



Dear IslandWood Community,

This summer, we promised to share quarterly updates about our commitment to ensure that justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) are at the forefront of all that we do. Today I'm sharing our second quarterly JEDI update.

While our JEDI work shows up throughout IslandWood in a variety of ways and each department has its own specific JEDI work and initiatives, we identified three organization-wide goals to focus on for this fiscal year:

1. Develop and launch a staff JEDI training program.
2. Ensure those we serve are stakeholders in the assessment of our JEDI work.
3. Ensure JEDI culture is supported consistently across the organization.

Here's the work that we did toward each goal this past quarter:

Priority #1: Develop and launch a staff JEDI training program.

- All staff participated in a series of training sessions focused on microaggressions.
- The series included:
 - Several short videos selected by our staff-run JEDI Council that were watched and then discussed during departmental team meetings
 - An online training program through [Traliant](#)
 - Two remote workshops dually led by external BIPOC and non-BIPOC facilitators
- In addition, we've been including board members in JEDI discussions with our leadership team.

Priority #2: Ensure those we serve are stakeholders in the assessment of our JEDI work.

- We designed a community stakeholder survey that was sent in October to a variety of community members, including graduate program alumni, school teachers, conference and event guests, docents, and donors. Our key learnings and takeaways include the following:
 - 50% of respondents were aware of changes IslandWood had been making to prioritize JEDI in our work.
 - 88% of respondents felt that staff demonstrated racial sensitivity during the program they participated in and that the program was inclusive for all participants.
 - 95% of respondents felt communications such as emails, social media, printed pieces, and the IslandWood website were respectful of all audiences, and 87% found the communications culturally responsive.
 - In addition, consistent themes from respondent comments included:
 - A desire to have more *specific* information and examples of how JEDI is informing programs, policies, and decisions at IslandWood. Respondents noted that the information we shared about [how we've changed our hiring practices](#) was helpful in its clarity and tangible examples. This coming quarter we'll be working to provide tangible examples across all our departments and programs and will share them with you in our next update.
 - An awareness that IslandWood has been working to increase hiring of BIPOC staff at all levels of the organization and the strong desire to see this continue.
 - Encouragement to continue to engage with community partners.
 - Hope that our JEDI efforts are sincere and lasting and not just a part of a current wave of racial awareness.
 - Recognition that this is hard work for the organization, particularly in admitting past harm and mistakes, and encouragement to continue being transparent and holding ourselves accountable.
 - Some respondents noted that as a white person, they weren't sure they could truly speak to whether our programs and communications felt respectful and inclusive of all audiences. In future engagement and surveys, we recognize we need to ask respondents if they'd share their race so that we're able to analyze answers to questions and any differences in those answers, by race.

Priority #3: Ensure JEDI culture is supported consistently throughout the organization.

- JEDI work at IslandWood has been happening for many years, led and carried by individual staff members. But it was siloed within particular teams and small groups. In committing to ensuring that justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are at the forefront of our work, we recognized that the commitment to JEDI could not be held only by individual staff, but needed to be held by, and supported consistently, throughout the entire organization.
- This quarter we began to share organization-wide communication to all staff about our JEDI goals and work in multiple ways:
 - JEDI is now a separate agenda item at every monthly all-staff meeting.
 - Notes from our weekly leadership team meeting are emailed to all staff.
 - A leadership team newsletter that outlines, by department, key work and JEDI initiatives, will be sent to staff each quarter. Our first leadership newsletter was sent in October and our second was sent in January.

For more information about these goals and our plans toward more progress next quarter, [please visit our 2021 Fiscal Year JEDI Priorities page](#).

In addition, we've also been working on two other important priorities:

- Additional BIPOC board members: It is our aim that the racial composition of our board mirrors the racial composition of the communities that we serve. Currently, BIPOC individuals make up 22% of our board, while BIPOC individuals make up roughly 36% of Seattle's population. (*As of 2019 census data.*) We know we have work to do and are actively working towards it with the goal of at least two additional BIPOC board members by the end of this fiscal year.
- Police presence on campus policy: While IslandWood does not have a contract with any campus police, nor a regular presence on campus, our graduate students and staff recognized the need for a formal policy regarding police presence to keep students, guests, and staff safe given our country's history of police brutality against Black and brown people. Our goal is to minimize the chance that law enforcement will be called to our campus unnecessarily by staff or guests. Focus in the policy will be on providing de-escalation resources to all department coordinators and leadership. We are currently working on writing the full policy and plan to complete it by early February.

We are continually learning and making progress on our JEDI journey, but we know there is always so much more work to be done. And we will keep working. You can expect to see our next JEDI update in early April. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to reach out with feedback, questions, or thoughts. We are working hard, but we are far from having all the answers and humbly welcome your input.

Warmly,

Megan Karch, CEO
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