have on others, at all levels of the organization.

- **Investing in research** early in our equity and inclusion work by commissioning a Neighborhood Identity Report to better understand the key issues and needs of neighborhoods surrounding the museum. Insights directly from community members have laid the foundation for so much of our community engagement work over the past five years. In fact, our neighbors have reinforced the importance of providing spaces for communities to come together and celebrate diverse cultural traditions, and they have underscored the need to lift up Oakland's multiple histories, particularly in the context of growing gentrification.

There are so many other ways that we are working to embed equity and inclusion principles throughout the museum. For example, we have

Thousands come out to the museum's weekly Friday Nights at OMCA program to dance, celebrate, and be in community with each other.



Photo by Odell Hussey Photography





changed how we recruit and retain new staff and board members, implemented more inclusive policies from human resources to collections, fundamentally shifted how we collaborate with community partners, and radically rethought our exhibition content to center on the relevant and pressing issues of our time and in our community.

“I think about very granular and prosaic changes we’ve made in the collections department to be a more equitable and inclusive organization,” says Valerie Huaco, director of collections. “For example, we look at industrial hygiene through a community engagement lens. Mitigating toxins used to preserve Native American materials is not just about worker safety, it’s about providing safe access to our Native community.”

As we’ve put these practices into place, we’ve learned two overarching things: equity and inclusion are a fundamental aspect of every person’s job, and

a commitment to equity and inclusion has to affect the entire continuum of our staff, board, volunteers, community partners, and programming.

So far, we’ve gotten good feedback from staff. “This is the first institution that I’ve applied to that asked me what my pronouns were; that made me tear up in my onboarding meeting,” shares Scotty Graham, a gallery guide.

Our campus and our walls have changed every bit as much as our people and our processes, but we’re not finished yet—there are always new stones to uncover in practicing equity and inclusion.

**Lori Fogarty** (she/her/hers) is director and CEO, **Kelly McKinley** (she/her/hers) is deputy director, and **Ayanna Reed** (she/her/hers) is director of human resources at the Oakland Museum of California.







The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan, brings the past forward by immersing visitors in the stories of ingenuity, resourcefulness, and innovation that helped shape America.



# Inspiring Success

Why and how The Henry Ford developed its leadership program.

By Tim Johnson,  
Mike Moseley,  
and Jim Van Bochove

**How do you retain** talented staff? How do you develop their skills, talents, and knowledge? How can you get the most from them when they are already delivering their best efforts? How do you inspire commitment?

These are questions that The Henry Ford, like all museums, faces every day. Museums are populated by talented staff who have a passion for particular subjects, people who trade higher paychecks for higher callings. How do you help them grow?

In examining these questions, we compiled a mountain of evidence based on our many years of participating in *Fortune* magazine's Best Places to Work nationwide survey. Combined with our own anecdotal knowledge, an answer became clear—professional development. Our staff has an intense desire for training and learning.

As is the case with most museums, we operate with limited resources. So our next question was: Where



Leaders with various levels of experience from across the organization collaborate and discuss their commonalities during Inspiring Leadership.

do we focus our resources, time, and energy? Our data showed that we are already providing world-class onboarding and hospitality and skill training to our frontline staff.

Patricia Mooradian, our president and CEO, provided the way forward by sharing her belief that the care and development of our people is foundational to her role. If that is the case, then isn't that the foundation of all leaders' roles within the organization?

This realization led us to develop Inspiring Leadership, a comprehensive professional development program for managers, directors, and executive leaders. We identified 167 organizational leaders as the initial participants.

### The Concept

When undertaking a new initiative of this magnitude, it is always wise to draw on your core strengths. Our first core strength is our mission of inspiring staff and visitors to learn in order to shape a better future. Everything we do must reflect and connect to this mission. This focus served us well as we developed our Inspiring Service onboarding program and our

Inspiring Excellence frontline staff training program.

In developing Inspiring Leadership, we decided that we would not simply teach leaders a few management tools that they may never use. Instead, we would use data, research, and our own rich archive of stories of leadership, innovation, ingenuity, and resourcefulness to inspire our leaders to embrace the importance of care and development of people. Our aim is to both refine managerial skills and enhance leaders' abilities to inspire their teams. This first year we are using instructor-led classroom sessions that engage participants through a variety of interactive learning designs. All but one of the sessions are being delivered by internal instructors.

Our second core strength is the talent and experience of all the staff at The Henry Ford. Having spent decades studying innovation and leadership in designing experiences for our guests, we knew we had the ability to do the same for ourselves.

With these core strengths as our parameters, we developed the program's four primary goals:

- Build a leadership culture where the support of people's development and growth is woven into the daily fabric of working life. Successful leaders will reflect this approach in their regular operations, daily routines, and conversations with their team members.
- Create a forum for our leaders to reflect, learn, and support one another in best leadership practices. While The Henry Ford is a multifaceted operation featuring multiple venues and functions, successful leaders can learn and support one another regardless of their individual areas of responsibility.
- Build a shared language of leadership. It is hard for successful leaders to communicate if they do not speak the same language.
- Become more effective as ambassadors of The Henry Ford and as agents of change. Successful leaders have their people's confidence and trust, especially in times of uncertainty or change.

### The Process

No two workplace cultures are the same. What works for one often fails spectacularly for others.



Rather than attempting to pound some round peg of an off-the-shelf model into the square hole of The Henry Ford, we created a leadership model that reflects the mission, goals, and unique atmosphere of our workplace.

Designed by our directors of organizational culture and leadership development and training, The Henry Ford Leadership Model focuses on inspiring leadership, which translates to leading with vision, knowledge, service, and character. In doing so, leaders support our organizational philosophy that leaders “lead people, manage resources.” Based both on historical lessons of successful leadership and the newest research in the field, this model reflects the leadership culture we wish to establish.

The ability to apply organizational philosophies and practices to ever-changing situations is vital to successful leadership. In their work with educators and schools, our Learning and Engagement Team and partners in the Henry Ford Learning Institute developed Model i, The Henry Ford’s Innovation Learning Platform. Created for students and

teachers to foster a spirit of innovation, Model i uses habits and actions of the innovator, drawn from research on past innovators, as a basis for innovative thinking. (See “Model i—Innovation Powered by Perspective” sidebar on p. 26 for more information on this learning platform.) We want to develop leaders who embrace innovation and apply it to meet real-world challenges and opportunities, so Model i was perfect for our program.

