The Leadership Imperative: A Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Primer for Museum Boards

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ANDREW PLUMLEY (3:37)

Hello everyone. I'm Andrew Plumley, Director of Inclusion at the American Alliance of Museums, and I'm pleased to welcome all of you to the Leadership Imperative: A Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Primer for Museum Boards.

Before we get started, a quick housekeeping announcement: closed captioning is available for this program and can be accessed by hitting the closed caption button at the bottom of your screen. Once that happens, you can hit a button called "Show Subtitles." And to make sure we're able to answer as many questions as possible in our time together, Laura and I actually recorded our conversation last week, and our team will be actively monitoring both chat and Q&A sections of the webinar today. If time allows at the end, I'll hop back on to take a question or two live. If you do in fact have questions, please try and ask them using the Q&A function at the bottom of your screen. We'll be dropping in resources mentioned in the recording into the chat box throughout the whole webinar.

Thank you again for being here today, and we're looking forward to a great discussion.

LAURA LOTT

Hello.

I'm Laura Lott, President and CEO of the American Alliance of Museums. And I'm joined today by Andrew Plumley, our Director of Inclusion.

Andrew and I know there is a lot going on in the world, and museums are facing myriad challenges. And so, we are very pleased that you are joining us on this important topic today about diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion, and how it relates to museum boards.

It is critical that we center equity in our work even in – especially in – times of crisis. The importance of this work and the need of our field has only been amplified this past year with the COVID-19 pandemic's disproportionate effect on communities of color, the Black Lives Matter movement, and our nation's reckoning with its history of racial injustice – sometimes referred to as the "other" centuries-long pandemic from which we're suffering.

We are very grateful to Merrill Lynch and Bank of America whose support made this webinar possible.

So, welcome, officially to this DEAI Primer for Museum Boards.

We are pleased to offer this program because boards and museum CEOS and directors are critical to DEAI work. They set the tone for museums – and the strategic direction; they make sure resources are allocated properly; and they hold museums accountable.

And yet in decades of DEAI work across the museum field, there's been very little attention paid to boards.

So today, we're going to introduce you to our pilot initiative that aims to change that. It's called *Facing Change: Advancing Museum Board Diversity & Inclusion*.

We're going to share some startling and I think compelling data and information about why this work is needed that you might use to make the case with your board and colleagues that this work is a leadership imperative.

Andrew is going to model how to set the stage for open and productive conversations, some agreements and definitions you can use in your meetings as early as tomorrow or later today to build a common foundation knowledge with your board.

We'll share a bit about what we've learned so far, some ways to get started, and some resources that AAM has to support you.

So first, since we have many trustees here today who may be unfamiliar with AAM, I'd like to start with a brief overview of the American Alliance of Museums.

We envision a world informed and enriched by thriving museums. And our mission is to champion museums and nurture excellence in partnership with our members and allies.

Founded in 1906 by a few dozen museums, we are now a community of over 35,000 museum professionals and museums, of all types and sizes, from A-Z (art museums to zoos) and everything in between.

We don't often think about museums in these terms, but we are a $50 billion industry and support nearly three-quarters of a million jobs across the country. In every community, every zip code, every corner of our country, we have tremendous influence on society.

In addition to connecting museum professionals and providing professional development, AAM is the accrediting body for museums – and we're also an advocacy organization for museums in Washington, DC and around the country in partnership with many state museum associations.

The museum field has a few decades old history of grappling with what we now call DEAI (diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion).

But unfortunately, not enough has changed. This was proven by surveys and focus groups that were done in preparation for our current strategic plan a few years ago.

In surveying the museum field for a new strategic plan, we identified three focus areas that folks said were most vital to museums' future viability, relevance, and sustainability. The first of these was DEAI; it came up in virtually every discussion we had with museum leaders. And this is how it's worded in our strategic plan, holistically: "diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion in all aspects of museum structure and programming."

In the last five years, building on a lot of work that was done previously, and with help from a lot of people, AAM has led the field to much deeper work in DEAI and racial equity. The importance of this work and the need has only been amplified this year.

Before I turn it over to Andrew to really get into this, we're going to show you a short 3-minute video which sets the stage for the board-focused Facing Change initiative that we've begun.

VIDEO
Laura Lott
Facing Change: Advancing Museum Board Diversity & Inclusion is a three-year initiative that will work with museum boards across the country to provide training, resources, and support to diversify their ranks and become more inclusive of the communities that they're trying to serve.

