



REINTRODUCING THE FRICK: A CENTER OF OUR COMMUNITY

Museums, by their very natures, are always choosing what to include—and exclude. In a world filled with things, what precious few will be added to the collection or featured in an exhibition? Of the countless insights that might be shared about any artwork, which ones make the cut? Who decides? Such choices matter, since by showing us whose histories are worth saving and whose experiences deserve to be understood, museums give us insight into ourselves.

Or, at least, into some selves. Until recently, most museums chose to feature the contributions of white people (and of white men in particular), largely to the exclusion of the achievements of people of color. Such omissions not only narrowed our presentations; they have made many prospective visitors feel that their experiences were not valued and that they were not welcome.

The Frick recognizes the conspicuous absence of Black perspectives in our collections, our presentations, and our leadership—and therefore, not surprisingly, from our audience. We are committed to do better.

On July 16th, six weeks after publishing a statement decrying racial violence and systemic racism, the Frick made the following public commitments, developed by our staff Diversity Equity Accessibility and Inclusion (DEAI) Committee with support of senior leadership and the board.

1. THE FRICK PITTSBURGH SUPPORTS THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT and shares its commitment “to create space for Black imagination and innovation.”

2. THE FRICK PITTSBURGH COMMITS TO CULTIVATE A STAFF AND BOARD that oppose all discrimination and are actively anti-racist by taking the following steps:

- Providing staff and community listening sessions and learning opportunities for all staff and board members in 2020;

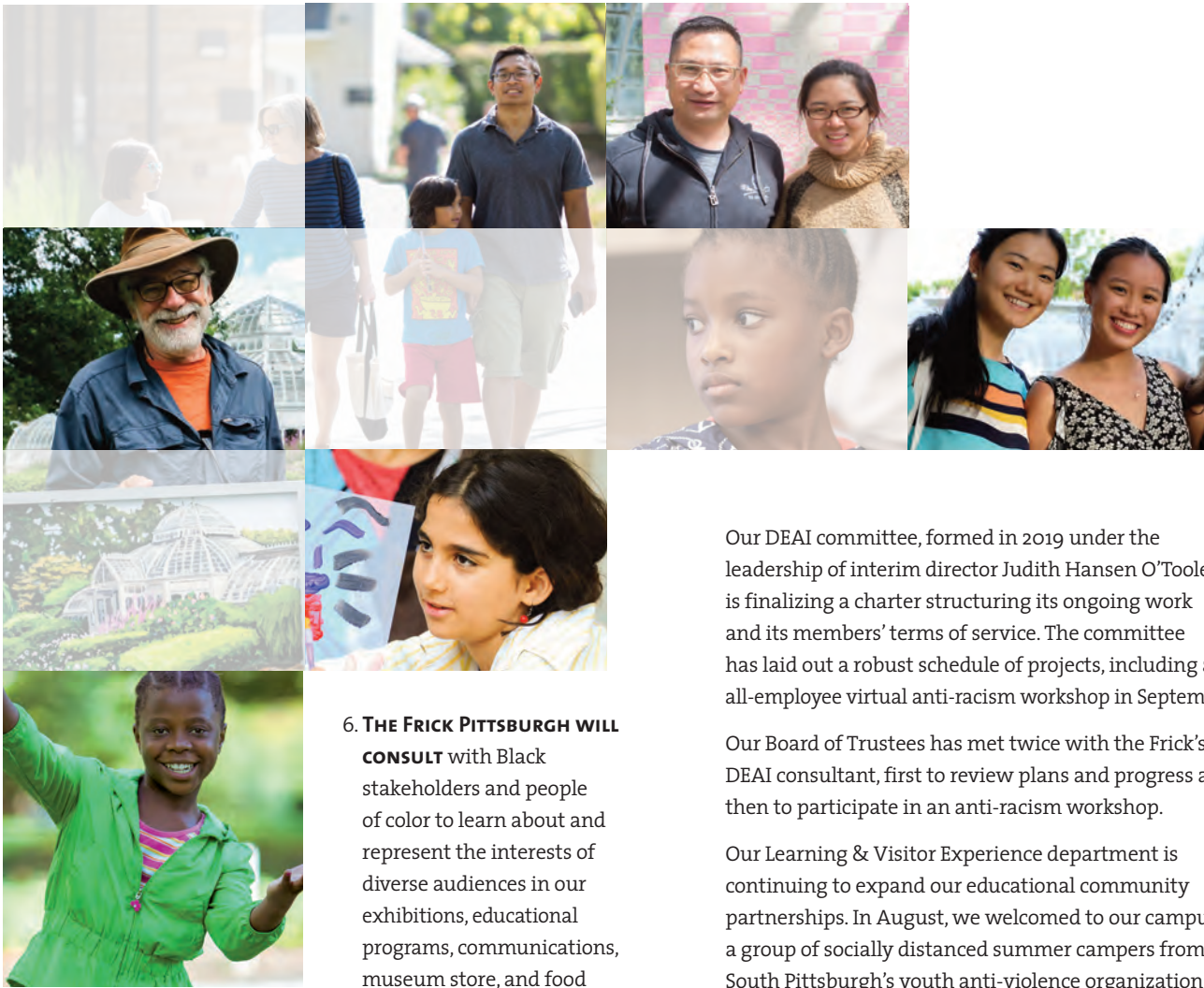
- Providing ongoing opportunities for the education and enlightenment of all employees and trustees thereafter; and
- Publishing annual progress reports on this work in the Frick’s Annual Report (beginning in 2021).