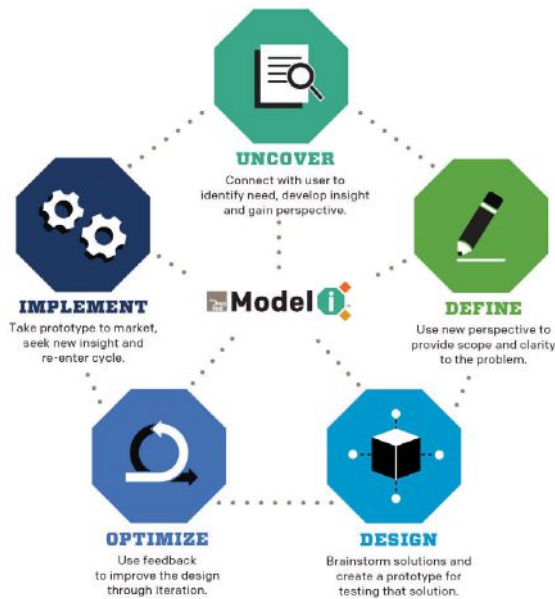
With our learning models in place, the next step was to identify who would participate in the program. Too often, leadership programs involve only one level of leaders, leading some to ask, “Why don’t we get to do that? Aren’t we leaders, too?” These questions cause division within the very group of people you want to support.

To accomplish our goal of creating a leadership culture, we decided that all managers—including our most senior leaders and our president—would go through the program. With a shared forum, senior managers would become aware of staff issues and challenges, fostering an atmosphere of trust and support across all levels.



During Inspiring Service, staff are encouraged to sit with colleagues from outside their department to learn and gain insight from each other.

## ACTIONS OF INNOVATION™



## HABITS OF AN INNOVATOR™



## MODEL i—INNOVATION POWERED BY PERSPECTIVE

To unleash everyone's potential to innovate, The Henry Ford has developed Model i, a unique learning framework based on artifacts and stories in The Henry Ford Archive of American Innovation. This remarkable collection provides unprecedented insight into the way people innovate across 300 years of American history.

For more than 90 years, our curators and historians have studied the archive's content, curating stories of American ingenuity, resourcefulness, and innovation that continue to evolve with today's breakthroughs. It is this experience, combined with our decade-long focus on innovation education, that provides the expertise behind Model i. The framework has two frames: Actions of Innovation and Habits of an Innovator. Together, they serve as a language to describe Innovation Journeys within our collection—and activate learners through their own innovation journeys.

### Actions of Innovation

Innovation is messy and there's no one formula, but when we set out to pursue a new idea or solve a new problem, we can learn and act in ways that increase our chances of success. For would-be innovators, this **set of guideposts** helps point the way forward.

- **Uncover**—Connect with users to identify need, develop insight, and gain perspective.
- **Define**—Use new perspective to provide scope and clarity to the problem.
- **Design**—Brainstorm solutions and create a prototype for testing that solution.
- **Optimize**—Use feedback to improve the design through iteration.
- **Implement**—Take the prototype to market, seek new insights, and re-enter the cycle.

### Habits of an Innovator

Developing our mindset—the way we see, think, and interact with something—is especially useful for staying motivated and inspired to explore new ideas and overcome challenges.

- **Challenge the rules**—Turn "can't" into "can do." Dare to be different.
- **Take risks**—Think BIG. Embrace uncertainty.
- **Be empathetic**—Walk in other people's shoes to understand their needs.
- **Collaborate**—Share what we know. Respect what others bring.
- **Stay curious**—Learn something new. Ask questions.
- **Learn from failure**—Be resilient. Use feedback to make improvements.





Staff at The Henry Ford go over the journey map during an Inspiring Service session.



We created five daylong (eight-hour) Inspiring Leadership sessions that occur throughout the year. All invitees, including our executive-level participants, are asked to clear their schedules on those days. In this first year, all leaders participate in every module. The program will continue to be refined in future years with new learning opportunities for participants. We also plan to develop a version of these first five modules for new leaders who are either hired as such or promoted from within the organization.

The final step in the design process was identifying the leadership topics to address in the sessions. Based on the results of a leadership needs assessment we conducted last year, we decided to focus on an introduction to leadership theory and best practices, coaching for excellence, communication and team building, as well as some basic planning and goal-setting skills.

Participants are grouped into one of six cross-functional and cross-level groups, each with about 30 leaders. We call these groups “cohorts,” and people stay with their cohort throughout the program in order to establish connections with people in different areas and to enhance camaraderie.

### The Results So Far

Because our participants come into the training with different levels of knowledge of leadership theory,

modules 1 and 2 focus on data-driven research about leadership. This creates a more level theoretical base that will help everyone see the relevance of this training to their work. Modules 3, 4, and 5 move toward application of theory and how we can all reach our potential as leaders. We will learn and practice in-the-moment coaching techniques, work through real scenarios for cross-functional collaboration, and practice critical and candid communication methods.

So far we have already seen increased connections among participants, in both number and depth. Participants are sharing their insights inspired by their increased knowledge of theory, with comments such as, “So authority is not leadership, but wise and judicious use of authority is a vital building block for good leadership” and “Knowing where your people are coming from is a sort of energy, and we as leaders can direct that energy in a proper and positive direction.”

The attitude of “I don’t get this” has been replaced by “I want to get this!” This change, perhaps more than anything else so far, shows that we are moving along the right path.



**Tim Johnson** is a program leader, **Mike Moseley** is the director of leadership development and training, and **Jim Van Bochove** is the director of organizational culture at The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan.

# Searching for Truffles

History Nebraska is using curiosity to grow staff capacity and enrich the museum experience.

By Jill Dolberg



Josh Beeman, History Nebraska's digital media specialist, shared the black-and-white image here in a social media post. Such posts highlight interesting stories or artifacts that create information gaps for viewers and encourage clicks to additional information.





## History Nebraska's museum

recently reopened following extensive infrastructure renovations. Prior to the renovations, attendance had been in decline, and the 18-month closure did not put us top of mind in the community.

The museum was essentially a big blank box. Our small staff was doing what it could, but our public programs needed a jolt of energy. Given that museums are nurturers of curiosity, we felt we first had to feed ourselves before effectively serving the public's thirst for curiosity.

So History Nebraska applied for and received a \$25,000 grant from the IMLS Museums Empowered initiative to develop staff capacity for audience-centered engagement focused on the concept of museums as nurturers of curiosity. Working with museum consultants Rainey Tisdale and Susie Wilkening, 25 History Nebraska staff members and volunteers explored the significance of curiosity in engaging new visitors.

Although the grant focused primarily on our staff at the Nebraska History Museum, we discovered that harnessing curiosity in all teams in our state agency, which include collections, archeology, historic sites, and historic preservation, transformed staff members' thought processes and allowed us to serve the public in creative and inspired ways. Understanding the way curiosity works and discovering how it applies to our own lives gave us new perspectives on our audiences and ultimately our work culture.

This investment in our staff has allowed us to define a common language, leverage curiosity internally and more broadly, build camaraderie to bridge silos, and embrace risk-taking. Best of all, we have no doubt that the Curiosity Project can be replicated in other museums.

### Why Curiosity Matters

Wilkening's and other research (see Resources on p. 30) indicates that curiosity is an important driver for

societal goals, such as education, physical and social well-being, creativity, and civic engagement. Curious people are more likely to visit libraries and cultural institutions, read the news, support philanthropies, have greater compassion and empathy, and engage in a variety of lifelong-learning opportunities.