Several years ago, the American Alliance of Museums conducted a study called *Museum Board Leadership*. That study showed us that 46% of museums' boards across the country are 100% white, which of course is not mirroring the American public by-and-large of the American population.

Dr. Tonya Matthews
But what surprised us and encouraged us, was that the majority of our respondents also recognized this. And were thinking about it as a problem for their sustainability. Everything from relevance to their communities, to financial sustainability.

Dr. Doug Jones
Who doesn't want to have a diverse audience? Or a diverse staff? Or a diverse board? Who doesn't want to have an institution that's accessible, that's inclusive, where everybody feels welcome? And equity - I mean, all visitors should feel like they belong and they have an equal right to be there and be served. That's what we're in business for.

Dr. Johnnetta Cole

I think there's simply more *joy* in being a place where the creativity that is being expressed is not the creativity of just *some* of us in the world. But of *all* of us in the world.

Arthur Affleck
As a museum visitor, the ideal future looks like institutions that are entirely welcoming to young and old, Black or white, foreign or domestic visitors. All feeling good about participating in the wonderful, rich resource that are our museums all over this country.

Elizabeth Pierce
Museums are here to inform and inspire and make humans better versions of ourselves. And this work is fundamental to that opportunity. And to reflecting the communities that we serve, the collections that we showcase, the opportunities for partnerships that we have. So this is just such a vital and important part of how museums can serve their communities more effectively.

Lonnie G. Bunch III
My hope is that boards are just a tip of the iceberg. They're the people that make determinations
that can really short circuit some of the change that you want to do in a museum. I've always argued that a museum is only as gifted as its staff but it can only go as far as the boards allow.

Matthews
What I know is that representation - at all levels - makes a difference. It affects our organizations'
ability to welcome and that includes the board.

Cole
I really believe that if boards across our museum world will face what needs to be done, have the courage to do it, and move forward collaboratively, then we're going to have the transformation, not only that our museums deserve, but the change that our communities, our nation, and our *world* deserve.

(inspiring music)

PLUMLEY

I always love watching that video - it's so inspirational. *Facing Change* really has been an amazing experience so far, and it's really inspiring seeing all the learning and growth taking place in participating museums.

But as we continue the webinar today, I want to name that many of you might have some group agreements in which you operate under in your museums or on your boards. As a best practice in this work, I want to offer these group agreements as things we can try and live into for our time together on this webinar today.

I won't go over all of these particular agreements, but I want to highlight two that I think we should focus on during this time. They've often helped me in the work. And so the first that I want to highlight is that there are no easy answers. Coming to terms with this is really essential, and actually has helped me remain present when things get challenging or I feel uncomfortable.

We're trying to be better, and do better, but it also has taken 400 years to get to this point in our nation's history, so we're not going to fix racism and injustice tomorrow. I encourage all of us to sit with the challenge of this work and remain present.

The other thing I'd like to point out here is our consent to learn in public. I think this dovetails well with the no easy answers. But ultimately for me, learning in public does a few things. The first is that it shows vulnerability which is absolutely a key ingredient in the work around DEAI and racial equity. And the next is that by learning in public, it actually helps everyone else stretch their learning edges and get out of their own comfort zones, which is also another key ingredient in DEAI work.

As you all probably know, this work is hard enough, and it's really challenging for a lot of different reasons, but one really great way to start down the right path is to understand terminology and language. I often say that for as many people who are on this Zoom right now, there are often that many different definitions of some of the words you see on the screen. Creating a shared understanding around language is key, because it allows all of us to communicate mor effectively. So here are a few terms and definitions that you'll hear a lot today.

Diversity – It's all the ways that people are both different and the same. Diversity, to me, is just literal variation. We often equate diversity with what we see in the room, but diversity can be on much more than race and gender.

Equity – Equity is the fair and just treatment of all members of a community. I'll also say here that equity is really an outcome, and so we can actually measure it. I'll talk a little bit more about that in just a second.

Accessibility – Accessibility is giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. I'll name here that that's both physical and neurodiversity that we want to bring into the space today.

Inclusion – Inclusion refers to the intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse individuals feel that they can fully participate in all aspects of organizational work, and specifically including decision-making processes.

