



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Updates

Spring 2021

Dear Sam Fox School Community,

The 2020-2021 academic year has highlighted the inequities across this country, and within our own School community. Our efforts to support equity in justice, access, and outcomes have continued, and this report shares the efforts across the Sam Fox School to create a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community.

Our efforts in the School are within the context of on-going intimidation, violence, and hate crimes against Asian and Asian Americans, contentious politics at the local and national level, and efforts to seek justice for the families of those killed in racialized violence by law enforcement.

We must continue to investigate—at both an individual and a School level—the ways we have failed to address these systemic issues, the ways we can do better, and the ways we can put these reflections into action.

As always, we invite your feedback, both on the format and content of what we are sharing, and on the work that we’re undertaking within the School.

You can find additional information, as well as a record of this report, on the Sam Fox School website [here](#).

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Committees and Organizing Groups

Fairness & Diversity Committee, 2020-2021 academic year

The Sam Fox School Fairness & Diversity Committee advises the Dean's Office on related issues including improving recruitment and retention efforts; strengthening the environment for women and members of minority groups; and stimulating and responding to opportunities that promote and encourage diversity, tolerance, and equity among all groups in the Sam Fox School. Learn more about their work [here](#).

Current activities include:

- Hosted Baselines 2021 workshop on March 17, with over 70 students, staff, and faculty participating to discuss civility and interactions in the Sam Fox School.
- Emerging as a central response hub to issues related to fairness and diversity within the Sam Fox School.
- Recruited 5 student representatives to join the committee.
- Informing strategic planning for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Membership

Bruce Lindsey, Chair	Liz Kramer	Tim Portlock
Nicole Allen	Meredith Lehman	Mónica Rivera
Shantel Blakely	Arny Nadler	Dryden Wells
Petra Kempf	Shreyas R Krishnan	

Student Members:

Elaina Echevarria (MArch)	Yutong Ma (MSAS)	Madison Ronchetto (BFA)
Bomin Kim (DrSU)	Samantha Modder (MFA-VA)	

Commitments and Planning

Past demands, commitments, and statements are available online [here](#). These efforts are ongoing.

Assistant Director for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

As committed to in fall 2020, the Sam Fox School has hired Stephen Deaderick for a new position, assistant director for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Deaderick will begin this full-time role on June 1, 2021. In this full-time staff role, Deaderick will work closely with the Dean's Office, the Fairness & Diversity Committee, the Colleges of Architecture and Art, and other Sam Fox School staff, faculty, and students to ensure high-quality programming, policies, and communications that welcome diversity, foster inclusion, and prioritize equity in outcomes for members of the Sam Fox School community on a daily basis. Read more about him [here](#).

Strategic Planning

The Sam Fox School is in the midst of a 10-year strategic planning effort. The Fairness & Diversity Committee has written a working group paper which outlines proposed actions and investments for the Sam Fox School. These proposals fall into four categories: diversify the staff and faculty, leadership and support, learning and unlearning towards an environment of equity and inclusion, and scholarships and pipeline. Proposed investments include increasing support for the assistant director for diversity, equity, and inclusion; creating a dashboard of measurements; supporting pipeline programs like Alberti, Architecture Discovery, and Portfolio Plus; and recruiting and retaining diverse faculty and staff.

Courses, Curriculum, and Studio Projects

The Sam Fox School regularly offers courses that directly address identity, diversity, inclusion, equity, and racial justice. We've highlighted a few courses and projects from the spring 2021 semester below.

New Course

Modern Architecture, Race, and Ethnicity

In this new history seminar, *Shantel Blakely* led a review of issues related to modern architecture, race, and ethnicity as represented in recent literature and historical examples, focusing mainly on architecture in the urban context. Themes included the history and theory of architecture; architecture as art and as service; architecture and social class; and technology and intersectionality.

New Course

You Are Here: Engaging St. Louis' Racial History Through Site + Story

In this 1.5 credit course, targeted to first-year students, *Penina Acayo Laker*, *Patty Heyda*, and *Heidi Kolk* led a group of students through the history of sites in St. Louis through storytelling. Students wrestled with fundamental questions of power, positionality, and perspective, hearing from guests who brought their own experiences of how designers, artists, architects, and activists engage St. Louis. The course included a mix of Sam Fox School students across art, architecture, and design, as well as Arts & Sciences students.

New Course

Engaging Community: Understanding the Basics

Paired with You Are Here, this 1.5 credit class taught by *Liz Kramer* addressed the practices, skills, and mindsets of engaging the community as a creative practitioner. Students practiced listening, observation, reflection, and improvisation, learning the techniques of relationship building and power disruption.

MFA-VA Studio Project

Monument to the Venezuelan Diaspora (Moumento a la Diáspora Venezolana) by Carlos Salazar-Lermont (MFA-VA22)

Carlos Salazar-Lermont is currently working with the [Venezuelan Association of Missouri](#) (AVMO) to engage members of the Venezuelan diaspora living in the St. Louis region in production, exhibition, and discussion spurred by the creation of this sculpture, which will “embody the grief produced by the massive migration of Venezuelans, caused by the current social, political, and economic collapse in Venezuela.” Concept drawing pictured to the right.



