

KCAI IDEAS COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

Updates and Recommendations Toward Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity,
Access and Sustainability at KCAI

May 13, 2022

2021–22 Council Members: Ruben Castillo, Angelica DeSimio (Fall 2021 only), Peyton Follis, tyler galloway, Kevin Hopkins, Shawntae Jones, Syren Law, Eleanor Lim-Midyett, Lisa Maione, Malisha Meador, Lucky Moe, Miguel Rivera, Michael Schonhoff, Sydney Smith, Aleah Washington.

Executive Summary

The IDEAS Council is composed of representatives from KCAI's student body, faculty, and staff and was formed in the fall of 2020 in response to a need recognized across all our campus constituencies for a body devoted to issues of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access and Sustainability (IDEAS).¹

Since September of 2020, IDEAS Council members have met regularly to discuss issues of diversity and inclusion at KCAI, both acknowledging the work that is being done and making recommendations for future initiatives that will improve and transform our campus environment.

In order to organize our efforts, we studied both the Students' List of Demands and the Diversity Working Groups' List of Recommendations, as well as the college's responses to the student demands and models for DEI plans at other institutions of higher learning. We determined four focus areas for our examination of IDEAS at the college, namely: Academics and Curriculum; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Leadership, Reporting, and Accountability; and Student Services. We divided our group into subcommittees that met every other week to assess IDEAS within the four focus areas, ascertaining what work is already being done, making recommendations for required, next step, action items, identifying potentially responsible parties, and offering a suggested timeline and budget for completion where possible.

We hope that you will view this document not as the final blueprint for a master plan, but rather as a collaborative, dynamic, and ongoing project guide that will continue to change and be modified as goals are met and new needs arise and are identified. We are honored to be members of the IDEAS Council and pledge to engage and mobilize constituents across campus in our collaborative efforts as a community to translate these words into actions for the betterment of the college.

Respectfully submitted,

The IDEAS Council, Kansas City Art Institute

¹ The Students' List of Demands calls for "the creation of an official body dedicated to social equity and inclusion." The Diversity Working Group, the ad hoc committee of Faculty Assembly, in its List of Recommendations to the college suggests "the formation of the IDEAS Council with representatives from staff, faculty, students, administration and the board of trustees to collectively assess diversity and equity at the college, make recommendations on how best to accomplish KCAI's goals, and address the needs of the college with respect to diversity and inclusion." Both the Staff Advisory Committee and KCAI's executive leadership strongly endorsed the formation of IDEAS Council.

1.0 Academics + Curriculum

Achievements & Highlights:

- **Liberal Arts Curriculum** - The Liberal Arts Department has implemented a new curriculum that has replaced the required lower division “History of Thought” courses with “Critical Studies” courses that focus on the teaching of critical thinking skills and also replaced the required lower division “History of Art” courses with “Art Historical Studies” courses; these new courses now include a process in which individual instructors develop themed classes that focus on the study of diverse texts centered around a comprehensive theme, shifting the focus away from a Eurocentric model to a more globalized, decolonized curriculum that provides a diverse mixture of historical, philosophical, and literary texts. In addition, the Liberal Arts Department has been teaching a range of non-Eurocentric and gender studies classes.
- **Student Learning Outcomes** - During the Fall 2021 semester, Dr. Milton Katz, VPAA, worked with the department chairs to consider a new college-wide student learning outcome. It states, “demonstrate an openness to learn about and cultivate an understanding and appreciation of different perspectives and diverse worldviews and how they contextualize various works.” All students are now assessed for their progress on this outcome.
- **Visiting Artist Working Group** - For the 2020–21 and 2021–22 academic years, nearly all “Current Perspectives” lecturers exhibited diversity in some respect. The IDEAS Council worked with VAWG to ensure that language in the annual call emphasizes a respect for and encouragement of diverse voices / practices.

Challenges & Work In Progress:

- The Liberal Arts Department and Studio Departments continue to prioritize the hiring of more diverse faculty.
- IDEAS Council plans to identify and recommend trainings/workshops to assist faculty with integrating non-Eurocentric texts into their course syllabi in a “non-tokenizing” manner.

2.0 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Achievements & Highlights:

- **AICAD BIPOC Academic Leadership Institute** - Two Student Affairs staff members and one department chair participated in the AICAD BIPOC Academic Leadership Institute.
- **AICAD Fellowship Program** - This program continues to be a great hiring resource for 1- and 2- year faculty hires as needed. For 2020-2021, one BIPOC AICAD Fellow was placed in Foundation in the fall. For 2021-2022, five AICAD Fellows are in full-time positions at KCAI.

