ARCS Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Plan of Action

Summary

In July 2020, in the wake of George Floyd's murder, the Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists (ARCS) solicited a call for nominations for an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Task Force. By October 2020, eight individuals were selected by the Nominations Committee for the IDEA Task Force and formally charged with the following responsibility:

> "...Examine the internal structures of ARCS and make recommendations for ways the organization can center on inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility throughout its core activities, consistent with the values stated in the ARCS strategic plan:
>
> - Demonstrate the Ethics of the Profession
> - Accountability to Membership
> - Model Transparency
> - Promote Inclusivity"

After thoughtful review of the IDEA Task Force Report, the ARCS Board developed the following plan of action that outlines how ARCS intends to move forward in IDEA work. The Plan of Action addresses the IDEA Task Force Report recommendations and creates additional recommendations not specifically outlined within the report but are critical to ARCS' commitment to IDEA practice.

It is the responsibility of all ARCS Board members, committee members, and general members to ensure that the activities noted in this document are implemented and carried forward indefinitely. The ARCS IDEA Plan of Action is intended to be a living document that will need updating as progress is made and new challenges are identified.

Acknowledgements

The Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists recognizes the dedication of the IDEA Task Force, its members and board of directors in the creation of and commitment to this plan of action.

Short Term [1-2 years]

I. **Board Focus**
   Recommendations and Actions

   A. IDEA Report - Prepare and budget for continuous IDEA training; training should be board capacity.
      a. Suggested action:
         i. Budgets for training resources should be set and defined each fiscal year and/or investment efforts created to meet these needs.
   B. Identify consultants/consulting firms
      a. Suggested action:
         i. Prepare RFP
         ii. Review organizations that can provide training
   C. IDEA Report - Executive leadership within ARCS (i.e., Board/Executive Committee) should define what Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility means within the organization. Consistent and clear messaging from leadership regarding these definitions and ideals is essential. Stakeholders' perceptions and experiences with ARCS' commitment to IDEA work are weakened by ineffective and inconsistent attempts at creating a culture rooted in IDEA values.
      a. Suggested action:
         i. Create a glossary defining key terms

II. **Committee Focus**
   Recommendations and Actions

   A. IDEA Report - "Prepare and budget for continuous IDEA training; training should be provided to all members who serve in any committee or board capacity."
      a. Suggested action:
         i. IDEA training for committee members annually.
         ii. Determine future training based on available funding and training firm RFQs
   B. IDEA Report - "Decide what metrics will be put in place for committees and executive leadership to successfully integrate IDEA."
      a. Suggested action:
         i. Monthly Committee Reports will include a section on IDEA progress and include metrics where possible.

C. IDEA Report - "Committees rely on other committees to either provide actionable IDEA practices, or suggest IDEA actions for the committee, rather than develop or practice IDEA within their own *charge* and activities."
  a. Suggested action:
      i. Incorporate IDEA goals in Committee Charges. In practice as of July 2022.
D. IDEA Report - "Decide what governing component of ARCS will hold committees and executive leadership responsible and accountable for incorporating IDEA into their work."
  a. Additional Recommendation:
      i. Decide what metrics will be put in place for committees and executive leadership to successfully integrate IDEA."
  b. Suggested actions:
      i. Quarterly Head Chairs group quarterly review of Board practices and commitments to IDEA in order to hold executive leadership accountable. In practice as of September 2021.
      ii. Membership review of Board actions through annual survey and other tools.
E. IDEA Report - "Follow up with membership and the AAPI community regarding the statement ARCS released in March 2021 to confirm or continue actions set out by the statement for ARCS."
  a. Suggested action:
      i. As of May 2022, currently brainstorming ideas; committed to a plan by December 2022. Example ideas could include:
          1. Conducting webinars co-organized with associated organizations.
      ii. Connect with other communities regarding future statements.
      iii. Determine ARCS responses to national/international events and who will author said responses.