Curiosity is an innate trait that can diminish as we age. By adulthood, only 5 percent of people are still intrinsic learners who seek knowledge or new experiences for the love of it. Others are more extrinsically motivated, needing to know that their efforts will be rewarded.

During an introductory two-day workshop conducted by Tisdale and Wilkening, we learned the science of curiosity, its influence on the brain, and how it inspires intrinsically and extrinsically motivated learners. Additionally, we explored what makes us curious, how curiosity makes us feel, and what happens when it is stifled.

Through our workshop, we learned that people do not generally digest an entire exhibition as we script it; instead, they pick and choose what they want to explore. However, we can elicit curiosity by crafting "information gaps" in an exhibition that guide visitors to further exploration and deeper understanding, an act we equated to searching for "curiosity truffles." When visitors find the information, somewhere in the sweet spot between stumbling over the answer too easily and having to dig too hard, this moment of success provides a hit of dopamine, the brain chemical involved in generating pleasure and satisfaction as part of our internal reward system.

In other words, feeding curiosity feels good and is addictive! Tisdale recommended layering content within an exhibition so there are "truffles" that appeal to various age groups and interests. And she advised us to create a safe space in which any question could be asked.

After the workshop, we were motivated to foster a new organization-wide culture of curiosity. Since only



The main hallway that leads to the galleries used to be essentially a white box. Now the space provides truffles and bread crumbs to follow to exhibits of interest and color, shapes, and historic photographs to spur visitor curiosity.

one-quarter of the staff had attended the initial workshop, we shared what we had learned with everyone at the next monthly staff meeting.

Subsequent staff meetings have featured Curiosity Moments where we exchange interesting information from old newspapers or photographs from collections. These brief presentations gained momentum when we invited the second cohort of workshop attendees to share what they found curious. The buyer for the museum store showed toys that young visitors find most curious. An archivist highlighted a satirical newspaper edition that upon further research yielded a late-19th-century tale of prejudice and vandalism in a now-defunct township. Our photographs curator has created a monthly caption contest for strange and befuddling photographs in the collection.

We have also implemented a new project proposal process to evaluate potential exhibits and activities that asks the writer to consider how the project will engineer curiosity. And History Nebraska has been

more encouraging of staff attending conferences and seeking staff development opportunities to satisfy their own curiosity. A statement that starts with, “Well, I was curious, so I...” is met with understanding nods throughout the organization.

## Valuing Curiosity

If we are looking at our museum, indeed our entire organization, as a curiosity laboratory, then an important part of the experiment is evaluation. With Wilkening’s help, we have developed exit surveys for visitors to integrate those lessons into new projects.

Wilkening has also created annual staff surveys to evaluate how the Curiosity Project is affecting us as a group. Among the findings, staff members who have been with us for six to 11 years showed a substantial growth in their curiosity and engagement. New staff hired during the project showed the highest average curiosity scores, indicating that our emphasis on hiring for curiosity has been successful.

However, some staff members were not particularly influenced by this new undertaking. Staff who had been with the organization for more than 11 years did not, generally speaking, experience growth in their curiosity levels.

Nonetheless, many staff members know that their research projects inspired by curiosity are not a waste of time. They may lead to a blog or a social media post, a new idea, or perhaps eventually an article in our magazine or an independent exhibit. And as a staff, we now know that risk-taking and experimentation are valued and encouraged, even when the outcome is not immediately apparent.

But what about staff whose jobs do not necessarily lend themselves to creativity or curiosity? Accountants, staff assistants, and human resource professionals tend to have very prescribed roles within any organization. Were they to be left out of our Curiosity Project?

Tisdale spent time with them this spring to strategize how to integrate curiosity into their work. After group members shared their strengths, each participant wrote down their typical tasks and identified which they liked and disliked. They were then asked to identify ways to engage curiosity or creativity to make unsavory tasks more palatable.

## RESOURCES

Matthias Gruber, “This Is Your Brain on Curiosity” (video) [youtube.com/watch?v=SmaTPPB-T\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmaTPPB-T_s)

Todd B. Kashdan, et al., “Curiosity Has Comprehensive Benefits in the Workplace: Developing and Validating the Multidimensional Work Related Curiosity Scale in United States and German Employees,” *PsyArXiv Preprints* [psyarxiv.com/tx7b5/](https://psyarxiv.com/tx7b5/)

George Loewenstein, “The Psychology of Curiosity: A Review and Reinterpretation,” *Psychological Bulletin*, 1994 [bit.ly/2XL5ZLI](https://bit.ly/2XL5ZLI)

Jay Rounds, “Strategies for the Curiosity-Driven Museum Visitor,” *Curator*, 2004 [bit.ly/2Xck8ES](https://bit.ly/2Xck8ES)

Susie Wilkening, 2017–2019 Annual Surveys of Museum-Goers and Broader Population Sampling [wilkeningconsulting.com/datamuseum](https://wilkeningconsulting.com/datamuseum)



## What We've Accomplished

So how has the Curiosity Project changed our museum? Our fourth-grade school tours, now called "Curiosity Labs," were transformed from a didactic lecture model to an inquiry model. Docents were taught to spark curiosity in children by guiding them to investigate primary resources (or replicas of primary resources) through touchable objects.

For example, docents pass around replicas of travel trunks with false bottoms like those we have in the collection. The false bottom hides paper money, handmade collars or hankies, prayer books, and other personal items. The children are then asked three simple questions: What do you see? What does that make you think? What does that make you wonder? Through this probing, docents identify specific interests and ask additional questions that allow children to fill their own information gaps. This has been so effective that the docents who lead these tours are now called "curiosity guides."

Our first big change in exhibition design was led by our museum curator, Laura Mooney. She had planned a short-term quilt exhibition based on those of the past—a dozen or more quilts carefully mounted so they could be seen in their entirety, with labels thoroughly describing them. Using what she learned about curiosity, Mooney reconfigured the exhibition to illustrate how colors combine to create other colors and how cost and technology limited quilters' fabric choices

or construction method. On the walls, we posted questions and motifs to explore to pique curiosity.

On average, surveyed visitors stayed 20 to 30 minutes longer in this exhibition than they had in past ones, and they were effusive about how intriguing they found it. As Mooney sagely noted, "When you give yourself permission to be curious, it affects your journey."

In the 18 months since we began our curiosity journey, we have seen staff become more engaged, motivated, and creative. We have learned that curiosity affects our ability to build relationships with each other and our patrons, increase our professional expertise, solve problems and correct mistakes, and create engaging projects and exhibitions. Attendance at our special events and exhibition openings has vastly improved, due in no small part to the multilayered activities and programs that make them more intriguing and compelling.

We hope to continue our journey by securing additional grant funds to extend our Curiosity Project to other cultural organizations in Nebraska so they, too, can learn how to champion curiosity in their work.

