



## **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** **A Statement of Institutional Commitments**

Gage Academy of Art is committed to social justice in a diverse democracy.

At Gage Academy of Art, we adhere to our mission—to educate, enrich, and transform our community through the visual arts. We aspire to see this reflected in the diversity that permeates the organization from students to staff and board. With art as our lens, we are committed to uniting diverse thinkers and advancing equity. We commit to actively recognize and eliminate historic and systemic barriers embedded in our society that affect our learning community and institution.

We define **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**<sup>1</sup>

**Diversity:** Individual differences (such as personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (such as race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, physical or cognitive abilities, as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations) that can be engaged in the service of learning.

**Inclusion:** The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in people, in the curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical).

**Equity:** Creating opportunities for equal access and success for historically underrepresented populations, such as racial and ethnic minority and low-income students in three main areas:

1. Representational Equity: proportional participation at all levels of an institution
2. Resource Equity: distribution of educational resources in order to close equity gaps; and
3. Equity-mindedness: leaders and staff demonstrate an awareness of, and willingness to address, equity issues.

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1 New England Resource Center for Higher Education

As an organization, we value and seek to increase diversity along many aspects of the school, including, but not limited to, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, language, nationality and immigration status, socio-economic status, age, and disability status.

At Gage we recognize the history of racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination in the United States of America, and its longstanding effect on access to economic and cultural resources. We commit to extend opportunities for members of all groups that have been historically marginalized and affected by inequalities.

It is critical that we ensure each member of our Gage community has a full opportunity to thrive in our environment. We understand that without a vibrant and diverse community of individuals, we cannot progress as a school as we cannot fulfill our mission to “educate, enrich, and transform our community through the visual arts.”

In light of the direction set in the Strategic Plan 2018-2023, Gage Academy of Art commits to developing the institutional mechanisms necessary to create a diverse, inclusive, and just learning community by ensuring that differences are respected, welcomed, and used to support individuals’ empowerment and flourishing as well as advance our collective goals.

The pursuit of equity requires institutionalizing policies and practices that facilitate the school’s ability to recruit and serve a robustly diverse community of students, instructors, staff, and trustees. The pursuit of inclusion entails both removing barriers to, and providing support for, the participation of all community members.

## **Guiding Principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

The following principles guide Gage Academy of Art in the pursuit of promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within our learning community

- The diversity of our instructors, students, staff, and trustees reflects the makeup of our demographically diverse society.
- Each member of our community (students, instructors, staff, trustees) is recognized both as an individual with distinct perspectives and insights, and as a member of social groups who have benefitted from, or been disadvantaged by, historical and contemporary inequalities.

- Gage’s practices and policies ensure the full inclusion and empowerment of those who identify as members of historically disenfranchised groups, and cultivates among all community members shared competencies, sensitivities, and habits of mind fundamental to building an equitable and inclusive school environment.
- Diversity of identity, culture, perspective, and language should be protected and cultivated in all pedagogical and work activities.
- The school shall enable courageous, respectful, and civil discourse across differences of opinion, perspective, identity, and power status.
- Our institutional responsibility to enact the principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion requires that each of us—teachers, staff, students, trustees –actively contribute to an environment that supports the learning and interactions necessary to foster the socially just community that we seek.

## **Actions in support of the Principles of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

In order to realize our principles, Gage Academy of Art will, in a manner that is consistent with the law:

- Expect school leadership to assume responsibility for coordinating and implementing practices, policies, and protocols that are aligned with our commitment to promoting diversity and to advancing equity and inclusion as core school priorities.
- Develop and refine processes that seek to increase in measurable ways the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and gender diversity of our instructors, students, staff, and trustees in the following areas:
  - Admissions and registration
  - Scholarships
  - Student support and retention
  - Recruitment and hiring processes
- Allocate significant time and resources to adjust our curriculum and pedagogical approaches to reflect and strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion in the teaching and learning process.
- Ensure all members of our community feel recognized and supported.
- Increase the cultural competencies of staff and instructors to better serve a diverse community.

- Work toward inclusive classrooms in which instructors and students work together to create and sustain an environment in which everyone feels safe, supported, and encouraged to express their views and concerns.
- Establish practices and policies that acknowledge, make visible, discourage and/or respond to any act of discrimination, harassment, or abuse based on a person's individual or group identity.
- Encourage all voices and stories through open dialogue and generous listening.
- Identify ways to monitor, measure and document our progress in achieving our goals for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.