

**KENDALL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN OF FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY  
REPORT on DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION  
FOR THE *DIVERSITY AT FERRIS ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021***

**INTRODUCTION**

Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University (KCAD) is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As a learning community, KCAD works to create an environment that is welcoming to diverse populations, a curriculum that reflects both cultural diversity and diversity in expression, and programming that is inclusive and innovative in its content, intent, and ideas. KCAD's approach to diversity is to reach inward to the KCAD community through its curriculum and campus opportunities, while extending outward with industry partnerships, and community outreach programming.

*What actions were taken to address/implement initiatives that are in the current diversity and inclusion plan? What actions were taken to address/implement initiatives that are in the University's strategic plan?*

At the beginning of the fall 2020 semester, KCAD's President shared with the campus community that in addition to enrollment that diversity, equity, and inclusion would become focus areas to guide decision making and prioritization at KCAD. During the 2020-2021 academic year, KCAD would seek to provide learning opportunities and build awareness in our campus community. The following year, KCAD would focus on using the knowledge gained to create change and assist to inform the next diversity plan for the university, which includes KCAD.

After the murder of George Floyd and the unrest in the City of Grand Rapids, KCAD's President assembled the KCAD Equity Council to advise on KCAD policies, practices, and procedures to build a more equitable learning and work community. This group consists of members from the KCAD and FSU communities as well as broader community influencers. This council assists KCAD's President in identifying opportunities and initiatives for change, improvement, and action to support community, allyship, and agency. To date, the KCAD Equity Council has provided feedback on recruitment, student engagement, and language used in the college-wide assessment criteria that are in development.

KCAD's President also committed to sponsoring and facilitating the KCAD Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Brown Bag Conversation Series. This virtual series included presentations from Dr. David Pilgrim, Grand Rapids City Manager Mark Washington, Ana Ramirez-Saenz, Dr. Deepa Butoliya, and local professional design organizations, including IIDA Michigan Chapter, AIA Grand Rapids, and AIGA West Michigan.

One of the standing committees of the KCAD Faculty Senate is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI). The charge of this committee is to "Identify KCAD's challenges and strengths in achieving and relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Recommend structures,

initiatives, and policies relevant to supporting, educating, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Monitor and report on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.” During the 2020-2021 academic year, KCAD’s DEI Committee worked on several initiatives focusing primarily on developing and facilitating educational programming for the KCAD community.

In collaboration with the university's Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, KCAD's DEI Committee created a series of workshops for faculty around best practices in creating inclusive syllabi, assignments, and curriculum in the arts and design. KCAD's DEI Committee, KCAD Student Engagement Office, the university's LGBTQ+ Resource Center, and Grand Rapids Pride Center co-sponsored a screening of the film *MAJOR!* (2018), a documentary film about Black transgender activist Miss Major Griffin-Gracy on March 26, 2021. A Zoom-based discussion lead by Sarah Doherty, the university’s Coordinator of the LGBTQ+ Resource Center, and Jazz McKinney, Executive Director of the Grand Rapids Pride Center, followed this screening. Twenty-four people attended the film screening, with 15 participating in the zoom discussion.

For the second year, KCAD worked with the university’s LGTBQ+ Resource Center to participate in the 2021 Lavender Graduation ceremony.

*These actions support the current Ferris State University Diversity and Inclusion Plan goal of building and maintaining an infrastructure that supports diversity and promotes inclusion.*

*These actions also support the Ferris Forward Strategic Plan key area of Academic Programming and Offerings Initiative 5: Foster a rich, student-centered educational experience.*

During KCAD’s fall 2020 All College Meeting, the university's Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning staff facilitated a workshop for all KCAD employees called *Examining Unconscious Bias: From Habit to Hope*. This interactive workshop challenged KCAD faculty and staff to be aware of the bias they bring into their classrooms, workplace, teams, etc. Following this workshop, KCAD employees were encouraged to participate in a two-part training session called *Mental Health: Supporting Our Students*, developed and presented by the KCAD Director of Counseling and Disability Services. At the beginning of the spring 2021 semester, KCAD faculty, in collaboration with the university's LGBTQ+ Resource Center, facilitated a training called *The Proper Use of Pronouns*.

*These actions support the current Ferris State University Diversity and Inclusion Plan goal of creating a university that is respectful of differences and civil towards people who are different.*

In late 2020, the university’s Director of Community Engagement, UICA, KCAD, and GRPS representatives began developing a community education program offered at the Southwest Community Campus Middle/High School (SWCC), where FSU has leased space. This program aims to increase access to free design education opportunities in the communities KCAD is working to serve. With the support of the Meijer Foundation, Steelcase, and the Grand Rapids Public Schools Foundation, the KCAD Design Academy was established. This program will

provide after-school enrichment programs for 7th and 8th graders and dual enrollment courses in design at SWCC. The program is slated to launch in fall 2021.

Wege Prize 2021 brought together critical minds from across the globe to collaboratively design and propose a product, service, business/nonprofit organization, or other solution to a wicked problem that can help transition from a linear economic model to a circular economic model. Transdisciplinary teams of five students pitched ideas and competed for \$30,000 in prize monies. This year's competition saw 35 teams from 29 different countries participate. The live stream event had 423 unique viewers from 16 countries. The ability to cross collaborate and share this experience across the globe while addressing wicked problems is an impactful learning experience and unique opportunity.

*These actions support the current Ferris State University Diversity and Inclusion Plan goal of building upon existing partnerships and creating new partnerships that enhance the University's commitment to and work with diverse populations.*

*These actions also support the Ferris Forward Strategic Plan key area of Pride and Community Initiative 3: Identify, create, and pursue opportunities that strengthen student-focused partnerships with local community.*

In April 2021, KCAD faculty joined the Office of International Education at the Global Art and Design Education Expo 2021 hosted by Zista Events. This expo was a recruitment opportunity for international students interested in art and design education. This event yielded 2,333 prospective international students to include in recruitment communications.

*These actions support the Ferris Forward Strategic Plan key target of increasing the number of international students to 300.*

### **What are the major diversity and inclusion challenges KCAD is facing?**

Receiving an education in fields of art or design has traditionally been perceived as a privilege. Design is about making things better for users by improving processes, products, functions, and experience. Fine art is focused on the visual narrative of our humanity. There is an opportunity for KCAD to lead a cultural shift and change this perception by promoting and celebrating the diverse response and connection to our world. KCAD will continue to seek experiences and knowledge from the community to advise and inform policy, procedure, and practice at KCAD to help lead this cultural shift.

Systemic changes will be required to shift this perception around art and design education and careers. Design is all around, it impacts everyday lives, yet K-12 curriculum does not promote the exploration of creative and design careers. Currently, in North America, designers, across disciplines, are 71% white (Design Census 2019).

KCAD is committed to listening and learning from our students. We are committed to exploring and promoting diverse perspectives in our community. Recently, 121 KCAD students participated in the National Assessment of Collegiate Campus Climates (NACCC) survey that the university administered. During the 2021-2022 academic year, KCAD will use this data to help shift programming, opportunities, and culture to support a more just and equitable future.

**What can KCAD offer as we begin the process of creating the next diversity/inclusion/equity plan?**

Over the last few years, KCAD's community has become more active in participating and collaborating effectively with the university. The process of creating the next diversity/inclusion/equity plan is an exciting opportunity for KCAD to join the university as a motivated collaborator.

With KCAD on an urban campus in Grand Rapids and with the demographics of KCAD, having active participation in the development of the next plan offers the opportunity for a more inclusive and enterprise-wide approach.