



Harvard University
Graduate School of Design

Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Annual Report
2019-2020



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Overview

The Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) was created in response to suggestions from faculty, staff, and students at the Graduate School of Design (GSD). While purposeful efforts from various GSD constituents have aided in increasing diversity, many in the community felt that deliberate attention to and effort towards DIB was necessary in educating design leaders. In the Spring of 2019, Naisha Bradley joined the GSD community as the inaugural Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging. Shortly after her arrival, the School supported building its DIB staffing with the hire of an Assistant Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (Administrative Fellow), Esther Chong Weathers.

During the 2019–2020 academic year, the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging began to lay the groundwork towards fostering a design community that is thoughtful of diversity and able to hold multiple identities and conflicting perspectives in an engaging and respectful way. Over the course of this year it has completed a listening tour and reported its findings to the GSD community, framed a mission and focus areas for the Office, piloted a Diversity in Design dialogue series in response to listening tour data, and launched a climate survey to gain further insight on the diversity needs and concerns of the full community. This annual report details the progress, partnerships, and initiatives of the Office since it began in February 2019.

People



Naisha Bradley serves as the Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. Responsible for the leadership of the Office, this inaugural position involves developing and implementing a school-wide strategy to increase diversity, deepen inclusion, and advance a sense of belonging among students, faculty, and staff. Her portfolio includes senior level advisement, strategic development, operational management, and financial planning for the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging.



Esther Chong Weathers serves as the Assistant Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (Administrative Fellow) at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She is responsible for the creation, development, implementation, and evaluation of office programming that raises awareness of the impact of diversity in the design fields. In addition to her programming portfolio, Esther works as a liaison to student groups and facilitates partnerships between the DIB Office and departments throughout the GSD to ensure that diversity is present throughout our community.



Photo Credit: <https://www.ballardspahr.com/diversity>

Mission

The mission of the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging is to cultivate and sustain an environment at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (GSD) that increases diversity, deepens inclusion, and advances a sense of belonging among students, faculty, staff, and our extended community. The GSD believes in equipping students with the skills to design spaces for all people to navigate. To accomplish this, we prioritize the innovation and reflection that comes from recognizing diverse perspectives and experiences, and creating space for them in our community. Our diversity, inclusion, and belonging focus areas include recruitment and retention, community engagement, representation, and assessment.

Focus Areas

1. **Recruitment and Retention:** We work in partnership with other GSD offices to ensure diverse recruitment of faculty, staff, and students and advocate for retention practices that foster inclusion.
2. **Community Engagement:** We collaborate and support faculty, staff, and students who organize identity-based programming that seeks to advance conversations about DIB. We do this by helping to create avenues for diversity in community programs, conferences, and symposia.
3. **Representation:** We strive to ensure that our community is an accurate reflection of the diversity in our world, and we accomplish this in two ways:
 - a. We review and develop GSD policies to ensure recognition of a diverse and inclusive community while providing accountability to the GSD community values.
 - b. We seek to encourage a consistent review of curriculum to maintain an academic voice that highlights the diversity of the field and that can be far-reaching to our current and prospective students.
4. **Assessment:** We seek to advance our work and mark our movement using data driven and evidence-based approaches to diversity, inclusion, and belonging.



Photo Credit: <https://www.newamerica.org/ca/blogs/californias-greatest-asset-its-diversity/>

DIB Assessment

Listening Tour

DIB Climate Survey

Listening Tour

To determine the direction of the diversity, inclusion, and belonging work that needed to occur at the GSD, the Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, Naisha Bradley, conducted a listening tour to gain insight on the needs, challenges, and opportunities for growth from GSD community members. The frame, themes, and preliminary recommendations from the Listening Tour Report are below.

