

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task-force (DEI) Mission Statement

The Foundations Art Theory and Education (FATE) organization stands with marginalized groups in the fight against racism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism, and all other efforts to exclude individuals based on identity, status or origin. FATE is a member-run organization. The FATE Board of Officers, elected from our members, creates governing bi-laws, determines conference costs, and organizes biennial conferences along with a host institution. FATE strives to be a proactively anti-racist, anti-hegemonic organization, and we are actively working to reflect these anti-racist values in our structure, leadership, and community. Although we have made notable strides towards expanding our membership and outreach to historically marginalized groups, we still have much work to do.

To make FATE a more efficacious support tool for a greater spectrum of people, the Task-force is proactively working to include diverse voices and establish ourselves as a welcoming community for historically disadvantaged groups within academia.

To accomplish this we aim to:

- Increase heterogeneous representation on the FATE Board of Officers.
- Provide additional conference attendance funding opportunities for historically marginalized groups.
- Provide additional conference attendance funding opportunities for contingent faculty.
- Create strategic cohorts within FATE called Affinity Groups.
- Implement and facilitate “Affinity Group meet-ups” at conferences to connect people with shared affinities and to counter tokenism.
- Listen to our Affinity Groups and take these suggestions to the board for implementation.
- Increase mentorship opportunities at our conferences to support the professional advancement of our members.
- Provide a letter of inclusive best practices to be shared with future conference host institutions that provides guidance for keynote speaker selection and other strategies for increasing representation and diversifying the conference with heterogeneous speakers.
- Work with the FATE Board to substantially cut conference costs with the objective of making the FATE conference conceivable to marginalized academics.
- Engage with community colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and other historically neglected academic demographics.
- Increase representation of non-homogenous voices on FATE social media platforms.

We see the above objectives as falling into one of three implementation strategies, each of which can be addressed through a collaborative effort between the FATE Board, future host institutions and our members:

- Financial: Increased fiscal responsiveness and substantial funding opportunities.
- Membership outreach: increased mentorship, cohort building, and representation.
- Structural changes: implementation of new administrative positions, new conference strategies and procedural changes.

FATE has made some progress towards pursuing our inclusivity goals. In 2018, the DEI Task-force published a Diversity and Inclusion statement detailing our commitment to this cause and our anti-racist, anti-hegemonic position. This document was shared with our members online and through our Peer-reviewed journal FATE-in-Review. The Task-force also co-hosted the panel *Best Practice Share for Diversity and Inclusion in Foundations* at the 2019 FATE conference in Columbus, Ohio. This panel, a platform for diverse voices, invited presenters to share their anti-racist pedagogy, activism and strategies for radical inclusion in the classroom. We are currently working to update our Guidelines for Foundations document to reflect our inclusive mission.

The Task-force understands that some of the greatest obstacles to diversification and inclusion are financial. With this in mind FATE created and implemented reduced membership and conference rates for adjunct faculty, and member-nominated “Shout-out Awards” to provide more conference funding opportunities to a wider range of attendees. We are creating a rubric to ensure equitable distribution of these awards. Reduced rates and Shout-out Awards provide an example of work that can result in tangible demographic change through a path to conference attendance for marginalized groups and contingent faculty. These funding opportunities also send a message of inclusion to our members, indicating that their presence at our conference is valued and honored. We are working to expand the Shout-out Award program with the ultimate goal of tailoring some of these awards to support communities that have been historically neglected in academia.

After the recent killing of George Floyd, within the context of the surrounding protest movement, FATE issued a statement to our members supporting Black Lives Matter and condemning racism in our community. The Task-force has encouraged the implementation of a social media manager position on the board so we can proactively engage in cultural discussions and articulate FATE’s anti-hegemonic position to our members in high-visibility forums. We also believe this arena is a way to showcase our members individually and a valuable opportunity for increased representation.

Despite commendable steps towards our diversity and inclusivity goals, we recognize these gestures as incremental changes, and know we have more to do. The FATE Diversity and Inclusion Task-force is committed to creating real and lasting change within our organization, with the ultimate objective of dismantling hegemonic structures in academia and providing increased access to FATE’s valuable people and resources.

Beyond the objectives listed in this mission statement, FATE is open to hearing more from our community in regards to the task-force’s mission. We see listening to our members as an essential part of this process.

Please feel free to reach out to committee chair Katie Hargrave at khargrav@gmail.com