



Seattle Arts & Lectures is striving towards racial equity at all times, in all parts of our organization. And, though we will inevitably make mistakes, we commit to telling you what we've been doing in this area going forward. To be transparent about this important work, we share how racial equity has shaped our efforts.

Read our most recent Racial Equity Accountability Report below:

These updates represent significant actions that each team at SAL is highlighting from July 2021 to June 2022:

Youth Programs

- Launched a new WITS Apprentice Program by hiring two writers, each working alongside an existing WITS Writer-in-Residence, with the goal of providing meaningful on-the-job training and direct public school classroom experience to writers new to the WITS program. The program was designed to further develop a WITS cohort of writers with a demonstrated interest in, and commitment to, anti-racist education and provide paid opportunities to specifically Black, Indigenous, and writers of color with lived experience reflective of students in WITS classrooms across the Puget Sound area.
- In collaboration with WITS Writer Laura Da' (Eastern Shawnee), expanded an Indigenous Land Based Pedagogy professional development series free for classroom teachers and teaching artists entitled "Patterns of Air: Pathways for Indigenous Inspiration, Literacy, and Creativity," and gained OSPI State accreditation to provide clock hours for educators across Washington state. Outreach for the professional development module included a presentation by Da' at the 2021 Northwest Teaching for Social Justice Conference. The four-part series will continue with a third session planned in spring.
- Prioritized additional subsidies for WITS to historically underfunded schools serving majority populations of students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals. We prioritized partnering with schools who qualified for city-based arts funding subsidies like Creative Advantage and other non-PTSA-reliant sources. In 2021/22, 10 of our 23 partnering public schools are schools that have 50%+ students who qualify for free and reduced-price meals.

Public Programs

- Launched a co-presenter model for our Community Access Tickets (CAT) program with four local non-profits—Chief Seattle Club, Solid Ground, Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, and Wing Luke Museum. Donated 142 copies of Jelani Cobb’s anthology *The Matter of Black Lives* to the African-American Writers’ Association, Northwest African American Museum, Sankofa Impact, Solid Ground, *South Seattle Emerald*, and Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle.
- Continued efforts to address the intersection of racism and economic injustice by creating a new \$10 No Book/Reduced Price level for book-and-ticket events and by introducing a Reduced Price subscription across four of our core series. Committed to expanding digital access into communities beyond King County by launching a low or no-cost initiative to engage rural public libraries.
- Partnered with [Marguerite Casey Foundation](#) on two free community conversations centered on racial equity—one with [Lucy Bernholz and Vu Lee](#) (*How We Give Now*), and one with [Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor and Nikkita Oliver](#) (*From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*). Partnered with [Poetry Northwest](#) to debut the [James Welch Prize Reading](#), celebrating two emerging Indigenous poets. Launched a guest-curated series, Ijeoma Oluo Presents: Our Existence Beyond Trauma, co-presented with Langston Seattle. Partnered with the Seattle Public Library, Deaf Spotlight, and Elliott Bay Book Company to present a free event with [Raymond Antrobus](#).
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Development

- Encouraged donations to partner organizations on giving days like Giving Tuesday, especially those organizations that are led by or serve communities that identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color.
- Began to share a holistic overview of what donors’ dollars support in our fundraising communications and campaigns—including but not limited to general operating costs, staff salaries, and professional development and equity trainings—instead of focusing solely on programs.
- Continued using a strengths-based approach in our printed and online materials, event programs, and videos that values the individual and their story, and that does not tokenize or perpetuate racial stereotypes.
- Engaged more deeply and intentionally with resources that focus on equity issues in fundraising—such as racial equity, disability access, wealth disparities both locally and nationally, and centering community need—which allowed us to reflect on and make tangible changes to our fundraising practices. Our resources include the [Nonprofit AF](#) blog by Vu Le, the [Community-Centric Fundraising](#) group (including their [Aligned Actions Tool](#)), and literature and poetry by Black, Indigenous, and writers of color.

Administration

- Diversified Board leadership. Half of our Board Executive Committee identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color and 37% of the Board overall identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color.
- Continued an on-going focus on equitable hiring practices and made several internal promotions and new hires. Staffing changes:
 - Rebecca Hoogs was promoted from Associate Director to Executive Director.
 - Woogee Bae was promoted from Donor Relations Associate to Events & Annual Giving Manager.
 - Mickee Cheung was hired as Donor Relations Associate.
 - Indira Dahlstrom was hired as Writers in the Schools Program Coordinator.
 - Alison Stagner was promoted from Communications Manager to Director of Events & Outreach.
 - Letitia Cain was promoted from Marketing Coordinator to Public Programs Associate.
 - Betsey Brock was hired as Director of Development.
- Invested staff time in bi-weekly equity chats within all departments, which allow teams to dive deeper into equity issues and conversations within their own areas of work. Continued our six-year tradition of an all-staff summer book club in which staff read and discuss a book by a writer of color who is coming to SAL; this summer, we read and discussed *Good Talk* by Mira Jacob.
- Continued to interrogate our work culture as it relates to flexibility, mental health, and time for connection, care, and joy, grappling with the reality that we're all in different places in our pandemic experiences. Continued efforts to build a relational work philosophy that lives into our values, pushes against white supremacy culture, and supports our staff and community in this particularly challenging moment.
- Gave all staff raises and began contributing (based on a percent of salary) to every employee's 403(b) retirement account.