Frame

Timeline: February 13, 2019 – May 17, 2019 (13 1/2 weeks)

Methodology: Individual Meetings (135), Committee Meetings, Institutional Reports, Student Evaluations, and Articles

Stakeholders: Students, Loeb Fellows, Staff, Faculty, University Colleagues, and GSD Alumni

Committee/Department Meetings: Urban Planning and Design, Architecture, and Landscape Architecture department meetings; MUP Diversity Committee; GSD Alumni Group; Rights and Responsibilities Committee; Loeb Fellows Alumni Group

Themes

Recommendations

Expand course readings beyond the design canon to include voices of designers that are women and people of color



A need for more faculty of color outside of the category of visiting faculty

A need to articulate a clear message that can galvanize the work of the full community (easily identifiable mission, vision, and pillars)



The community is ready for the July leadership transition and excited about the cultural change

People report limited racial diversity among the staff



Work/life balance is important to the community

There seems to be a multifaceted hierarchy in the community between all stakeholders that prevents a free flow of ideas



Individuals describe disrespectful behavior as being prevalent in the community along power and gender lines

The culture informally attaches a hierarchy to the academic programs and it is felt by students



There is a perception in all stakeholder groups of a lack of transparency that fuels a culture of skepticism



Produce a mission and priorities for the work of the DIB office to engage the full community



Partner with Admissions, Faculty Affairs and Human Resources to create strategies in advancing recruitment, retention and representation



Work with Faculty Affairs on cultural competence initiative for faculty



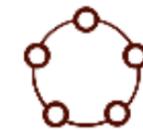
Work with student groups to strengthen DIB targeted programming



Conduct a climate survey for the full GSD community to gain insight into its voice



Release climate survey results and conduct conversations to discuss results



Add entry and mid-level staff to the Dean's Diversity Initiative



Identify DIB initiatives or co-sponsorship opportunities that highlight the value of diversity at the GSD

Engagement & Professional Development

Harvard University and Beyond

Naisha Bradley

Event Title and Organization/Institution	Date	Role
Organizational Approaches to Ending Gender Inequality, Harvard Hears You Summit	4/19	Panelist
Helping Staff Grow at Harvard, DIB Conference	5/19	Panelist
Bias and Beyond, GSD Alumni Council	9/19	Workshop Facilitator
Women in Business, WIPRO	10/19	Panelist
Teaching and Learning in the Diverse Classroom, Cornell University, X-TLDC101x	2/20	Verified Course Completion
2020 MIT Hack 4 Inclusion, MIT	2/20	DIB Coach
Alumni Affairs and Development, Harvard University	2/20	DIB Speaker
Urban Design and the Color-Line Reviews, GSD	3/20	Reviewer
Leadership: Managing Conflict Utilizing a DIB Framework, GSD Student Forum	3/20	Workshop Facilitator

Esther Chong Weathers

Event Title and Organization/Institution	Date	Role
Truth and Transformation Conference, HKS	10/19	Participant
Unconscious Bias in Schools: A Developmental Approach to Exploring Race and Racism, HGSE	11/19	Participant
Teaching and Learning in the Diverse Classroom, Cornell University, X-TLDC101x	2/20	Verified Course Completion
The Organizational Bases of Racial Discrimination, HKS	2/20	Participant
Defining Diversity: How Contemporary Diversity Rhetoric Might Undermine Equality, HKS	3/20	Participant
COVID-19: DE&I Implications and Considerations, NADOHE	3/20	Participant
The Impact of COVID-19 on the LGBTQ+ Community, National Coalition for LGBT Health	3/20	Participant
Pronouns and Beyond: Understanding Gender Identity, HMS	4/20	Participant

DIB Climate Survey



Photo Credit: <https://www.insidehighered.com/>

An important step in creating a truly diverse and inclusive community is to understand faculty, staff, and student perspectives and experiences related to their work and study at the GSD. To that end, the GSD Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging developed a Climate Survey – it is the first GSD survey that attempts to capture the community’s viewpoints and experiences related to diversity, inclusion, and belonging. The survey served as one baseline against which to measure improvement, a catalyst for community conversation, and a tool to contribute to thinking about the implementation of new programs and policies that foster an inclusive environment of belonging.

