
We Still Care: Continued Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Collections Care

ARCS St. Louis
Friday, November 21, 2025

Agenda

- Introductions
- Overview and definitions
- Science/natural history/government museums
- Art museums
- Recommendations and Questions

Speakers

- **Sebastián Encina**

Director of Curation & Exhibition, Minnetrista Museum & Gardens

- **Elise LeCompte**

Museum Consultant, Former Registrar, Florida Museum of Natural History
(ret. July 2025)

- **Katie Prichard**

Registrar for Permanent Collections & Loans Out, Seattle Art Museum

Overview and Definitions

DEIA is dead!



Overview and Definitions

Why does it matter?

- Be a good human
- Create a welcoming space
- Tell more inclusive stories
- Have more complete catalogue records!



Heritage Collection, Minnetrista Museum & Gardens

Overview and Definitions

But aren't these words forbidden???

- Woke
- Inclusion/Inclusion
- Female
- Trans...
- Black
- Latin(o)(a)(x)
- Diversity
- ...



Overview and Definitions

What can we do????

- REVOLUTION!
- Evolution?
- Education



Overview and Definitions

What can I do?

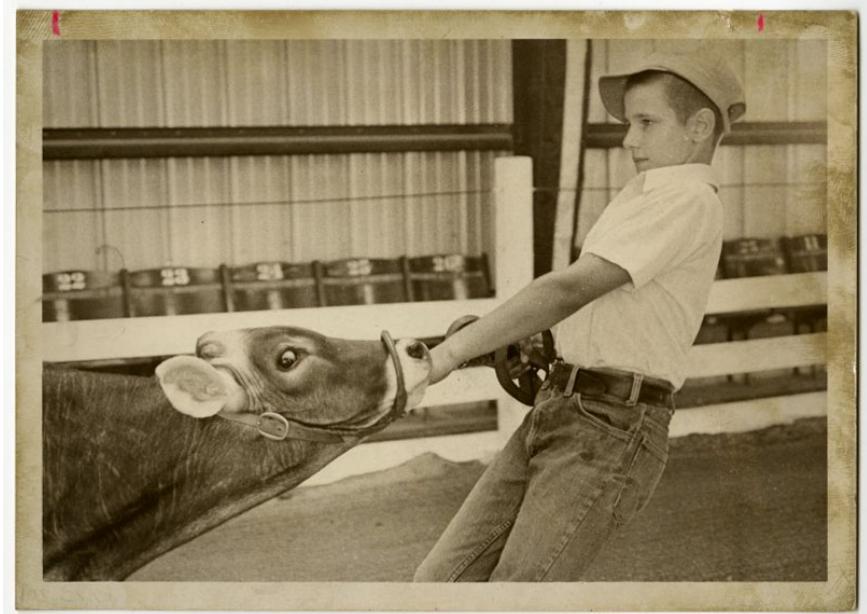
- It is not on you to change the world
- Small steps make a big difference
- Recognition goes a long way
- A kind gesture means something



Overview and Definitions

Know your limits

- Don't take on too much
- What is possible in your institution given your role?
- Where can you take action?
- What is realistic and sustainable?



Heritage Collection, Minnetrista Museum & Gardens

Overview and Definitions

The little things

- Welcome people through invitations
- Don't "other"
- Year-round inclusivity
 - Black history month
 - Indigenous peoples month
 - Pride month

