

Statement on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

Chantrell M. Lewis

It's important to me that DEIB doesn't become (or remain) a stagnant idea or trendy phrase. Due to systemic bias, as a Black Woman, my life, education and career's trajectory has been perpetually dependent upon DEIB efforts of the organizations and schools within my communities. The lack of concern surrounding DEIB is a form of classed, racial, ability and gender bias. In my arts education career, I have worked to combat this system with the intentional acquisition of knowledge regarding the cultures and social structures of groups who have historically been disregarded in education, arts and literacy. I recognize that there are additional support needs for everyone, as I work to highlight and equitably support those of marginalized persons. You cannot push a person in the direction of success, if you do not know who that person is or what they may need. Therefore, creating equitable spaces requires an acknowledgement of the imbalances, adjusting and allocating resources to create fair working environments for groups from a multitude of social, cultural and ethnic livelihoods. I believe that everyone can succeed when they are given an honest opportunity to. As an arts educator, I am committed to creating classrooms that are welcoming, safe and accessible for every student by providing students a healthy and consistent classroom structure, schedule, means of communication and flexible in class exercises. I demonstrate my continued dedication to DEIB and anti-racist, anti-bias practices by continuing to learn about those around me and through integrating a culturally competent plethora of knowledge, curiosity and appreciation into my daily interactions, curriculum and academic research.