

Diversifying the Docent Corps

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CROCKER
art museum

Sacramento, CA



Sacramento Demographics 2022

- 65% BIPOC, 35% white
- 12.5% seniors
- 51% female, 49% male
- Seventh highest LGBTQ population in country
- Median age 34.5
- 49.8% own homes
- 63% speak English
- 18% speak Spanish

Source: World Population Review



Some Statistics

2022 Sacramento Demos.	2018-19 Active Docents	2020-21 Training Class
49% male, 51% female	12% male, 88% female	19% male, 81% female
65% BIPOC, 35% white	15% BIPOC, 85% white	47% BIPOC, 53% white
Median age 34.5	Median age 60+	Median age 51
12.5% seniors	78% retired	31% retired

How Did We Get There?

- Diversity initiative established by Docent Council in 2017
- One representative from each touring team , VP in charge
- Two years to develop focus, functioning as a committee of the whole
- Nine months of work group activity
- LOTS of improvisation through the pandemic



The Working Group Approach

- Three groups:
 - Outreach: Identify underserved groups
 - Recruitment and Retention: Getting and keeping underserved groups
 - Continuing Education: Changing the climate
- Focus both internally and externally
- Evolve from “Diversity and Inclusion” to “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access”





Outreach

- Identify underserved populations
- Develop strategies and connections to reach underserved populations
- Develop touring strategies for underserved populations
- Propose internal changes to make tours as accessible as possible to diverse populations

Recruitment and Retention

- Identify populations underrepresented on Docent Council
- Develop strategies for recruiting those populations
- Develop strategies for retaining those populations during training
- Develop strategies for reducing barriers to participation during training and thereafter



Continuing Education

- Recommend programming that emphasizes inclusivity
- Recommend programming that enhances the knowledge and skills of docents in touring works by diverse artists or works that address social issues
- Develop strategies that help to make colloquia and other programming more accessible





Nine Months Later

- Outreach:
 - Land acknowledgement
 - Proposed multilingual curatorial labels
 - Recruited docents to tour in other languages (now English, Spanish, French, Cantonese, and American Sign Language)
- Continuing Education:
 - Public transportation schedules published for docents with travel issues
 - New on View for Working Docents
 - Three diversity-focused colloquia scheduled for 2019-20, more for 2020-21

A group of diverse young people and an adult woman are standing in a museum gallery, looking at a large painting. The group consists of five young people and one adult woman. They are all looking towards the right side of the frame, where a large painting is displayed. The painting is a landscape scene with trees and a body of water. The group is standing in a line, with the young people in the front and the adult woman at the back. The young people are wearing casual clothing, including t-shirts, jeans, and patterned pants. The adult woman is wearing a dark jacket and a green lanyard. The gallery has a polished wooden floor and a grey wall. The lighting is soft and even.

Nine Months Later

- Recruitment and Retention:
 - Developed strategies for recruiting docents from underrepresented groups
 - Developed “Want to Docent?” rack cards and banners
 - Recruited at Black History month celebration
 - Planned weekend recruiting

COVID!!!!!!

During the Lockdown

- Refined list of outreach organizations
- Revisions of gallery cards for inclusiveness
- Recruited and trained a new class



Seeing Docents as an Audience

- Focus on relevant engagement
- Strategies to keep non-touring docents engaged:
 - Recorded Colloquia
 - Regular ZOOM meetings
 - ZAP (ZOOM Art Presentations)
 - Expanded categories of service and participation to increase inclusiveness



COVID Changes Actually Helped Diversity and Retention Efforts

- Focus shifted to alternative means of delivering content both from and to docents
 - New categories of activities for active docents:
 - In-person touring
 - Virtual touring
 - Research
 - Sustaining
- Different ways of thinking about touring led to more flexibility for younger docents with families and regular work schedules

COVID Caused Rethinking

- COVID response broke the “one-size-fits-all” approach to touring and continuing education:
 - Continuing Education activities were recorded and uploaded to Dropbox
 - Training was done completely online, helping younger and more diverse trainees to persist
 - Virtual touring opened schedules for working docents
 - Interactive diversity workshops made it possible for docents to collaborate on strategies for dealing with diversity issues

A Sample Case Study:

You're touring a group of fourth graders chaperoned by the father of one of them, a thirty-something of a different race from yours. During the tour, the father pulls out his cell phone and starts texting, clearly no longer interested in the tour. As you proceed, the children begin to notice and you can feel you're losing their attention as well. Do you ask the father to put away his phone? If so, what do you say to avoid embarrassing him and re-engaging the children?

Some Responses:

- Ignore it
- “I don’t care if you’re black or white or green or purple. This is *my* tour, and you’ll follow my rules.”
- “If you need to take care of that, we’ll be moving to the yellow room across the hall in a few minutes.”

Recruiting after the Lockdown

- Intentional and Targeted
 - Transparent language about DEAI initiative, recruiting efforts, demographics of current docents, and goals
 - Relied on docent outreach committee, general docent council, and staff contacts
 - Correlation between ethnicities of applicants and exhibitions / collection increases
 - Built upon existing staff relationships

What Did We Gain?

2018-19 Active Docents	2019 Training Class	2020-21 Training Class	
12% male, 88% female	19% male, 81% female	19% male, 81% female	Slight improvement
15% BIPOC, 85% white	24% BIPOC, 76% white	47% BIPOC, 53% white	Large improvement
15% bilingual		37% bilingual	Large improvement
78% retired	60% retired	31% retired	Large improvement
	12% younger than 50	43% younger than 50	Large improvement

What Did We Gain?

	2018-19	2022-23	Percentage Point Shifts
Male	12%	20%	8%
Income – Under \$150K	67%	81%	14%
BIPOC	15%	30%	15%
Bilingual	15%	20%	5%
Disability	8%	9%	1%
Education – <Graduate Deg.	41%	47%	6%
Still Working	22%	50%	28%
Age - <50	12%	23%	11%

What Did We Gain?

- ZOOM and other technologies provided ways to connect with more diverse populations
- Colloquia are recorded and available for those who work
- Increased options for docents:
 - Virtual school tours
 - Research-based, monthly presentations by docents to docents
 - Increase in study groups



What's Next / What's Now

2017 – 2021	2021 - 2023
Continuing Education	Education and Collection
Outreach	Self-Reflection, Growth and Accountability
	Structure and Policy
Recruitment and Retention	Communication
	Removing Barriers to Involvement and Retention

What's Next / What's Now

2021 - 2023	Examples
Education and Collection	Develop curriculum with transparent, identified DEAI lens (eg Liberating the Narrative)
Self-Reflection, Growth and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Commitment to DEAI: Statement in yearly service agreement-Align peer review measures to DEAI goals
Structure and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Revise board nominating process-Make process more transparent-Confirm voting process-Define qualifications, skill set, board member sourcing
Communication	Participate in and report on efforts of other museum DEAI work
Removing Barriers to Involvement and Retention	Improve the cultural leadership pipeline by creating and supporting programs and policies that foster leadership

Docent Council Statement of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access

The mission of the Crocker Art Museum is to promote “an awareness of and enthusiasm for human experience through art,” and the Museum’s Docent Council was founded in support of this mission. The Docent Council acknowledges and challenges its own systems of power and privilege and holds itself accountable. We commit to advancing diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) through education and communication so as to foster inclusivity and belonging.