I'll name here that I think that when you hear phrases like "inclusion," you think about things like "I want to be able to bring my full self to work," and I think that's a really important aspect that we really need to dig into a little bit more. Many corporations and organizations

are also starting to move towards terminology like "belonging." I think that does a good job of really incorporating what inclusion feels like.

How I sometimes remember the difference between diversity, equity, and inclusion is that diversity is often about counting the people. How many of x identity are in a certain organization? Whereas inclusion is that the people count. Do your colleagues feel they belong, have voice, and are respected? And equity is really an outcomes count. Equity is all about outcomes. Where do disparities exist within your museum, and how can you mitigate those to get more equitable outcomes?

Race Equity – Race equity is the condition where one's race identity has no influence on how one fares in society. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race.

In other words if you were to disaggregate all social outcomes data (income, housing, education, healthcare, the criminal justice system, etc) by race, there would be no difference in outcomes. Obviously we are far from that in both the American context and around the globe.

When we look more closely at internal organizational data, we are far from race equity as well. If we were to look at compensation, promotion, professional development dollars, etc, and we disaggregated that data by race, equity in the data would mean that there would be no difference in outcomes there. And we all know that when we look at our own data, we are far from equity. So just keep that in mind when we talk about equity being outcomes.

I also like to show this picture here between the difference between equality and equity because it highlights the difference nicely, I think. The picture shows that with equality, intentions are spot on in that everyone gets the same exact bike to ride. If everyone were in fact the same, this would be a perfect solution.

But because we are such a diverse group of human beings with many differences, equity should be what we focus on, because in this scenario, everyone still gets a bike, but they get a bike that they can use, that fits them, and that actually works for them to get to where they're all trying to go.

DEAI is broad because it incorporates the many different social identities we hold, but focusing on race is important, because at least in the American context, race is the biggest driver of disparity and inequity that we see. Focusing on the root cause of any problem is key to finding sustainable solutions.

The second reason is that when race is not explicitly named, included, and centered, it is often pushed off the table. When we focus on race, all other identities (gender, sexual orientation, etc.) get raised up as well.

I also want to name here in terms of some level setting that when we think about forms of oppression like racism, sexism, or homophobia for instance, they are all operating at four different levels. So when understanding racism, we must see that it exists in multiple forms.

At the Personal Level, we're talking about the norms, beliefs, feelings, attitudes and bias lies within all of us as individuals.

At the Interpersonal Level, that's where those internal beliefs play out publicly in our behaviors, treatment of one another, relationships, and communications.

In terms of the Organizational Level, that's really where the policies, procedures, practices, and rules reside.

At the Structural Level, this involves the cumulative and compounding effects of all of these things and an array of societal factors, including the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of multiple institutions and policies that have bias baked into the very fabric of them from the Personal, Interpersonal, and Organizational levels.

I like to share this because it highlights a very important piece of what we are trying to understand and work against. This slide shows that when we think about racism, sexism, or any type oppression, we often think "Well I'm not racist, I treat everyone the same," or "I have plenty of Black or Brown friends."

This slide shows us that racism does not need an individual actor or specific individuals to be overtly racist for racism to continue to exist. It lives and is embedded in our systems and structures as well. Working on our personal bias is absolutely essential in DEAI and racial equity work, but it's really just the start. Laura?

LOTT

Thanks, Andrew. I think that last point is so critically important as we start this work. And all of the things you covered lay such an important foundation as we get started with our boards in creating more equitable outcomes for everyone we serve, both internally and externally to the museum.

I want to talk a little bit about why this is all important for museums. One of museums' superpowers, it's been said, is that in this age of "fake news" and rampant distrust, museums are trusted by the public – more than media, more than government, certainly, more than the corporate sector. This is a huge opportunity for museums, and it's also an enormous responsibility.

The stories we chose to tell (or not tell), the people we proactively reach out to welcome and speak to in our museums, how we use that power to cultivate stronger, a more inclusive and empathetic public are all really important decisions in our obligation to serve the public. And, as institutions that rely on public dollars, we do have an obligation to serve and reflect the entire public – not a slice of it.

AAM has taken the position, as the accrediting body for the field, that DEAI is integral to excellent museum practice.

It is, in fact, the cornerstone of museum excellence – and therefore embedded into our core missions, strategies, cultures, and our operations. It's not just public programming. It's integral to our institutional values – and also a framework for change within our institutions, rebuilding and reimagining our museums as we're being called upon to do in this time.