**Jill Dolberg** is the deputy state historic preservation officer at History Nebraska in Lincoln.



Every student who visits the museum on a school tour receives this sticker, an extrinsic reward, and the Education Team uses them as prizes at public events.

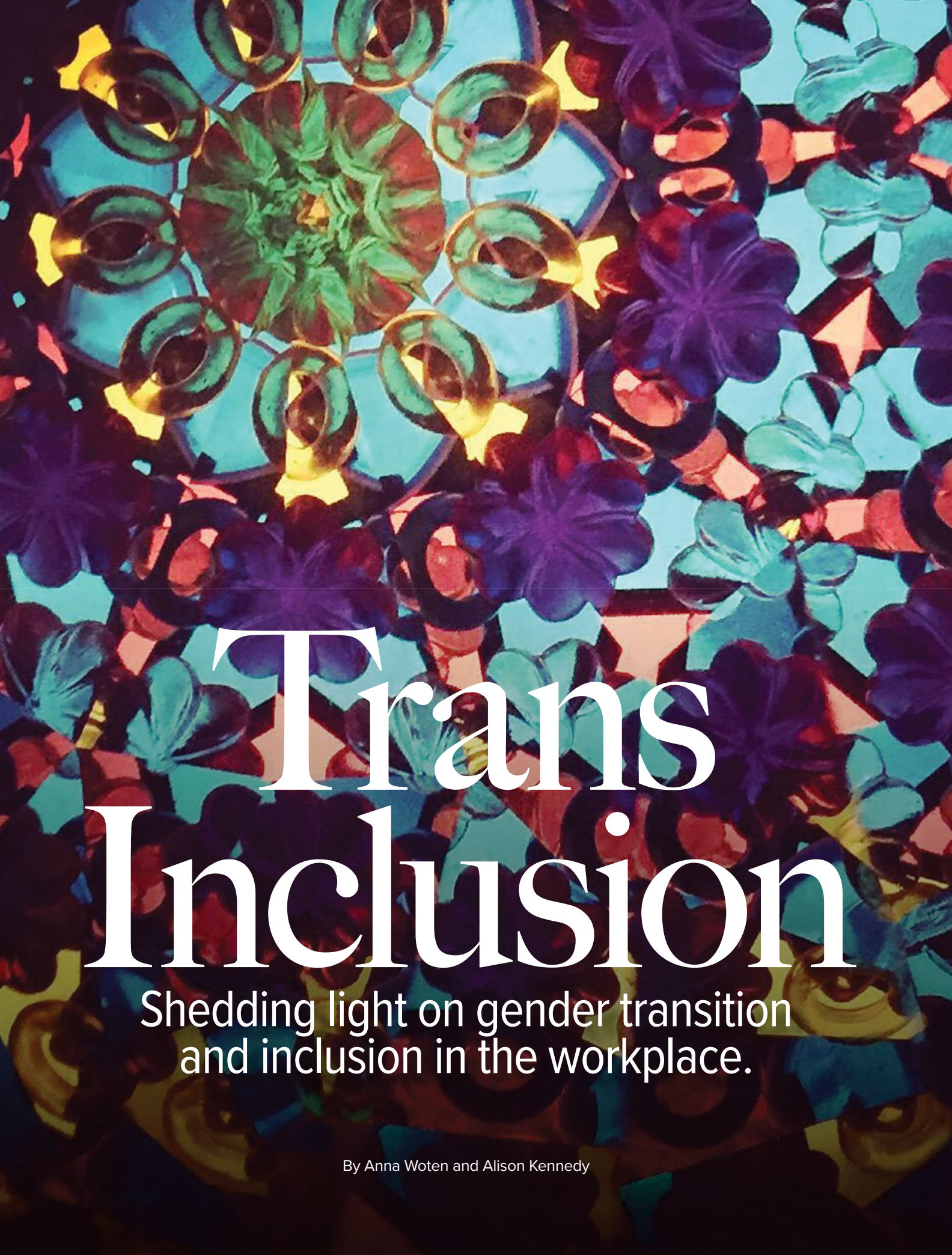
## CURIOSITY CONSIDERATIONS

When looking to engage curiosity in staff or visitors, here are some things to keep in mind.

**Consider hiring for curiosity.** A simple question like "In our organization we value curiosity; what you are curious about?" will yield fascinating answers. In our experience, candidates either have nothing to say, or the list of what they find curious will overwhelm you.

**Curiosity is not necessarily a great marketing hook.** Susie Wilkening's research shows that curiosity isn't a great motivator for visitation, but it is a value many visitors aspire to. Thus, telling them, "This will feed your curiosity" won't get them in the door. But affirming their curiosity, and putting them into a curiosity mindset, can deepen the visit (and encourage a return visit and/or positive word of mouth).

**Not all truffles are created equal.** One person's fascinating fact will do nothing for someone else. Present visitors with a variety of truffles that cater to different age groups. Plant the truffles early in an exhibition so that visitors don't get frustrated or bored.



# Trans Inclusion

Shedding light on gender transition  
and inclusion in the workplace.

By Anna Woten and Alison Kennedy





**Transgender people** are a lot more common than you might imagine: recent studies suggest that 1–2 percent of the US population is transgender. This may not seem like a significant number, but keep in mind that natural redheads make up about 1 percent of the US population. How many natural redheads do you know?

Yet, according to a 2015 GLAAD survey, only 16 percent of Americans report knowing a transgender person. In reality, many people who do not think that they have met a transgender person actually have and just did not realize it. This is because a lot of transgender people live what is often referred to as “stealth,” keeping this part of their identities a secret to protect themselves physically, emotionally, and financially.

Why are many transgender people stealth? In 2015, the National Center for Transgender Equality conducted the largest ever survey of the transgender community and found that 77 percent of respondents who had a job in the past year “took steps to avoid mistreatment in the workplace, such as hiding or delaying their gender transition or quitting their job.” The survey also found that 30 percent of respondents “who had a job in the past year reported being fired, denied a promotion, or experiencing some other form

of mistreatment related to their gender identity or expression.”

At the American Alliance of Museums’ Annual Meeting in 2018, the LGBTQ Alliance created the Task Force for Transgender Inclusion to address the lack of resources in the museum field for welcoming transgender staff, volunteers, and visitors. In this article, we describe a helpful resource for transgender inclusion that the Task Force created, and we provide some simple ways to become more inclusive at your own institution.

### **A Toolkit for All**

The Task Force for Transgender Inclusion has created a first-of-its-kind professional resource—*Gender Transition and Transgender Inclusion in the Museum Workplace: A Toolkit for Trans Individuals, Institutions, and Coworkers*. The *Toolkit* is a collection of guides created by three teams of transgender and allied museum professionals working across the United States.