- **Anti-Racism: Resources + Reading Room** - Coordinated by the Artspace and Jannes Library, this new resource features an evolving selection of materials and offerings to focus on the work of artists, activists, writers, scholars, and innovative cultural organizations exploring new approaches, insights, and possibilities around the subject of anti-racism.
- **Faculty Tenure** - As of Fall 2021, KCAI has 35 tenured faculty members, seven on the tenure track, and 17 full-time non-tenure track faculty members teaching at KCAI. Of those full-time faculty, 24% are diverse and 22% of all full- and part-time faculty are diverse. However, only 7% of tenure or tenure-track faculty are diverse. Art Historian, Dr. Amanda Chen, will be joining the Liberal Arts faculty in the Fall 2022 in a tenure-track position.
- **Human Resources** - HR has expanded job postings to include “Diversity Workplace” as a sourcing platform and created a partnership with Kauffman Scholars in an effort to source/build a pipeline of BIPOC alumni candidates interested in working at KCAI.
- **Search Advocate Training** - The Director of Diverse Talent and Inclusion, Shawntae Griffin, the Assistant Dean of Students, Joe Timson, and four faculty attended the Search Advocate Program at Oregon State University in Spring 2021. Each faculty search committee now has one trained Search Advocate and are working to revise position announcements to ensure they reflect DEI values. Human Resources is also involved in the faculty hiring process. Chairs are asked to nominate a faculty member to participate in the search advocacy training program.
- **Student Affairs** - For 2021-2022, 42% of the Student Affairs staff were of diverse backgrounds and 50% of Safety and Security were of diverse backgrounds. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Student Affairs division created a Professional Development Committee to coordinate development opportunities and trainings that include DEI individual and group work; Student Affairs staff participated in over 20 DEI-focused training opportunities and events this academic year. Examples of DEI training conducted in Student Affairs include: reading excerpts from “The Sum of Us,” by Heather McGhee, participating in the online forum, “How Racism Hurts Us All,” sponsored by the Missouri Workers Center, and attending various DEI-focused webinars on topics such as: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Helping Navigate the Complexity of Accessibility Laws, Digital Accessibility, Queer Zionism, Justice for Low Wage Workers, Colonial Advising, Bringing Cultural Humility to Academic Advising, Trauma in the Classroom (faculty included), Microaggressions in the Classroom (faculty included), and Insights from First Gen Students, among others.
 - **Disability Services** - During the 2021-2022 academic year, Disability Services created resources for faculty related to working with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and reviewing all academic resources to ensure they are accessible digitally.

- **New President** - Ruki Neuhold-Ravikumar has been hired and will begin their position in July 2022. Two trained Search Advocates served on the Presidential Search Committee. The IDEAS Council, student members of PAC, student leadership team, and Resident Assistants were all provided the opportunity to meet with finalists during the presidential candidate interviews.

Challenges & Work In Progress:

- **Accessibility** - Recent improvements to accessibility on campus include the new elevator in Vanderslice Hall and new railings and ramps by Tony Jones Studios and BMRH; the ramp and railings leading into the Lower Epperson studios have been rebuilt and new braille signage has been implemented. However, the East Building remains woefully inaccessible to students and visitors with physical impairments and IDEAS Council continues to strongly advocate for an elevator to be installed in the East Building. Administration is well-aware of this need and has planned a trajectory of steps required to achieve this goal including: faculty-led discussions about the space and the future of the programs, presentation of faculty recommendations to the new college president, Ruki, who will then have a chain of fora for review (e.g. Board of Trustees, Academic Affairs, Finance, Facilities, Development, etc); these steps are all in addition to the need to identify a funding source for the project.
- **Alumni Mentorship Program** - This new program will engage KCAI alumni to serve as mentors for KCAI current students in one of two areas: as a professional mentor or a mentor who comes from a similar background. This initiative has been delayed until Fall 2022. Alumni Relations will lay the groundwork for the program in the fall including a survey to alumni to gauge their interest and begin the pilot program during Spring 2023.
- **DEI Mission Statement** - IDEAS Council continues to advocate and assist in the implementation of a DEI mission statement in KCAI's strategic plan.
- **DEI Resource Center** - The Diversity Working Group has created but not yet published a list of resources for the MyKCAI online platform.
- **Diversity Grant** - IDEAS Council continues to advocate and assist in the proposal to establish a diversity grant for students.
- **Diverse Hiring** - The senior leadership team is 20% diverse; the cabinet leadership group is 22% diverse; the Board of Trustees is 11% diverse. KCAI also needs to hire a replacement Human Resources Director / Director of Diverse Talent and Inclusion; IDEAS Council strongly advocates that the positions of Human Resources Director and a Director of IDEAS be separate positions.
- **IDEAS Council** - Formed in 2020, the IDEAS Council is the only campus group made up of faculty, staff, and students. IDEAS Council has been meeting regularly since its formation and works with administration, student leadership, and other campus areas to support DEI progress at KCAI. IDEAS Council will develop a plan for succession of council members and continues to strongly recommend a full-time Director of IDEAS position be created and filled for the betterment of the KCAI community. In addition, IDEAS Council continues to recommend that KCAI hire a third-party assessment group to assist with DEI initiatives and improvements.