You'll hear us say this a lot. I think Andrew already said it once. It is *everyone's* responsibility – not just the chief diversity officer if you're lucky to have one, or the HR person, if you're lucky enough to have one of those, or the education/outreach department. It's really everyone in the museum – including and especially the board.

DEAI work requires resources. And it never ends. Just like any element of organizational culture, it's always a work in progress.

Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie Bunch co-chaired a task force recently with Elizabeth Pierce, who is the CEO of the Cincinnati Museum Center—we've been privileged to work with both—and the task force helped identify indicators of equity in museum operations. As Andrew mentioned, these are measurable in a variety of ways.

The indicators include things like there's representation from different genders/gender identities, races, and ethnicities on the board and in leadership. Policies are examined with an equity lens and processes are in place to identify and manage the inequities that we know exist in all of our organizations. DEAI work is funded and there's a plan with measurable goals. And CEOs are held accountable for race equity work, like any other organizational objectives and priorities.

So, there are many reasons this work is a leadership imperative. It's a moral imperative and a requirement now for accreditation – the standard of excellence in our field. It's a political imperative to fulfill our obligation to the public or publics as public entities and to continue to receive public support in all the shapes and forms that museums do. And it's a business imperative. Andrew's going to talk about market share in a minute. And funders (both private and certainly public – governments) are requiring evidence of cultural and research institutions' service to and representation of the entire public in order to be eligible for funding.

And the demographic of that public rapidly changing. Andrew – do you want to take it from here?

PLUMLEY

Absolutely, thanks Laura. So let's take a look at how are we doing. Some of these numbers are really staggering. You can see here on this slide that we have a real racial leadership

gap in the field as 93% of museum directors are white, 90% of museum board members are white, and 46% of museum boards are 100% white.

Again, you heard these numbers in the great video around *Facing Change* earlier in the webinar, but there is a recognition by museums and their leaders that racial and ethnic diversity is important to achieving their missions, but most museum boards don't have a plan to become more diverse and inclusive.

As Laura said, demographics are changing, but this slide illustrates that externally, the museum audience, irrespective of the drastic changes in American demographics. has remained basically the same since the 1970s. From a sustainability perspective, this is obviously not a growth strategy, and in simple terms, we're not gaining any sort of market share here, so this should be a prescient warning for us all.

So, the role of the board. What is your role in investing in and supporting DEAI and racial equity? And why does it matter? Often board members ask, "Why are we talking about DEAI? I came here because I love the museum. I love art, or science, or history and now we're here talking about things that I didn't expect to talk about. And it makes me feel super uncomfortable."

And that is absolutely fair. But I believe that as we understand why DEAI is so critically important for all of us to think about and actively work towards, the better and more effective we'll be at getting better outcomes, which is ultimately our main goal.

The first reason the board should support DEAI work is because your role is to support your leadership. If you're watching this webinar, then your museum leader is most likely on board with doing DEAI work and has probably been thinking about ways to incorporate this into the museum. The work of DEAI needs strong investment from senior leadership, and part of your job is to make sure your CEO and the team that they've built is successful in everything that they do.

The role of a board member is to make sure that the leader's vision is achieved. That means supporting leadership in their vision around racial equity and DEAI.

Next is to support the strategic goals of the organization. As museums focus even more on this critical work, we'll see more and more examples of how to to embed and operationalize DEAI into policy, practice, and operations.

Even the strategic goals that don't specifically call out diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion do actually incorporate these factors – for instance, if one of your goals is connecting with a broader section of the community, that's really a DEAI goal. That's really talking about how to broaden and diversify our audience.

Another example I hear a lot from institutions is around the word relevance. Museums are thinking about their relevance, especially now. Remaining relevant to the community

and visitors who walk through your doors means in many ways committing to and sustaining DEAI practice at all levels of your organization.

When you're looking at what members, community and other visitors are looking for, making sure that remaining relevant and being responsive to their needs is of utmost importance. That means that we might need to be even more expansive, more diverse in terms of race, in terms of gender, and other social identities – both within the museum and who we bring into the museum.

Third is that you really want to make sure that you're attracting and retaining the very best talent. Almost every review board from Glassdoor to Indeed to others show that for both for profit and nonprofit candidates, one of the top 2 things a candidates are looking for is a culture where they matter and they belong. There's that word belonging again.