Our goal was to create both a resource that provides a clear, step-by-step plan on how to facilitate gender transitions within the workplace and an approachable pathway for museum professionals to become more knowledgeable about, and better allies



“We wrote the *Toolkit* in an approachable way to engage everyone regardless of prior knowledge about the transgender community. We hope that with a better understanding about the transgender community, the demonization and discrimination in the museum field can start to fade.”

to, the transgender community. To reach this goal, we split the *Toolkit* into three separate guides, each focusing on a particular audience.

- ◆ A *Transitioning Professional’s Guide* provides strategies and resources for the museum professional who is preparing to begin a gender transition in the workplace. The guide includes examples of step-by-step plans, sample emails and conversations, and other resources.
- ◆ An *Institution’s Guide* provides resources and sample policies for human resources staff and management. This guide includes examples of step-by-step plans, sample emails for notifying staff, charts of vocabulary and terms, and a guide to policies that help make institutions a safer and more welcoming place for transgender museum professionals, volunteers, and visitors.
- ◆ A *Coworker’s Guide* provides resources for any and all museum professionals who wish to educate themselves about the trans community, including ways to be a better ally. The guide also tackles frequently asked questions, provides charts of vocabulary and terms, and examines ways that cisgender museum professionals can help advocate and stand up for the transgender community.

We wrote the *Toolkit* in an approachable way to engage everyone regardless of prior knowledge about the transgender community. We hope that with a better understanding about the transgender community, the demonization and discrimination in the museum field can start to fade.

### How to Be an Ally

Becoming an ally of the transgender community, or improving your allyship, might seem daunting, especially if you feel like your knowledge of transgender issues isn’t up to par. Fear not! There are some easy ways you can educate yourself and make your institution a more welcoming space for everybody. The *Toolkit* is a great way to get started, and following are a few things you can start doing today.

Everyone, whether transgender or cisgender, has pronouns, and it is very important to use the correct ones (the ones they tell you they use). When you don’t, you are telling that person that you do not respect them enough to see them as who they actually are. This disrespect can cause tensions within your work environment and could place transgender people at risk of violence and harassment.

The pronoun argument we hear the most concerns the singular “they.” Usually, people argue that this usage is not grammatically correct, as if that is a reason to invalidate people. But singular they has been used for hundreds of years in English, found in famous classics by Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and more. In fact, you probably already use singular they in your daily life. If a coworker told you that they went to the doctor yesterday, you might respond, “Well, what did *they* say?” This is an example of singular they. If somebody tells you that their pronouns are they/them, you would use them in the same way you normally use singular they.

What if you don’t know somebody’s pronouns? You can offer your pronouns when you introduce



# BASIC VOCABULARY

Note: Words marked as adjectives (adj.) should not be used as nouns (e.g., “a transgender person” not “a transgender”).

## Cisgender (adj.) (abbreviation: cis)

Someone whose gender is the same as the gender assigned to them at birth. The term was created to challenge the assumption that cisgender people (as opposed to transgender people) are always the standard in discussions about gender or sex. It is not a derogatory term or a slur.

## Gender

Umbrella term often used as shorthand to refer to gender identity, gender roles, and/or gender expression. When used for gender roles or expressions, it includes the range of socially constructed characteristics assigned to and differentiating between the masculine and feminine. These constructs differ from society to society and can change over time. Traditionally thought of as a binary with male and female as opposing forces, gender is more accurately described as a spectrum.

## Gender Expression

External appearance of one’s gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut, or voice. It may or may not conform to what is socially defined as typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

## Gender Identity

An inner, innate sense of self as male, female, somewhere in between, or outside the gender spectrum. Everybody has a gender identity, not just transgender people. Since gender identity is internal, one’s gender identity is not necessarily visible to others. Sometimes, this inner sense of gender can be different than the gender assigned to a person at birth.

## Gender Roles

Expected behaviors, thoughts, and emotions of a specific gender based on the views of a particular society or culture.

## Non-binary Gender

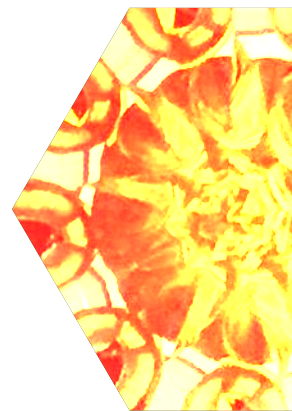
Refers to people whose gender does not conform to the traditional, Western gender binary model. They may be both male and female, neither male nor female, or completely outside or somewhere between the gender binary. Examples of labels people may use to describe their non-binary gender include androgyne, polygender, genderqueer, demigirl, or demiboy. These are only a few of the labels under the non-binary umbrella, and some people may not use any label.

## Transgender (adj.) (abbreviation: trans)

Someone who is a gender that is not the same as the gender assigned to them at birth. Being transgender is separate from a person’s sexual orientation and gender expression, and these terms should not be conflated to include being transgender.

## Transitioning

The social, medical, and/or legal process of aligning one’s life and physical characteristics to match their gender identity.



yourself: “Hi, my name is Mary, and my pronouns are she/her/hers.” If that doesn’t work, or you’ve already been introduced, you can ask them discreetly. Just be sure to offer your pronouns when asking for someone else’s, as it creates a safer environment for everyone involved. You can also include your pronouns in your email signature, verbally in situations such as meetings, and visually through pronoun pins, ribbons, and buttons.

Another easy way to become a better ally is to use gender-inclusive language, which makes everyone feel respected, safe, and accepted. While you may not understand, or even *know*, someone else’s gender, it is imperative to use language that is respectful to them. For example, saying, “Are your mom and dad here?” to a child in your institution is not inclusive of all families, including families with non-binary parents. Consider asking, “Is there an adult here with you?” or “Can you tell me where your grown-up is?” These words have the same meaning without being exclusive of non-binary people and LGBTQIA+ parents. For more suggestions on family-inclusive language, we recommend Margaret Middleton’s excellent Family Inclusive Language Chart (see Resources below).

Gender-inclusive language becomes particularly noticeable when addressing groups of people. Gendered language, such as “Hey, boys and girls” when addressing a group of children or “Hey, ladies!” when emailing a group of coworkers, can be very harmful to non-binary individuals. Try using “friends,” “colleagues,” or “distinguished guests” when addressing a group of people. “Y’all,” “folks,” or “everyone” are also great gender-inclusive terms

for groups. You can also be creative here. If you are running a space camp for children, perhaps refer to your campers as “astronauts.” Giving a tour of your local history museum? “Hello, history enthusiasts!” welcomes people of all genders. Remember to do this in your written communications as well.

Being an ally means standing up for transgender people in your life, whether they are coworkers or the people whose stories you are telling. Educate yourself on transgender topics and be prepared to speak up about them in the workplace. Start by reading the *Toolkit*, and encourage your coworkers to read it.

If you have an out transgender colleague, ask how you can best support them. Some transgender people appreciate when others jump in to correct misgendering or other inappropriate behavior, while others do not because it may have unintentional but serious consequences for their safety. Check in with them prior to correcting any language or behavior situations.