3. THE FRICK PITTSBURGH SEEKS TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT of physical and psychological safety for our Black staff and visitors. To that end, we are committed to doing the following:

- Training all employees in verbal de-escalation techniques to empower our staff to interact with respect, professionalism, and empathy;
- Requiring that every staff member participate in ongoing anti-racist education (as outlined above);
- Strictly enforcing the policy that all employees adhere to our organization’s values, which include respect for all human rights, while at work or otherwise representing the Frick;
- Hiring more Black and diverse colleagues at all levels of the organization (as described below);
- Building trusted partnerships with organizations in the Black community, including by proactively participating in neighborhood activities outside our campus;
- Making our site available to our neighbors for gatherings of Black community organizations; and
- Using signage on our campus and statements on our website to demonstrate our commitment to treat all people with respect and dignity.

4. THE FRICK PITTSBURGH HEREBY ADOPTS A “ROONEY RULE” for staff hiring and vendor selection—no search, at any level of the organization, may proceed without qualified Black and other diverse candidates in the selection pool.

5. THE FRICK PITTSBURGH WILL COMPLETE AND PUBLISH A DIVERSITY AUDIT of our museum collections by 2021 and use that information to establish diversity goals for acquisitions.



6. THE FRICK PITTSBURGH WILL CONSULT with Black stakeholders and people of color to learn about and represent the interests of diverse audiences in our exhibitions, educational programs, communications, museum store, and food services.

7. THE FRICK PITTSBURGH WILL EXPAND OUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS to include diverse organizations, such as the African American Chamber of Commerce of Western Pennsylvania, which can help us expand our partnerships, audiences, and applicant pools.

8. WE PLEDGE TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO DIVERSIFY our leadership and board within the period covered by our Strategic Plan (2020-2027).

TEN WEEKS AFTER MAKING THESE COMMITMENTS, THE FRICK HAS EMBARKED ON THE JOURNEY TO HONOR THEM.

We began with an informal listening session with our staff, at which we were joined by Cecile Shellman, our DEAI consultant, and Jane Zwier, a licensed professional counselor with our Employee Assistance Program.

Next, our entire staff completed virtual seminars on the subject of empathy, followed by online classes in verbal conflict de-escalation techniques—opportunities that have empowered us to approach all interactions with compassion and clear communication.

Our DEAI committee, formed in 2019 under the leadership of interim director Judith Hansen O’Toole, is finalizing a charter structuring its ongoing work and its members’ terms of service. The committee has laid out a robust schedule of projects, including an all-employee virtual anti-racism workshop in September.

Our Board of Trustees has met twice with the Frick’s DEAI consultant, first to review plans and progress and then to participate in an anti-racism workshop.

Our Learning & Visitor Experience department is continuing to expand our educational community partnerships. In August, we welcomed to our campus a group of socially distanced summer campers from South Pittsburgh’s youth anti-violence organization Voices Against Violence to create an anti-racist art installation on the Frick grounds.

We have begun asking our vendors to share information about their diversity and racial equity plans, and are ensuring that all searches for positions, services, and suppliers include Black and minority finalists.

Our curatorial department is in the throes of developing *The Frick Reflects* exhibition, examining both the social and art history of our collections and our institution’s founding.

We know the work ahead will be difficult. We will inevitably make mistakes. But we are approaching it with open hearts and open minds. And we are prepared to go the distance. Thank you, our members, for making this journey with us. ■