So just in terms of making sure you get the best of the best of the best, one thing every organization can and should do better at is making people feel welcomed, heard, and valued - all things that encapsulate DEAI practice. Even for individuals who might not fall into an underrepresented category or aren't a person of color (especially when we think about millennials and Gen Z – the future of museum professionals), they are also choosing not to be a part of organizations who don't have an inclusive, equitable culture.

One major piece of the board's role is around honoring their fiduciary duties. A part of that fiduciary responsibility includes making sure you decrease your exposure to risk. You might be aware of what's happening nationally amongst organizations, for profit and nonprofits, being called out, or held to a higher or different standard and are being held accountable at this particular moment in our nation's history around DEAI and racial equity issues.

We all see that there are real consequences if a board member says or does something that raises concerns around race, lack of equity, or inclusivity. That situation can have a real impact on the organization's brand and reputation. Situations like that can lead to low performance of the museum, funding stream issues, less visitors, and a less diverse customer base.

So part of the board's fiduciary responsibility is proper stewardship of the museum and always decreasing exposure to risk concerning brand and reputation.

I'm also starting to see a trend, and Laura mentioned this before, around donors and foundations starting to ask more questions about the composition of organization's board. So asking yourself questions like, "Is our board diverse enough?" and "What are we doing to make sure that our museum and facilities' are open and inclusive to everyone so that everyone gets an opportunity to see what you have to offer?", is absolutely critical.

Lastly, the board should be a model for the broader organization. As leaders of the organization, staff look to you for leadership and actually do listen and hear and see what you say and do. Staff take their cues from you, so the commitment and dedication to this work needs to be top of mind so that the organization as a whole can reach their mission, vision, and strategic priorities.

So what are we seeing in the field now? What's the current state of boards and how they're approaching DEAI?

What we're seeing is that for boards that are focusing at all on DEAI, they are primarily focused on the D part. Diversity. Most boards are working on cultivating a diverse pipeline of potential candidates. The main focus is on getting more diverse representation on the board, with not much focus on board culture or the inclusion of those diverse board members once they're actually on the board.

For boards that are a little bit ahead of the game in their learning journey, we're starting to see DEAI committees being formed that are developing charters, going through their governance documents to embed DEAI practice and policy into them, and taking a closer look at mission, vision, and values to make sure that DEAI is actually included in those as well.

Ultimately, we're seeing that as a collective, boards do not have many of the skills and knowledge needed at this moment in time to address DEAI proactively. It's very reactive right now. And again, because of this, we're seeing an increased level of accountability and heightened expectations of museums.

So what have we been learning through our time with *Facing Change* and our participating museums? We've learned quite a bit. And that's probably for a whole other webinar. What we do know is that the pacing and planning for trustees is very different than for the rest of the staff. Staff need every single day and either through Zoom or when we do get back to in person, they're seeing each other frequently. Most boards meet 4-6 times a year, with some committee work in between. So really managing expectations of the pace at the board level is really critical.

Trust and vulnerability are required and that also takes time. Building stronger authentic relationships that are built on trust and vulnerability are key. And you do have to build in that time, in order for this to be effective.

Another key thing to understand is that every organization and individual is on their own learning journey. Everyone is starting out at a different place based on their own lived experience. And every single museum has their own organizational culture. And so just meeting people where they are at and making sure they are going on a learning journey together is the most important piece.

Work processes vary between museums, but the content of the learning is the same. So meaning, foundational knowledge around bias, the history and construction of race, and

power are all necessary components of the learning, but based on the museum context, how that actually gets introduced might vary a bit. But again, the content and learning will remain the same.

An academic approach to DEAI can delay action and implementation. This one is a little bit tricky. But I think, what often happens is that the work ends up being a theoretical thing. It's almost like an intellectual exercise. And we want to make sure that we move away from that. As board members, as successful people in our careers, either for profit or nonprofit, oftentimes that intellectual capability is actually not as useful in this work. We have to bring a lot of that head work down to our hearts and that take a long time. It sounds corny, but it's true. We need to humanize this work and it takes commitment and real behavior change which, as we know, is not just about thinking about it. We actually have to do.