Additionally, advocate for the inclusion of the transgender community in your museum’s collections, exhibitions, and community involvement. Explicitly reach out to the transgender community when building opportunities to tell their stories. Transgender people should feel included not only in the final product of an exhibition, but also in the collaborative process.

As the transgender community continues to find itself under attack, it is imperative that cultural institutions lead the way toward representation and inclusion. If you need any help or have questions, feel free to reach out to the AAM LGBTQ Alliance at [lgbtq@aam-us.org](mailto:lgbtq@aam-us.org).



## RESOURCES

*Gender Transition and Transgender Inclusion in the Museum Workplace: A Toolkit for Trans Individuals, Institutions, and Coworkers*  
[aam-us.org/professional-networks/lgbtq-alliance/](http://aam-us.org/professional-networks/lgbtq-alliance/)

2015 US Transgender Survey  
[ustranssurvey.org/reports](http://ustranssurvey.org/reports)

Margaret Middleton Family Inclusive Language Chart  
[margaretmiddleton.com/family-inclusion](http://margaretmiddleton.com/family-inclusion)

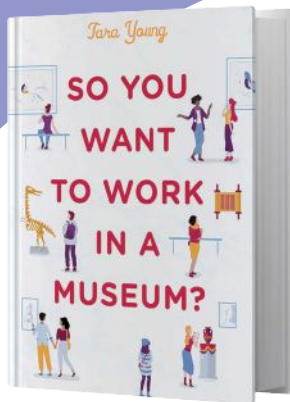
**Anna Woten** (she/her) is the assistant collections manager at the Atlanta History Center in Georgia, and **Alison Kennedy** (they/them) is a visitor experience lead at Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Columbus, Ohio. Woten is the current chairperson of the LGBTQ Alliance, and Kennedy is a co-chair of the LGBTQ Alliance’s Taskforce for Transgender Inclusion.





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## NEW RESOURCES FOR BEGINNING AND EXPERIENCED MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS



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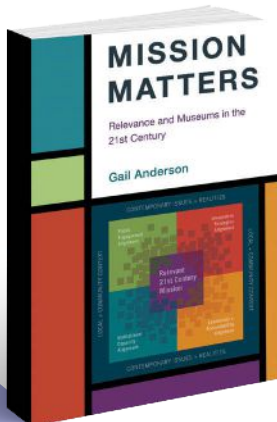
By Tara Young

"With decades of museum work under her belt, Young is uniquely qualified to answer the titular question. Indeed, this is a thorough, thoughtful book that will be of interest to a variety of job seekers, from teens just starting to consider a path to subject specialists looking for a career change to committed potential museum workers who aren't sure if a professional degree is necessary. . . . A realistic, practical guide."

—BOOKLIST

**Tara Young** is an experienced museum professional and a professor of museum studies at Tufts University. Currently an independent consultant, she has held positions at several museums on both coasts.

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### MISSION MATTERS

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# Professional Development Through AAM Peer Review

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or have recently retired.

AAM's Peer Reviewers review museum self-assessment materials, conduct site visits, and write reports based on their findings. With each site visit, Peer Reviewers interact with fellow professionals and learn how another museum

addresses its challenges and community.

**Would you like to . . .**

- Give back to the museum field?
- Get no-cost professional development?
- Learn from other museums?
- Travel and expand your network?



“The Museum Assessment Program Peer Review process is one of the best professional development opportunities that I have ever experienced. My first exposure to the MAP process was as a recipient of a MAP review. The reviewer was incredibly supportive and insightful. I was so inspired by the experience that I decided to pay it forward. Nine years later, I have reviewed a host of museums and have always gained professional insight that was useful for my museum. As a seasoned professional, it is incredibly important to me to share best practices and elevate our field.”

Michael Shanklin, CEO of Kidspace Children's Museum and MAP Peer Reviewer



**Are you someone who is . . .**

- Strongly committed to nurturing institutional excellence?
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- A leader with five years of professional experience in decision-making roles?
- Actively engaged in the field beyond your own museum?

The service of our Peer Reviewers is critical to the success of both programs. Learn more or apply to join AAM's Peer Review team at [aam-us](http://aam-us.org/programs/peer-review/apply-to-be-a-peer-reviewer/).

[org/programs/peer-review/apply-to-be-a-peer-reviewer/](http://aam-us.org/programs/peer-review/apply-to-be-a-peer-reviewer/).