III. **Member Focus**
Recommendations and Actions

A. IDEA Report - "Developing opportunities to solicit member review of Board practices and commitments to IDEA in order to hold executive leadership accountable."
  a. Suggested action:

   i. Create an ARCS Member Review of Board online feedback tool by January 2023 that is announced via ARCS Update and social media accounts with recurring reminders as needed in ARCS Update.
   1. Investigate cost for the creation of a feedback tool.
   2. Membership Engagement is responsible for managing the feedback tool, generating questions/topics, cadence of new communications, and reciprocity of reporting back to Membership and Board.
   3. Have this tool available on the ARCS website for members to engage with the ARCS board that can initially be Q&A-like, with options for pen forum format for people to leave comments and submit feedback on the state of IDEA issues.
   4. Ensure language is written so that as members submit feedback that someone or someones are receiving the feedback and that the member will be heard.
   5. Make anonymity the default.
   6. The feedback tool should not be placed behind a paywall and needs to be promoted and shared.

   ii. Board Liaisons and Committee Chairs of Membership Engagement Committee and appropriate sub-committee shall schedule at least 1 Meet up or similar event annually promoting in-person engagement with membership to share more about ARCS IDEA work to date and solicit feedback.

   iii. Encourage attendance by Board members.

Medium Term [within 2-3 years]

I. Board Focus
Recommendations and Actions

A. Additional Recommendation - Implementation
   a. Suggested action:
      i. The ARCS Board will ensure the goals set forth in the IDEA Plan of Action are implemented at all levels of ARCS.
B. Additional Recommendation - Accountability

a. Suggested action:
    i. The ARCS Board will hold committees and committee members accountable by ensuring work and communication is in compliance with the IDEA Plan of Action.
    ii. ARCS members will hold the Board accountable in complying with the IDEA Plan of Action.

C. Additional Recommendation - Assessment
  a. Suggested Action:
    i. The ARCS Board will assess the IDEA Plan of Action on an annual basis to ensure it is current, actionable, and meeting the needs of ARCS members, collections professionals, and the cultural community.
    ii. The ARCS Board will review and approve committee charges on an annual basis to ensure they are in alignment with IDEA Plan of Action.

II. Committee Focus
Recommendations and Actions

A. IDEA Report - "Encourage and require inclusive language throughout the organization in programming, committee actions and meetings."
  a. Suggested action:
    i. Committee Head Chairs group will implement inclusive language based on IDEA training and definition of terms.

B. IDEA Report - "Committees define creative and intentional ways to integrate more accessible practices into programming and communication to diversify member and non-member engagement."
  a. Suggested action:
    i. This work will be tracked in the Committee Monthly reports and more accessible and diverse programming will be part of the FY23 program.

C. IDEA Report - "Ensure future ARCS surveys include IDEA questions and statements to continue to gauge stakeholder experiences and perspectives. For reference regarding specific questions, please refer to the IDEA Survey from June 2021."
  a. Suggested action:
    i. Future ARCS surveys to include IDEA focused questions to gauge stakeholder experiences and perspectives. We can refer to the June 2021 IDEA Survey for reference. Some IDEA questions were included in the March 2022 Member Survey

but we will elaborate on these in the March 2023 survey.

III   **Member Focus**
Recommendations and Actions

A. IDEA Report - "Offer IDEA training to membership [videos/resources [ARCS members]. Training should also be offered to the general membership to meet ARCS' goals for integrated IDEA practices within the organization."
   a. Suggested action:
      i. Membership Engagement Committee (or sub-committee) is responsible for managing the "trainings," setting the schedule, identifying topics to discuss and content experts to facilitate "trainings," developing metrics and quality assurance data.
         1. "Trainings" must align with the Board, Executive Committee, and other Committees training.
B. IDEA Report - "Host programming regarding pressing social and political issues in both publicly accessible non-members and member events. Topics included but are not limited to: repatriation, decolonizing collections, provenance research, microaggressions in the workplace, responsibility of registrars and collections specialists regarding these topics, etc."
   a. Suggested action:
      i. Engage in membership conversations as well as non-members townhalls to be more inclusive and invite aligned professional organizations.
      ii. Host 1-2 social issues conversations per calendar year