And the last thing is that DEAI requires a different approach than our usual work. This is the hardest work that your museum is going to take on. And that's just the fact. Again, it's taken 400 years to get here. There's a reason why we are having such difficulties with it. So just making sure that we are open to different ways of knowing, different ways of trying to do this work, is absolutely critical. But I have the most faith that we can do it. Otherwise none of us would be on this webinar.

Opportunities though. Because we are all kind of challenged together, we have opportunities at hand, for us. So how can boards develop their approach? And build their capacity around this important work?

The first is to create a learning development plan. So those trainings around bias, around power, around privilege and structural racism that increase skills, abilities and knowledge around specific topics tied to racial equity and DEAI are very important. You have to create a shared learning and shared context and container for this work.

Engage in sector wide conversations around DEAI. There's a lot going on in the field right now and plugging into that ongoing work and conversation, will help both you, your museum, and the field move along.

Coming together around a shared commitment to DEAI work is also critical, so making an explicit commitment in statement both internally and externally is a great way to build accountability at the board level. And one of the roles of the board is holding your CEO and directors accountable to specific goals and some of those specific goals made to be around DEAI and racial equity.

So how do we actually get started? Again, open a continuous dialogue about DEAI work. There's plenty of ways to do this. There are conversation guides and conversation starters. What I love to do is pick specific articles or books that are relevant to both the museum and race and racism and start to have some dialogues there. Open up the space to start to get comfortable being uncomfortable.

Establish a shared vocabulary. Again, there are many different definitions for all of these terms. Making sure we are clear and concise about how we are using terminology with each other is critical. So I often encourage museums and museum professionals to create their own glossaries and definitions that they can go back to. Because often we use terms like equity and we really mean diversity. So we want to be clear.

Every museum professional must do personal work to face unconscious bias. We all have bias, we are all trying to do better. But the work starts at the personal level. And so we have to be able to really do the hard work, the hard personal work, looking inward before we can do the outward.

Identify equity champions at the board and senior leadership levels. To put it bluntly, this work isn't sustainable without your investment and it's not sustainable without senior leadership driving the work. So senior leaders and board members have to get acquainted with the language and make sure that they are driving and sustaining the work while listening to staff to make sure they are all aligned and moving in the right direction.

Embrace data. Disaggregate the data by race, gender, and social identities when possible. This is really key because we talk about diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion – and remember, diversity is "count the people," inclusion is "the people count," and equity is "outcomes count." We won't be able to know where there is disparity in any of the outcomes that we're looking to achieve if we don't disaggregate the data by race. We need a solid baseline so we can address the problems as we see them. So disaggregate the data as much as you possibly can.

Laura, I'll hand it back to off you.

LOTT

Thanks, Andrew, you have just given us a great checklist of. what was that -- five things? – I think, that if we could all as a field do, we would make such tremendous progress in this work.

Even though I know this is just a short primer, we have thrown a lot at you today. We started off with some foundational DEAI and racial equity concepts. We talked about a museum-specific look at why this work is critical to the reason museums exist and the work that we do in our communities. And why it's specifically important for museum boards to play an integral role in this work and not just leave it to the outreach departments.

We gave you some observations, given our couple of years of experience now with our *Facing Change* museums about what is happening in those museums and others across the country. And how you might get started with your own board, in this work.

I know that, as Andrew said, some of this may have made you uncomfortable; my best piece of advice is to get comfortable getting uncomfortable. That IS actually the work in this year.

I bet many of you are ready to dig into more – start the personal work and start these conversations with your museum board and leadership.

And you are in luck!

As Andrew said, there are so many resources out there to get started. In fact, I think as a leader part of the challenge is sorting through an overabundance of resources to pick a few for you. AAM has and is rapidly building a Trustee Resource Center of museum board-specific articles, models, templates – as well as a cadre of DEAI/racial equity practitioners and series of webinars and workshops and programs that can help guide you.

I hope you'll find online our *Facing Change* insights report, which issued several years ago by a working group of DEAI leaders in our field that I was privileged to co-chair with Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole. In an attempt to learn from our past and build on what was done before, the working group explored why our field has not made more progress in DEAI, despite decades of discussion. It's a good grounding piece. And you'll recognize the five key insights from their report – the importance of individual work, clarity on definitions so it doesn't hold up the work, systemic/structural change that's needed and the involvement of leaders/boards in our other programs – and even today's presentation. It can also be a good grounding and conversation starter for groups coming together for the first time, and trying to get more traction in moving this work forward. And it's short enough that you could ask board members to read it before your next meeting and dig into some of the questions together.