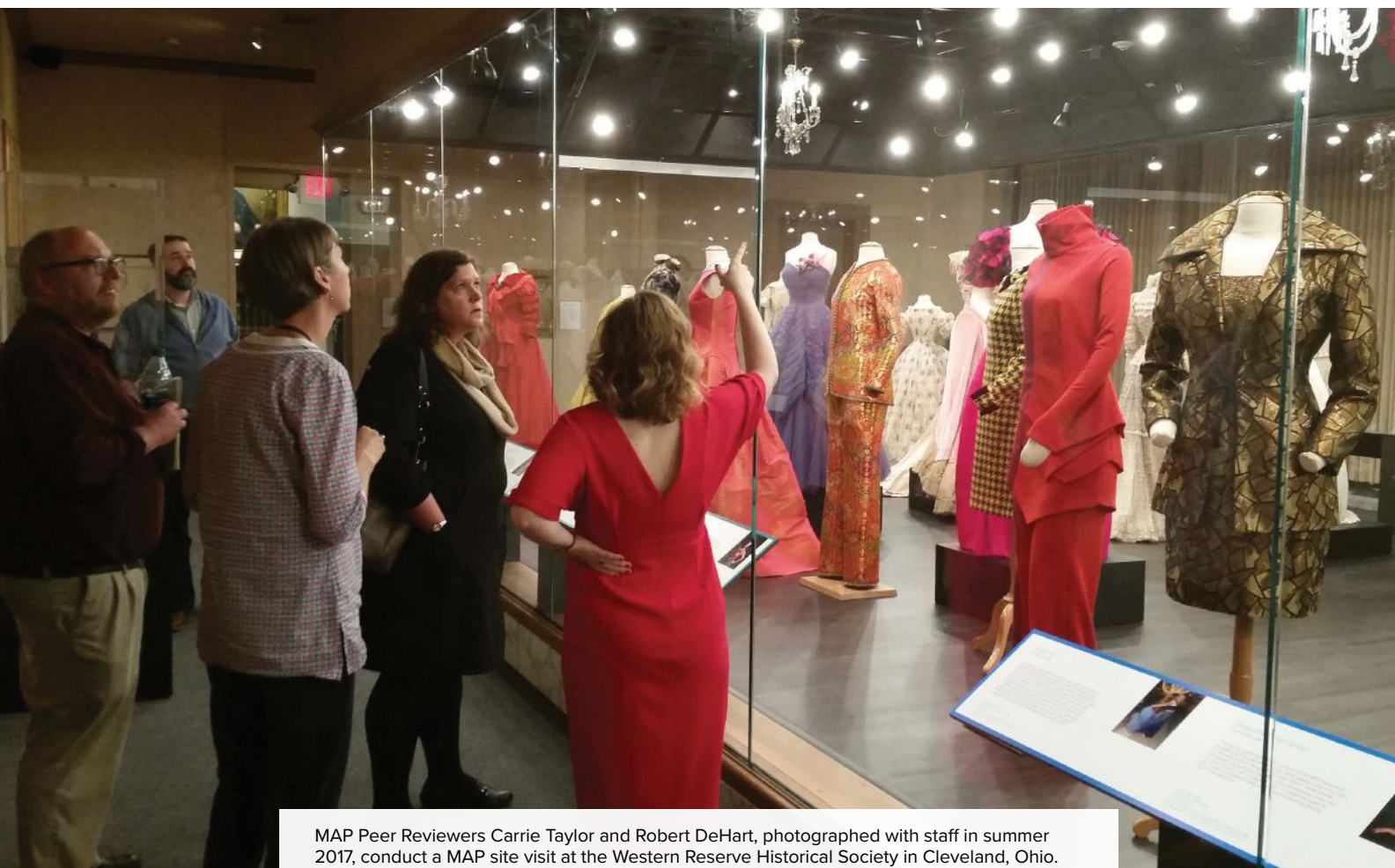
**Facing Change Update**

*Facing Change: Museum Board Diversity and Inclusion* is a three-year initiative that will provide the framework, training, and resources for museum boards to build diverse and inclusive cultures within their organizations that better reflect and serve their communities.

Already in 2019, AAM has charged forward and is making significant progress across all

pillars of the initiative: developing fieldwide standards and programs to advance excellence in diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI); directing inclusive leadership development for more than 50 museums; creating an online resource center for inclusive museum governance; and providing museums with a website portal of potential board members.

A task force has been assembled and charged with developing recommendations to embed DEAI more deeply into the Alliance's standards and excellence programs,



MAP Peer Reviewers Carrie Taylor and Robert DeHart, photographed with staff in summer 2017, conduct a MAP site visit at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio.

including accreditation. This group of experts in the field is co-chaired by Lonnie Bunch, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, and Elizabeth Pierce, president and CEO of the Cincinnati Museum Center.

A cohort of 10 DEAI fellows has been selected from 180 exceptional applicants. They will work with AAM through 2021 to implement the inclusive leadership activities of *Facing Change*. The fellows represent a broad array of expertise in leadership and management, nonprofit governance, museum practice, cultural competence, and DEAI strategies.

Fifty-one museums have been selected to participate in the five “Museum Communities of Learning” in Chicago, Illinois; Houston, Texas; Jackson, Mississippi; Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota; and the Oakland–San Francisco Bay Area, California. Diversity fellows will coach the museums using the diversity and inclusion curriculum developed by deepSEE Consulting. By the end of the grant term, each museum will develop and implement an inclusion plan and hire at least two new diverse board members.

For more information, visit [aam-us.org/programs/facing-change1/](http://aam-us.org/programs/facing-change1/). To sign up for email updates, submit your information to [mailchi.mp/aam-us.org/deai-news](mailto:mailchi.mp/aam-us.org/deai-news).

## Hail and Farewell

Congratulations to Mike Lesperance, principal, The Design Minds, and Sarah Cohn, principal, Aurora Consulting, the new chair and vice chair, respectively, of the Professional Network Council. The Council is composed of the chairs of the 20 Professional Networks and serves as the vehicle for these leaders to share strategies for engaging their members and advancing the museum field. Thank you to Ellen Endslow, director of collections/curator, Chester County Historical Society, who has completed her term as Council chair. Learn more at [aam-us.org/programs/about-aam/professional-networks/](http://aam-us.org/programs/about-aam/professional-networks/).

## Alliance Webinar Explored Self-Care in the Museum Workplace

On August 8, the Center for the Future of Museums’ (CFM) Elizabeth Merritt and guest Seema Rao presented a webinar on self-care in the museum workplace, a topic initially explored in TrendsWatch 2019. The webinar highlighted ways to reduce burn-out, sustain physical and mental health, and create a less stressful workplace. TrendsWatch, CFM’s annual forecasting report, is available at [aam-us.org/programs/center-for-the-future-of-museums/trendswatch/](http://aam-us.org/programs/center-for-the-future-of-museums/trendswatch/). View the webinar, hosted by Blackbaud, at [bit.ly/AAMselfcare](http://bit.ly/AAMselfcare).



The DEAI fellows for the *Facing Change* initiative: **(front row)** left to right: Azuka MuMin, Danielle Linzer, Cecile Shellman, Makeba Clay, Ann Hernandez; **(back row)** left to right: Levon Williams, Sandra Bonnici, Aiko Bethea, Eric Carpio, Omar Eaton-Martinez





Photo by MedMeetingImages

### AAM Hosted Digital Literacy Forum

The Alliance hosted a Digital Literacy Forum at its headquarters on July 10 and 11. The convening, comprised of representatives from academia, museums, philanthropy, affiliate organizations, and

government agencies, and facilitated by Ross Parry, professor at the University of Leicester, offered insight on a 30-month initiative designed to build a shared framework of digital skills development for the UK museum sector. The initiative was first reported in the January/

February 2019 issue of *Museum*. The article and a companion session at the 2019 Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo informed the forum agenda and exploratory discussion, which covered the relevance of the initiative and its potential for US application.



# TRIBUTES AND TRANSITIONS

## New Jobs



**Diana Abouali**, *Museum Director*, Arab American National Museum, Dearborn, Michigan



**Erin Wolfe Bell**, *Director of Exhibitions*, Naples Botanical Garden, Florida



**William L. Coleman**, *Director of Collections & Exhibitions*, The Olana Partnership, Hudson, New York



**Elizabeth Doud**, *Currie-Kohlmann Curator of Performance*, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida



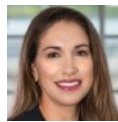
**Catherine Duffy**, *Curator of Exhibitions*, Orange County Regional History Center, Orlando, Florida



**Ben Garcia**, *Deputy Executive Director and Chief Learning Officer*, Ohio History Connection, Columbus



**Cathy Green**, *Executive Director*, Wisconsin Maritime Museum, Manitowoc



**Marissa Hershon**, *Curator of the Ca'd'Zan and Decorative Arts*, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida



**Mackenzie Massman**, *Education Director*, The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures, Tucson, Arizona



**Max Metz Jr.**, *Manager of School and Teacher Programs*, John G. Shedd Aquarium, Chicago, Illinois



**H. Alexander Rich**, *Executive Director and Chief Curator*, Polk Museum of Art at Florida Southern College, Lakeland, Florida



**Mark Smith**, *Marketing Director*, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida

Photo of Diana Abouali courtesy of Salam Center Studio

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**Hillary Spencer**, CEO and President, The Children's Museum of the Upstate, Greenville, South Carolina



**Melissa Venator**, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellow in Modern Art, Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri



**Erin Vigneau-Dimick**, Executive Curator, SIUE University Museum, Edwardsville, Illinois



**John Weber**, Executive Director, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon, Eugene

## Retired



**Joe Schenk** retired on June 1, having served as director of the Art Museum of South Texas since 2007. Schenk worked at eight museums in six states over the past 46 years, including as director of the Mobile Museum of Art and executive director of the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art. During his career, he juried 72 shows and curated 38 exhibitions, some of which toured nationally and internationally. In 2002, he received one of five national Excellence in Peer Review Service Awards from AAM.