Frame

Timeline: Monday, February 10, 2020 – Friday, March 20, 2020 (5 weeks)

Methodology: Qualtrics Survey

Stakeholders: GSD Faculty, Staff, and Students

Signature Programming

The Harvard University Graduate School of Design believes that an environment of trust and mutual respect, free expression and inquiry, and a commitment to truth, excellence and lifelong learning is necessary to produce global design leaders. In alignment with that belief, the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging piloted two signature programs in the Spring of 2020, the Diversity in Design dialogue series and Community Conversations. The Diversity in Design dialogue series was established to create a consistent environment for diversity within the landscape of the School, where GSD community members explore the role of diversity in design and engage in conversations around difference. Guest speakers from across design fields serve as catalysts for these dialogues by sharing their expertise and highlighting how diversity impacts their work. The Diversity in Design dialogue series works in partnership with the Frances Loeb Library and student organizations.

GSD Community Conversations is an initiative for GSD faculty, staff, and students to informally engage with each other around topics that advance discussions about identity, difference, and commonality. It is intended to foster a learning community where meaningful dialogue and critical thinking can flourish. This initiative is ongoing and will highlight one aspect of the intersecting quality of diversity, inclusion, and belonging at a time.

DIVERSITY IN DESIGN

Dialogue series is open to the Harvard community
12:00 PM | Frances Loeb Library

FEBRUARY 5

Social Entanglements: The Politics of Belonging and Creative Placemaking

Using the City of Oakland's initiative "Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan" as a case study, this dialogue will explore how one operationalizes creative placemaking given the complexities of race, economic development, and civic trauma.

Roberto Bedoya
Cultural Affairs Manager
City of Oakland



MARCH 4



Cutting Against the Bias

The conversation about gender in design practice often leans in on the challenges as opposed to the agency of women designers. This dialogue will focus on gender as a creative driver in practice, a multi-faceted benefit in business, and a critical dimension of diversity in design.

Gina Ford
in conversation with **Brie Hensold**
Co-Founders
Agency Landscape + Planning

Co-Sponsored by *Womxn in Design*

APRIL 1

Heterogeneous Futures: Design Thinking Alternatives for Anthropologically and Ecologically Diverse Landscapes

Creating new and radical public spaces begins with unpacking the nexus of anthropological and ecological biodiversity. Expanding upon landscape ecology definitions of heterogeneity, this dialogue will explore new public space paradigms that embrace a palimpsest of histories and spatial constructs.

Diana Fernandez
Associate
Sasaki



Sponsored by the
GSD Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging
Lunch Provided

***April event cancelled due to Covid-19**

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

CREATING OUTSIDE YOUR EXPERIENCE

Explore the interplay between the role of fiction, the need for representation, and the ethics of designing spaces outside of your experience

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 | 1 PM - 2 PM
GUND 505

This conversation will be constructed around the following readings:

Fascinated to Presume: In Defense of Fiction by Zadie Smith

Who Gave You the Right to Tell That Story by Lila Shapiro

The Bearable Whiteness of 'Little Women' by Kaitlyn Greenidge



Scan QR code to access articles | Readings are recommended but not required

Informal conversation facilitated by



Dean Sarah Whiting



Professor Toni L. Griffin

Sponsored by the Dean's Office and
the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging
Cookies and Coffee Provided

Initiatives & Partnerships

African American Design Nexus

The Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging serves on the advisory board of the African American Design Nexus. This initiative was developed by the Frances Loeb Library in collaboration with the GSD's African American Student Union. It was launched to address the dearth of diverse representation in the design industry. The Design Nexus highlights black designers to “showcase their craft, explore different geographies of design practice, and inspire change within design institutions to participate in adopting new approaches to elevate black designers.”