If you want to dig into the personal work, I loved Andrew's comment about getting out of our heads and into our hearts, there are so many great books and articles out there. We are putting together a reading list with some of the top ones. For museum-specific grounding, we published a collection of essays on DEAI, spanning the last 20 years from some key players in this work across the sector. It is intended to create an intergenerational dialogue on DEAI and to service as a core text for the evolution of DEAI in our field. It's available in the AAM bookstore – and there's a discount code to use for 30% off, which we'll make sure that you have.

I hope you will also find online a really powerful session on "Racism, Unrest, and the Museum Field" from our spring 2020 "Radical Reimaging" virtual conference. Following the murder of George Floyd, this was a timely watershed conversation with Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie Bunch and Dr. Johnnetta Betch Cole, along with Lori Fogarty from the Oakland Museum of California. The urgency of this work is apparent in that conversation, and it really sparked conversations about the need for truth, reconciliation and healing in the museum field, and in our institutions, and other racial equity focused work we are pursuing now.

And that cool photo on the slide with the airplane is one of our museum board retreats at the SFO Museum at the airport -- the only AAM accredited museum in an airport, by

the way. When we're able to get back together in person safely, I hope we can come to your board meeting and work with you and your museums.

There are many more resources on our website – and there's more coming all the time. I urge you to check it out.

Most of all, I want to leave you with the assurance that you are not alone.

AAM is doing this work in our own organization, right along side you, as are leading museums across the country. I hope we can share what we all learn along our respective journeys. I hope that you can be bold and hopeful in your work and as Dr. Cole says "joyful" in this work, embedding it across our field and in our museums.

And I hope you will reach out to Andrew or me any time. We are here to support you.

Thank you for joining us today.

PLUMLEY

Thank you.

Thank you, everyone. As promised, there is a little bit of time for questions and I saw that there are a couple of great questions in the Q&A.

But before I do that, I want to reiterate what Laura said at the end, that the recording, the links, and all of these other resources will be on the AAM website in coming days. So please make sure to come and check those out. We try to update those as often as possible. And if there are resources that you're specifically needing, please reach out to me and let us know what you're looking for and we can make sure to do our best to come out with resources that help support you and your learning journey.

I want to get to some of these questions and reiterate some of the things I answered in the Q&A. One question here is: Trustees who are hostile to these themes take up a lot of time that could be spent nurturing progress. Any advice here?

That is a true point and I'm sure that many of you are dealing with that on your own boards. There's a couple of things that I can share. The first is that one really great way to move people along who are defensive or really just starting out in this work, is to find some equity champions, race equity champions who are peers to those same board members. Maybe it's a board member at another museum across town. Maybe it is someone, if they are in the business community, there is a business leader that's really promoting DEAI. And you know that that board member respects them and their thinking. Find them and try to talk to them about having a conversation with that one board member. Or give them resources that that business leader or leader in the community might have written or might on be a webinar or something like that, and share that with them. And slowly bring them along.

But it is hard to move an individual that is not ready for this work or unwilling to do this work. And the truth of the matter is, as we continue this work and we continue to deepen our own understanding and awareness around DEAI, as I said in the video, a lot of board members think, "Well I came here because I love history or art, and I'm not sure why we are talking about these specific issues."

And sometimes, if museum leaders and boards decide they want to continue a conversation around DEAI and really make their words into action, some board members decide that this space is not comfortable enough for them. And they decide to do other things, and ultimately, we see this all the time, and we don't want to lose board members, because the museum field has fantastic trustees, but sometimes folks are not ready for this conversation.

And that's something that we all have to actually understand. We do know that having these conversations is uncomfortable. So just talking about and easing into getting comfortable being uncomfortable, as Laura said, is really key. There are some articles that I could follow up with around the getting comfortable with being uncomfortable that I think can help.

Another question here: Any tools to share to begin to measure belonging and other qualitative markers of DEAI?

Absolutely. I'm going to drop in the chat box one really great organization that I learn a lot from around inclusion and belonging. It's called the Othering & Belonging Institute. I'm going to drop that in here. I think that's a great place to start as a place to go and look for some specific indicators. I would say one thing you have to do is board and/or staff engagement surveys. And ask those questions.