Support for Guests and Partnerships

Alternative Atlas: St. Louis

Linda C. Samuels, working in partnership with *Geoff*

Ward and *Walter Johnson*, utilized her CityStudioSTL Faculty Course Grant to incorporate the ongoing memory work of representatives from East St. Louis, West County, and North City. This

process included bringing in guests from the regional St. Louis community, including the leadership of the 4theVille organization, The Commonwealth Project, and the National Black Tourism Network. A work in progress, the Alternative Atlas project “overtly exposes, decodes, and displays silenced truths. Inspired by traditional tour guides, maps, signs, and itineraries, this course aims to unearth and represent the deeper foundations of the complicated city of St. Louis and its immediate region.”

Programming and Exhibitions

Programming—particularly lectures by visitors—is key to bringing new voices and perspectives to the Sam Fox School. Some highlights are described below.

Visiting Artists

[Artist-in-Residence Jordan Weber, in partnership with the Pulitzer Arts Foundation and CRE²](#)

Spring 2021

Jordan Weber, a multidisciplinary artist and activist based in Des Moines, Iowa, has earned a national reputation for creating sculptures, murals, installations, and community projects that investigate the intersection of social justice and environmental racism. Weber is an artist-in-residence at Washington University in spring 2021, visiting classes, participating in reviews, and other programming. In addition, Weber participated in a panel discussion titled “Environmental Racism and the Arts” on March 9, featuring *Michael Allen*, senior lecturer in architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design in the Sam Fox School; *Inez Bordeaux*, organizer for “Close the Workhouse” and manager of community collaborations at ArchCity Defenders; and *Geoff Ward*, associate director of CRE² and professor of African and African-American studies in Arts & Sciences.

Lectures

[African American Architecture in St. Louis: The Case of Charles E. Fleming](#)

January 30

In this panel discussion, faculty *Shantel Blakely* and *Eric Mumford*—both architectural historians—joined architect *Michael Willis* (BA73, MArch76/MSW76) in an interview of *Charles E. Fleming* about his more than 50 years of experience as an architect. As one of the first African Americans to earn a degree in architecture from Washington University, Fleming has made significant contributions both regionally and nationally to the field of modern architecture, including numerous residential projects in the St. Louis region.

[Amanda Williams & Giles Smith/Assemble](#)

March 4

Amanda Williams, a sole practitioner, and *Giles Smith*, part of the multi-member collective Assemble, represent the gamut of forms that an architectural practice can take, as well as the persistence and increasing visibility of architecture’s activist tradition. This talk addressed conditions such as vacancy and decline in economic activity in cities like St. Louis and Liverpool.

[Toni L. Griffin](#)

April 8

Toni L. Griffin, Professor in Practice of Urban Planning at Harvard University Graduate School of Design and founder of Urban Planning and Design for the American City, focuses her practice on spatial and racial justice within urban environments. She created the Just City Index as a roster of values cities can use to develop visions for becoming the most just spaces for their residents.

Exhibitions

[Stacking Traumas by Christine Sun Kim](#)

Atrium, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, January 25, 2021 – January 31, 2022

The California-born, Berlin-based artist *Christine Sun Kim* (b. 1980) explores concepts of sound, its visual representations, and how it is valued in society from her perspective as part of the Deaf community. In this site-specific mural, *Stacking Traumas* (2021), Kim identifies three sources of traumatic experience, represented by three tables stacked on top of one another. The bottom table denotes “dinner table syndrome,” the feeling of frustration that grows out of being surrounded by non-signing hearing people at social events. The dinner table—a symbol of family life and bonding—often represents inaccessibility to Deaf people, especially for children whose family members never learned to sign. Kim also participated in an artist talk on March 6.

Student Activities and Leadership

A number of student-led initiatives address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. A few new highlights are described below.

SFS Black Student Network at Washington University is a new undergraduate and graduate student organization dedicated to uplifting and supporting the creative voices of Black students on campus and beyond. In fall 2020, the group hosted regular open sessions and virtual events, and it is currently featuring the studios of its members this spring 2021. SFS Black Student Network looks forward to welcoming more members and expanding its creative community and support.



National Organization of Minority Architecture Students has hosted a variety of workshops for students to learn new skills and connect with each other, including learning new Adobe skills, a sticker workshop, and a portfolio workshop.

University-Wide Initiatives and Resources

[Race and Ethnicity Cluster Hire Initiative](#)

Danforth Campus-wide cluster hire of 12 new faculty who will focus on world-class research on race and ethnicity in our society. The call for proposals reopened in spring 2021. Sam Fox School Representatives: Eric Mumford, Tim Portlock

[Washington University Equity & Inclusion Council \(WUEIC\)](#)

Facilitating the implementation of recommendations made in the [Washington University Commission on Diversity and Inclusion](#)'s 2017 report; providing a standing institutional home for that work; generating recommendations to advance campus culture and climate; and reporting back to the University community on progress. Sam Fox School Representatives: Shantel Blakely, Dmitri Jackson, Sparkle Whitaker

For more information about diversity, inclusion, and equity efforts across Washington University, visit [Diversity & Inclusion at WashU](#) or explore resources available from the [Academy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) and the [Center for Diversity and Inclusion](#).

Demographics

For past demographic information, please see the [fall 2020 update report](#) on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in the School, published January 4, 2021. Updated demographics will be available in the next academic year.