Long Term [within 3-5 years]

I.   **Board Focus**
Recommendations and Actions

A. Additional Recommendation - Implementation
   a. Suggested action:
      i. The ARCS Board will ensure the goals set forth in the IDEA Plan of Action are implemented at all levels of ARCS.
B. Additional Recommendation - Accountability
   a. Suggested action:

i. The ARCS Board will hold committees and committee members accountable by ensuring work and communication is in compliance with the IDEA Plan of Action.

ii. ARCS members will hold the Board accountable in complying with the IDEA Plan of Action

C. Additional Recommendation - Assessment

    a. Suggested Action:

      i. The ARCS Board will assess the IDEA Plan of Action on an annual basis to ensure it is current, actionable, and meeting the needs of ARCS members, museum professionals, and the museum field.

      ii. The ARCS Board will review and approve committee charges on an annual basis to ensure they are in alignment with IDEA Plan of Action

II. Committee Focus

Recommendations and Actions

A. IDEA Report - "Build relationships and partner with networks and organizations outside of ARCS' current network, such as special interest or affinity groups. Avoid creating a climate of othering from limiting the network to current ARCS volunteers (committee chairs, committee members, Board, etc)."

    a. Suggested action:

      i. Advocacy, Partnerships, and Global Connections Committees to recommend and make connections.

      ii. Recommendations for partnerships can originate with any ARCS member, and Advocacy, Partnerships, or Global Connections will make the connections.

B. IDEA Report - "Prioritize intentional and widespread collaboration with CS-AAM to be a more collaborative and inclusive partnership that can strengthen the relationships between both organizations and the role ARCS can have in the professional stakes of members within the broader cultural professionals community."

    a. Suggested action:

      i. Education and Advocacy to make connections and recommend joint programing.

C. IDEA Report - "Increase support for the Mentorship, Professional Programming, and Global Initiatives committees."

    a. Suggested action:

        i.   Increase fundraising efforts dedicated to inclusive programming.

D. IDEA Report - "Collect self-voluntary demographic data on race and ethnicity of general membership through membership renewal or registration cycles."

    a. Suggested action:

        i.   Continue to collect data through the annual survey.

        ii.   Roll out the new payment structure [January 2023].

III   **Member Focus**

Recommendations and Actions

A. IDEA Report - "Host caucus sessions similar to the ones facilitated by IDEA Task Force Members at the 2021 Conference. These informal conversations with general membership will continue to build trust and dialogue around IDEA principles and offer opportunities for new perspectives and actions for IDEA to be developed."

    a. Suggested action:

        i.   Board or appropriate committee should determine if the term "caucus" is the right solution for this kind of program.

        ii.   Conference Committee and Conference Content Task Force is responsible for organizing schedules, identifying topics to host, content experts to facilitate by November 2022.

            1. Identify who will moderate each (Board/Committee/Member/Hired facilitator?)

            2. Identify important relevant topics to discuss

                a. Topics should not be solely museum-based. We can reach out to our fellow GLAM and adjacent professions to ensure a broad spectrum of IDEA topics are considered.

B. IDEA Report -"Host Town Halls accessible to members and non-members with the intent of offering the space to listen to interested and invested parties within the field and promote networks of support."

    a. Suggested action:

        i.   The Programming Committee is responsible for organizing schedules, identifying topics to host and content experts to facilitate by Spring 2023.

            1. Identify who would moderate each (Board, Committee, Member, or Hired facilitator?)

2. Identify topics to discuss and best way to stage topic sessions so they are not stagnant or a re-hashing of previous conversations and rather build upon previous "trainings" and programming.
    a. A first or early Town Hall featuring a presentation from the Board about our IDEA work with moderated Q&A is recommended.
3. Topics should not be solely museum-based. We can reach out to our fellow GLAM and adjacent professions to ensure a broad spectrum of IDEA topics are considered.
C. Create a structure to have meaningful engagement with international communities to encourage greater membership.
D. Consider posting all opportunities available within ARCS to different types of listservs or boards that are targeted to a variety of communities.