

Statement: Diversity Practices

One of the great privileges I have had is that of growing up within educational, neighborhood, religious and sub-cultural communities that were diverse in terms of age, gender, class and racial and ethnic identity. The pleasures and richness of that sustained exposure to diversity has made the gradual homogeneity that I have encountered within my profession to be that much more impoverished and deformed. And so it has also clarified my own project - to confront that deformity with new forms of education, cultural practice and facilitation.

As a straight, white, cisgendered man I have used and leveraged my position within academia to advance research that centers the work of those who have been historically underrepresented as well as subjects that explicitly consider the role of opponents of diversity in maintaining systems of oppression.

This has manifested in my public-facing work most prominently with my experience curating “Organize Your Own: The Politics and Poetics of Self-Determination Movements” a 9-venue nationally touring exhibition and event series on the theme of racial justice between 2016-2020. The project featured new work by contemporary artists and poets that responds to the history of the mandate from the Black Power movement to “organize your own” community against racism and drew extensively from social movement media archives. The project is documented in a book and online at <https://organizeyourown.wordpress.com>. One takeaway from the enthusiasm generated for this project was that by offering a timely exhibition and event series for campuses to host and adapt to their local context - it made great use of the “third place” that campus institutes, galleries, centers and libraries can provide to diverse communities within and beyond the campus itself.

As a faculty member at Moore College of Art & Design since 2014 I have taken quite seriously the disproportionate burden of mentoring often placed on faculty of color as well as queer faculty, female faculty and faculty with disabilities. It has been a priority for me to both find ways to value and recognize this additional work of others, while also working to extend consciousness of related curricular gaps and mentoring responsibility through campus-wide advocacy. One of my passionate commitments has been a deep interrogation of the biases and limitations of the conventional “critique” assessment process common in art/design/writing courses, and an incorporation of that concern into the institution-wide dialogue around DEI. Four years ago this led to my role in designing a campus climate survey - the results of which are still informing college-wide policies, as well as co-developing a workshop for the full faculty at In-Service on rethinking critiques, and eventually developing a workshop for students as well. One outgrowth of this was a greater recognition that the students wanted out of their departmental bubbles to talk about their work with different people and I collaborated with a team of colleagues to create a cross-departmental critique night for students across every department in the school that is now informing college-wide reforms in the foundation curriculum taught to all students.

This work has been informed by my participation in AAC&U’s Network for Academic Renewal “Diversity, Learning, and Student Success” conference in 2016, Alliance of Independent College of Art & Design’s 2018 conference on DEI and Critiques, and my participation of the Rockwood Leadership Institute’s Art of Leadership program in 2018 which focused on facilitation techniques for bringing social justice values into the workplace. In the 360 evaluation I was given anonymously by colleagues in the Rockwood

process, feedback included: “Clear communicator, great at making connections and building bridges, very conscious of their position as a white cis/het male and brings that awareness to conversations and power-building with colleagues and mentees.” Another said “Daniel is a great bridge-builder, able to identify and build relationships with people inside and outside institutional frames that can push his work forward. He knows how to build community and is intentional with structural decisions, understanding that every personnel choice and policy is political and considers every action within that frame. He is a great big picture thinker and planner and his vision is often well-thought out and wide-ranging in its understanding of how societal inequities affect students and the university environment which helps to build an environment that works for a spectrum of experiences. He has great integrity - that is such a beautiful and important quality to his work.”

Finally, in my own teaching my commitment to modeling inclusion for students is addressed through course structure/format emphasizing multi-modal to support different learners as well as students reflecting back their interpretations and experiences (see my example of a [Socratic Mapping lesson plan](#)) and classroom agreements (while they need to be generated as a group, I offer the On Being Podcast’s grounding virtues: Words That Matter, Hospitality, Humility, Patience, Generous Listening, and Adventurous Civility as prompts to students).