Because ultimately, many times we don't have a baseline for where we actually are in terms of our welcoming, belonging, inclusion within our own organizations and we might hear from one staff member, this sort of situation. Or we might hear from a board member that this conversation happened. But until we actually use surveys to gather specific data about how folks are feeling about our internal culture, our leaders, etc. we won't actually know. And so I would highly encourage you to use survey data as a baseline and then make your decisions based on that. But if you go the Othering & Belonging Institute, and some of our other resources, you can find specific things around inclusion and how to measure that.

Let's see here. How do you navigate between board members who are also critical donors and exchanging their seat at the table to bring in more diverse members?

This is a really challenging issue and something we see all the time with the structure of boards and museums - often those boards being high "give or gets" and some of the major ways that museums fund their operations. One thing that can help is reframing

give or gets, or reframing exactly how we think about the money that we need from board members.

And so, for instance, it's a hard thing to manage around power dynamics. If I'm giving $10,000 a year and Laura is giving $100,000 a year, whose voice is going to matter more on the board? It's pretty clear that with the challenges of managing that, Laura is going to have a little bit more say.

But what we can think about is instead of all of us having to give the same amount or varying amounts, what if we had a collective understanding of: we need to raise $200,000 as a collective this year, and here are some of the specific ways we can do it with the networks we have. So it takes the individual onus of giving a certain amount off the table which does allow for more equity in voice and power on the board.

In terms of diversifying the board by giving a high net worth individual seat to a more diverse person, I think that's where you have to decide if that's something you can do and still continue operations. What I would say is, I think it might be a bit easier to think about changing bylaws to add on another candidate, than switching a board member, one board member for another.

Another great way to think about how to diversify boards is to think about are there specific committees that you can create to start building up a pipeline of more diverse candidates and starting to bring them on to the board slowly. I've been on a couple of boards, they are really advisory councils or advisory boards, that are based in community to help advise the boards and all of its candidates, at specific organizations. So thinking about changing the structure, instead of switching person A for B, especially in tough times and tough financial periods, is another great way to think about the give/get and the money situation.

Let's see, there was one around the kind of influx of the word "belonging" in museums. And I answered it within the Q&A section. But I think that's a really good point and I wanted to double down on that. You'll hear a bunch of different -- you'll hear a bunch of different terms. Diversity, equity, accessibility, inclusion, cultural competency, belonging, all of these terms have different meanings. I would encourage everyone to before getting started in this work, or one major way to get started, is to create some shared language about what terms we want to use for what things. In my head, I really equate inclusion with belonging in many ways. Inclusion seems a little bit more intellectual or academic, whereas belonging is something that we know what that feels that. If that resonates with you, board members, museum leaders and staff, more than inclusion, go ahead and use that. As long as you define the term for yourselves and what it actually means.

Creating shared language is really important and I do think that over time we are going to see language change. Before it was multiculturalism. Then it was diversity, equity, and inclusion, then cultural competency, and now you'll hear folks talking about anti-racism and being proactively antiracist. Those shifts happen as culture and society

shifts to meet the moment that we're in. Be aware that language often changes. but being able to shift with that is important.

And I've got time for one more question. So one question here that I answered, how do these insights around boards apply to museum staff, is that another webinar?

So we want to create as many resources as possible, but the last thing I'll say around this is there is something called isomorphic process. That sounds like a super fancy word but our friend and partner in this work Beth Zemsky talks about this often. Isomorphic process is a fancy way of saying that what happens at one level actually also replicates itself at the other. So all of the things we talked about today at the board level, although a little bit more nuanced, still remains the same at the staff level. A couple main differences: at the staff level there's more touch points to drive and sustain this work. At the end of the day, the board might meet 4 or 6 times per year with maybe some work in subcommittees. Whereas the staff are seeing each other every single day, so the pace of the work changes at the staff level than it does at the board level. And then also, a lot of the times, a lot of the DEAI work is really both grassroots and grasstops. So, at the grassroots a lot of the DEAI work resides in education department. They're really high capacity, high skilled, and have the capacity for DEAI. Whereas in the board you might have to do more awareness building around the work. More to come on that and we can make sure to answer more of those questions.

I know there's never enough time for these conversations but it is 4 o'clock. And I want to thank everyone for taking part in this really critical conversation. I encourage you to stay in touch with us, with questions or to share all the progress you're making on your museum boards. Please take care of yourselves and stay safe. Thank you, everybody.