Alumni Affairs and Development

Listening Tour Meeting

In the Spring of 2019, the Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging met with the GSD Alumni Council to discuss their diversity charge, and the challenges and opportunities for DIB they believed were present at the GSD.

Bias and Beyond Workshop

This interactive session was conducted in the fall of 2019 by the Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging for the GSD Alumni Council. While pre-work was done to identify each participant's personal bias, this workshop explored implicit bias, the impact of stereotypes, and strategies one can use to begin to move beyond bias.

DIB University Leadership Council

The Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging represents the GSD on the DIB Leadership Council. This Council is a collection of all the diversity leaders around Harvard University. Its description is as follows:

The Harvard University Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Leadership Council consists of leaders at Schools and those within central administration dedicated to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging work across the University.

These monthly convenings enable DIB Council leaders to meet and share best practices, strategize, collaborate, and pursue coordinated efforts with greater intentionality and greater impact.

The DIB Council will focus on the shared goal of developing the strategies that will drive constant improvement and identify the local implementations that can be replicated across Harvard and beyond. This “One Harvard” initiative will align the university’s decentralized campus around a coordinated vision, collectively develop commitments, set priorities for local implementation, and amplify successes.

Faculty Affairs

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

Title: Teaching and Learning in the Diverse Classroom

GSD faculty were invited by the Faculty Affairs department and the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging to participate in a professional development opportunity that supports inclusion and belonging in the classroom. Developed at Cornell University, this MOOC course explored strategies for inclusive course design, pedagogical practices, self-reflection, and social identity. Its goal was to help faculty better understand how to effectively foster student engagement and belonging across difference.

Faculty Affairs con’t

Faculty Hiring Diversity Question

The Faculty Affairs Office and the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging worked together to include a diversity question in the faculty hiring process. Moving forward, prospective faculty will be asked to respond to a diversity question with a statement that will be included in their application materials along with the teaching statement and research statement. This question is posed to help the hiring committee better understand how each applicant can best communicate their expertise to a diverse student body.

GSD Diversity Council

The Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging is an active participant in the GSD Diversity Council. Naisha Bradley serves as a co-chair on the Council while Esther Chong Weathers serves on the Communications, Media, and Public Events subcommittee. This year the Office of DIB worked in partnership with members of the GSD Diversity Council to update its mission, subcommittees, and goals. The GSD Diversity Council now serves as a consultative body to the Office of DIB around concerns that impact inclusivity and belonging for all members of the GSD community. Its updated mission is as follows:

The Mission of the GSD Diversity Council is to engage students, faculty, and staff in supporting a diverse intellectual and social climate. In alignment with this mission, it provides strategic consultation around concerns that impact inclusivity and belonging for all members of the GSD community. These concerns include, but are not limited to, recruitment and retention, curriculum, communications, media, and public events. The Council’s consultation seeks to advance a welcoming environment for individuals of varied abilities, backgrounds, beliefs, cultures, identities, races, lived experiences, perspectives, and values.

Human Resources

In response to the feedback of the listening tour, the DIB Office created a toolkit providing insight on how to conduct a more inclusive hiring process. The toolkit was shared with the GSD HR department. It included the following:

- ~ Countermeasures to Implicit Bias in Hiring one pager (with cited resources)
- ~ Interview Criteria Rubric
- ~ Interview Questions and Evaluations template

Student Life and Wellness Series

The Student Life and Wellness Series is an initiative hosted by Student Services at the Graduate School of Design. It seeks to enhance individual success and community wellbeing through respectful and transparent engagement. This initiative works in collaboration with campus partners to raise awareness around issues that impact the student experience and promote a GSD environment where students can naturally identify more balanced options when faced with daily choices. The Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging works in partnership by assisting in the design and implementation of the series. During the spring of 2020, we supported the February 3, 2020 event, *More than Pronouns: Understanding Sexual & Gender Identities*, presented by the Office of Sexual Assault Prevention & Response.