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**Dr. Frances Levine**, president and CEO of the Missouri Historical Society (MHS), was selected for the *St. Louis Business Journal's* Most Influential Business Women class of 2019. *The St. Louis Business Journal* received nearly 240 nominations this year, and 25 business leaders were selected. Levine is an AAM member and has served as a Peer Reviewer on AAM's Accreditation Visiting Committee. She has been president of MHS since 2014 and is the first woman to serve as the chief executive officer of a St. Louis Zoo-Museum District institution.

*The Houston Business Journal* selected **Kelly Zúñiga**, CEO of the Houston Holocaust Museum, and **William Harris**, CEO of the Space Center Houston, as honorees for its 2019 Most Admired CEO Awards. Candidates are nominated by their staff members, who complete a detailed questionnaire, and a committee of their peers then makes the selections. The awards were given to for-profit and nonprofit leaders of different-sized organizations at an event on August 22, 2019.

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## TRIBUTES AND TRANSITIONS

### In Memoriam



**Lonn Taylor**, who was a historian and director of public programs for the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, DC, died on June 26 at 79 at his home in Fort Davis, Texas. Taylor, who worked at the National Museum of American History from 1984 through his retirement in 2002, helped create several of the museum's permanent exhibitions, including "Within These Walls," which tells the story of the nation's history through one 18th-century house from Ipswich, Massachusetts. Taylor was also an expert on the "Star Spangled Banner," both Francis Scott Key's national anthem and the flag that inspired Key, which flew at Fort McHenry during the War of 1812. He co-authored a book about the flag in 2000 titled *Star-Spangled Banner: The Making of an American Icon*.



**Mary Bowie**, AAM's vice president for finance and administration from 1999 to 2009, passed away on July 26 after a brief illness. A seasoned business, technology, and nonprofit finance professional, Bowie shepherded the association through Y2K compliance and a database conversion; implemented organizational change in membership and marketing operations; and managed AAM's finances during some very difficult years for museums, the association and nonprofits. Bowie's passions were not limited to museums. She enjoyed sailing and boating, opera, Shakespeare, traveling, and studying Gaelic. Bowie made many friends within the museum community and will be missed. She is survived by her son Gavin and his wife and two grandchildren.

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## REFLECTION



*In chaos, all is possible. Every incoming idea is welcome, with no regard for reality. Forget time, money or reason; embrace a brimming universe!*

*Because if you start with rules, your creation will be stillborn.*

Excerpted from *Creativity: The Perfect Crime* by Philippe Petit

Jay DeFeo (1929-1989), *The Rose*, (1958-1966)

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Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of The Jay DeFeo Trust and purchase, with funds from the Contemporary Painting and Sculpture Committee and the Judith Rothschild Foundation 95.170

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Currently on view in "The Whitney's Collection: Selections from 1900 to 1965," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY





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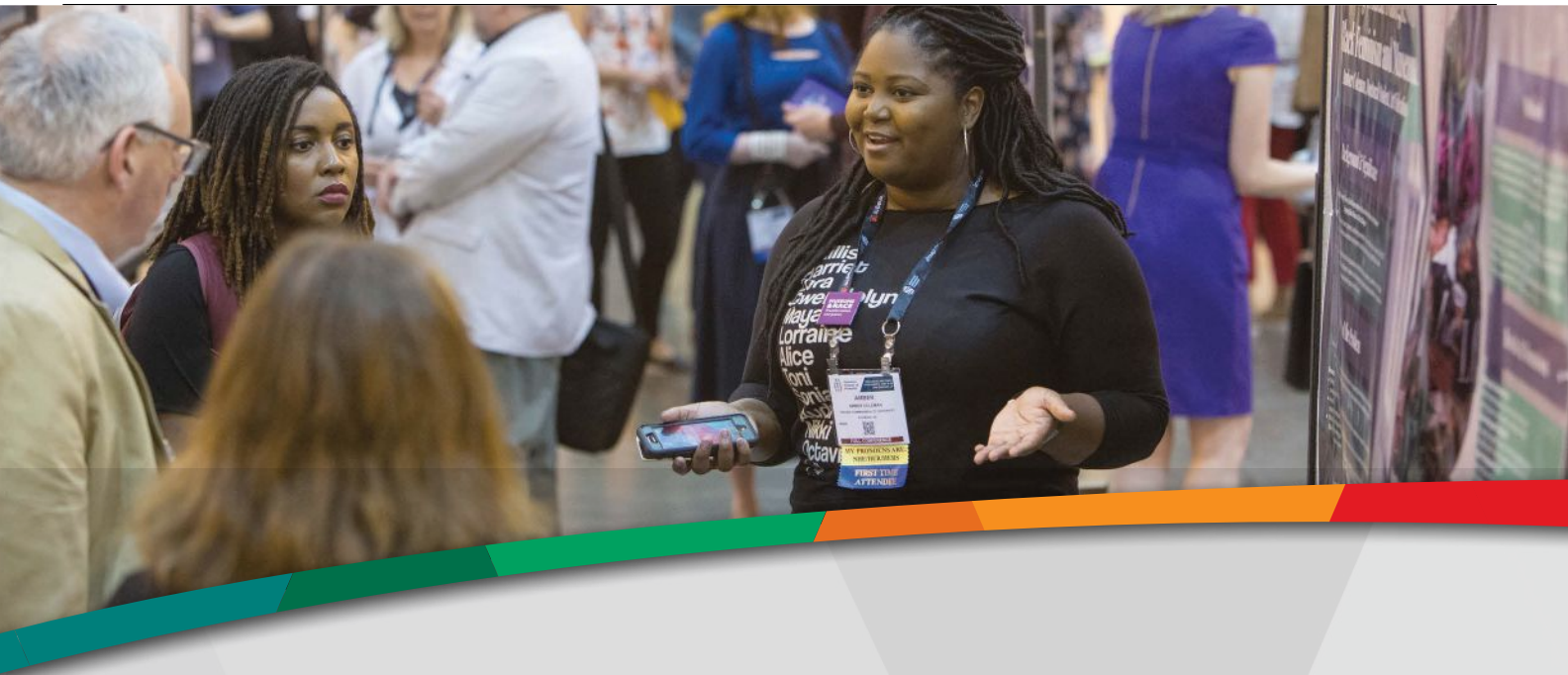
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