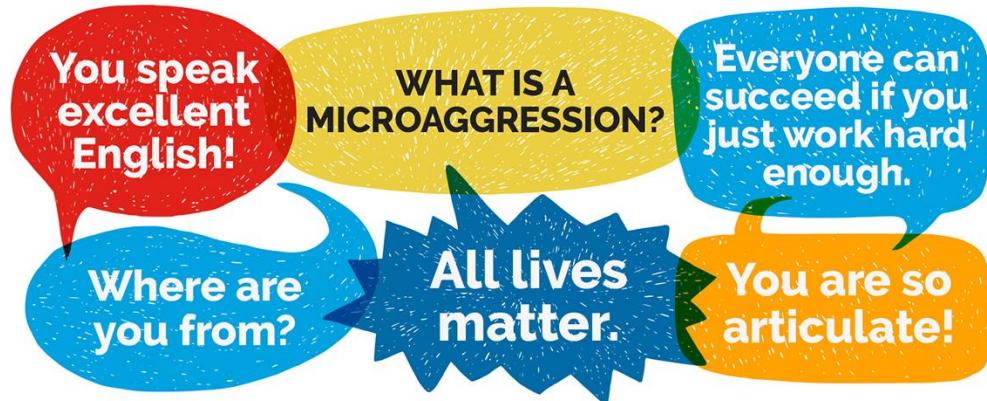


World Market

Overview and Definitions

Recognize

- Unconscious biases
- Microaggressions
- Non-compliments



Overview and Definitions

- Choose kindness
- Decenter your experiences
- Leave space for others
- It takes time!

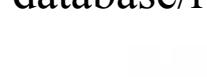


Heritage Collection, Minnetrista Museum & Gardens

Overview and Definitions

Little solutions

- Allow for foreign characters in your database/records
- Non-Latin script
- Text-to-speech
- Words matter





Overview and Definitions

Oops, I did it again!

- Catch yourself
- Simple apology
- Learn from it
- Do not make a big deal out of it



DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums

“Protracted neglect is both shameful and sad, but there is nothing so unsettling, or so unforgivable, as intentionally inflicted damage.”
—*the ECHO of OLD BOOKS*, Barbara Davis



DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums

States around the country began passing laws that prohibited schools and businesses from teaching certain concepts.



FL Governor DeSantis speaks to College Republicans at Florida International University in 2018

[https://firstamendment.mtsu.edu/
article/stop-w-o-k-e-act-florida/](https://firstamendment.mtsu.edu/article/stop-w-o-k-e-act-florida/)

DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums

HB 7: The Florida State “Stop Woke” bill, July 1, 2022

- Ironically titled The Individual Freedom Act
- University of Florida faculty required to attend a lecture by UF Florida Counsel to explain what we were no longer allowed to do in our classes
- Transgender guest lecturer in my collections management course

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stop_WOKE_Act)

DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums

- Internally, administrative attitudes remained the same
 - Florida Museum of Natural History
 - Consultation and repatriation
 - UF Museum Studies Program
 - Alachua Co. Community Remembrance project in collaboration with the national Equal Justice Initiative
- Work continued but using different terminology

DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums

Consultation and Repatriation Continues at the Florida Museum of Natural History

Haida Argillite Carving

<https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/pearsall/blog/artifact/p0956/>



Choctaw basket
<https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/pearsall/blog/artifact/p1847/>

DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums



UF Museum Studies students and Alachua County community members gather outside of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice

DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums



Soil Collection Ceremony
<https://truth.alachuacounty.us/history/accrp-eji>



Soil Collection Jar Exhibit
<https://truth.alachuacounty.us/in-memoriam/soil-exhibit>

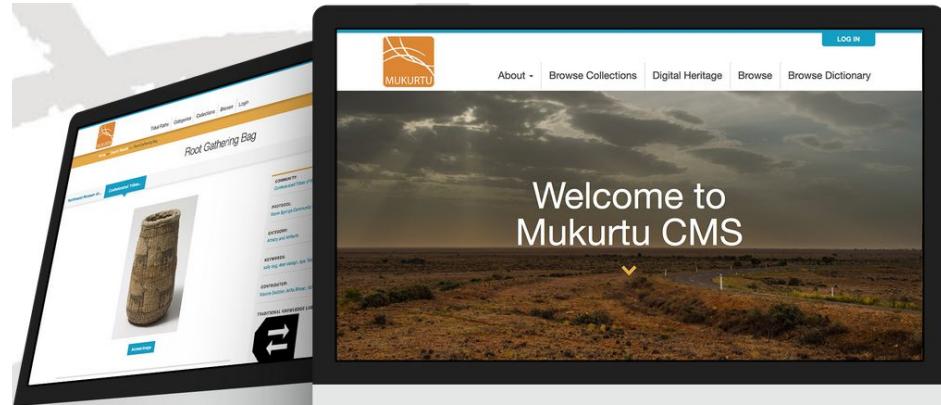
DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums

- Internally, administrative attitudes remained the same
 - UF Samuel Proctor Oral History Program and Libraries
 - Using Mukurtu, a free, mobile, and open source platform built with Indigenous communities to manage and share digital cultural heritage to update oral history recordings
 - *Redressing Native American Oral Histories. Revitalization, Repatriation, and Responsible Sharing of Digital Cultural Heritage*, revisits Native American interviews curated at the University of Florida

DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums



<https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/NAOH>



<https://mukurtu.org/>

Research Article

Redressing Archival Harm: Ownership, Access, and Indigenous Knowledge

Evangeline Giaconia  , Ginessa Mahar  & Perry Collins 

Pages 119-131 | Published online: 24 Jan 2024

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0361526X.2023.2286237>

DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums

Removing colonial terms and replacing them with associated community terms

- Language used to refer to collections:
 - “Ancestral remains and cultural belongings”
 - Replacing colonial terms with indigenous terms
 - Replacing colonial tribal names with indigenous tribal names
 - In collections management records (e.g., DOGs, catalogs, condition reports)
 - In collections databases

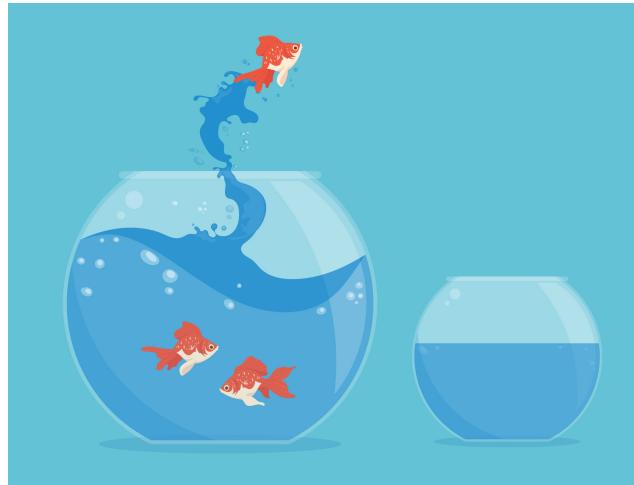
DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums

What Can You Do?

- Get involved with national and regional organizations where DEAI work is still being done (e.g., ARCS, AASLH, AAM, SEMC)
- Consult and collaborate with museums and organizations that are still able to incorporate DEAI in what they do and how they operate
- When necessary, make it clear that you are doing the work as a private, independent professional and not as a representative of any organization.

DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums

REBEL



DEIA Efforts in Science/Natural History/Government Museums

“Be brave and do the work. But do it your way. The world needs your voice” –*the ECHO of OLD BOOKS*, Barbara Davis



DEIA Efforts in Art Museums (A *small* selection)

- Honoring artist identities
- Increasing diversity in collections
- Seeking out underrepresented artists
- Developing reparative cataloguing practices
- Developing equitable pay scales and payment practices

DEIA Under Attack

- January 20th EO declares DEI “immoral” and “illegal discrimination.”
- Cuts to funding organizations with special but careless focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Private, public, for-profit, and non-profit organizations begin to slash their DEI offices, staff, and programs.



[Chronicle of Higher Ed: UM Shuts DEI Office](#)

Continuing the work

“Agency in the Quiet Work”

or

“Activism through Neglect”

DEIA on the DL

- Equitable compensation for vendors.
- Equity in cataloguing.
- Ended unpaid internships before it was mandated (or supported).
- Increased exposure to and understanding of non-colonial knowledge-keeping.

Continuing the work

- Find your allies
- Change your terminology
- Attention isn't necessary
- Track your progress
- Pick your battles
- Feel your feelings but practice self care

Recommendations & Questions

- What has worked for you?
- What has NOT worked for you?
- What would you like to see?
- What have you seen that gives you hope?

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