- **KC REDI Community of Practice Program** – This training is an 18-month program in which participants from organizations throughout the KC Metro engage in readings, reflections, and action related to DEI initiatives at our respective institutions/ organizations and within the city. Additionally, participants are charged with sharing the information with their respective institutions/organizations as a catalyst for change. Bambi Burgard, Gina Golba, Shawntae Griffin, and Michael Schonhoff have been participating.
- **Land Acknowledgement** - Currently, some departments are using the land acknowledgment prepared by Michael Schonhoff, Director of the KCAI Gallery, and IDEAS Council continues to work on implementing a campus-wide land acknowledgment policy/approach.

3.0 Leadership, Reporting, and Accountability

Achievements & Highlights:

- **Campus Policies** - During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Vice President and Dean of Students and Assistant Dean of Students met weekly with three members of the Student Leadership Council (SLC); during these meetings, various KCAI policies were reviewed with respect to greater equity for underserved students and recommended updates were sent to the college administration for approval; in addition, Student Affairs staff have met monthly to review policies in an attempt to identify and remove bias and barriers; the campus policy library and Student Handbook will be updated Summer 2022 to reflect approved changes. See also “Work In Progress” below.
- **Financial Transparency** - The Investments Committee of the Board of Trustees meets quarterly with KCAI’s outsourced investment consultants, Commonfund, to review endowment performance and ongoing topics such as ESG investment and divestment in toxic industries. Pending approval from the new college president, it is anticipated that Communications will be approved to publish the updates from the quarterly meetings between the Investments Committee of the Board of Trustees and KCAI’s outsourced investment consultants, Commonfund, in the annual President’s Report. KCAI’s annual audit details all financial activity of the college and is verified by an independent, 3rd party audit firm. Copies of the most recent annual audit as well as past audits are available for review at Jannes Library. The annual Form 990, the college’s nonprofit income tax return, is publicly available on sites such as Guidestar and, effective Spring 2022, is also available in digital format via request through the Jannes Library; the most current Form 990 is typically available in mid-May. These two forms provide transparency into the college’s finances, including investments, the endowment, and financial performance.
- **Internships** - Beginning the 2022-2023 academic year, there will be a reduced tuition rate for for-credit summer internships, decreasing from \$440/credit hour to \$125/credit hour in order to make summer internships more affordable and accessible; in addition, there is now a \$1,000 stipend available for approximately 15 students per academic year for unpaid internships.

- **Listening and Learning Sessions** - The Vice President and Dean of Students and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs hosted a total of 8 (4 in the fall and 4 in the spring) listening sessions with students of color with the goal of making change through opening the lines of communication, building trust, and identifying systems of power. A total of 12 students participated in the meetings where students shared their concerns including lack of sensitivity at times when decolonizing the curriculum and the lack of counselors of color at KCAI. After each session, administrators followed up to address each concern with the respective faculty/department to stop the behavior and/or add services where possible. The listening sessions will continue next academic year. In addition to the listening sessions with students of color, the Vice President and Dean of Students and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs met with students within each academic department during the Spring 2022 semester to solicit feedback from students. The same questions were asked to each group and the responses were recorded and shared with campus leadership for consideration of changes to the delivery of curriculum, student scholarships and aid, and additional or other changes to student services; the information will also be shared with the Board of Trustees, Admissions/Student Affairs Committee, and the incoming president, Ruki Nehuhold-Ravikumar.
- **Open Office Hours** - During the Fall 2021 semester, open office hours with each of the senior administrative leaders (Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President and Dean of Students, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, and the Executive Vice President for Advancement and Marketing) were made available for students to directly share their issues and concerns. Two students visited with campus leadership—one with the EVPAA and one with the VPDS.
- **Student Leadership Council** - Formed in Spring 2021 to replace the previous Student Guild, the Student Leadership Council is a student-run organization advocating for the needs of students through elected and departmental representatives. Beginning the 2022-2023 academic year and going forward, the constitution (including election process) will be published in the Student Handbook and on the MyKCAI Campus Life tab where additional information will be posted when requested by the student leadership (upcoming meetings, agendas, etc.); information about the SLC, including the constitution and election process, was emailed to students and faculty during the 2021-2022 academic year. During the weekly meetings between the junior and senior representatives and the organization advisors, information is shared relevant to the student body, including events involving students, changes on campus, and ideas, concerns, and needs of the student body; some examples of topics discussed include: notification of tuition increase; asking for student feedback about a proposed student fee to specifically support telehealth services for all students; involvement in the selection of the next president; involvement in the NASAD and HLC accreditation visits; and, student concerns about liberal arts classes resuming in-person instruction for the Spring 2022 semester. The SLC reported the following projects/goals met or initiated in the 2021-2022 academic year:
 - Woodshop orientation for second-year students who did not receive the orientation last year due to it being canceled amid rising Covid-19 cases.
 - Increased staffing for the Print Center to meet students' needs.

- Opening of the BMRH kitchen space for residential students staying in BMRH over spring break.
- Assisted with the advertising of the food pantry over college breaks.
- Oversaw student organization fund allocations.
- Shared information and news to students about college initiatives.
- **Sustainability / KCAI: Target Zero** - The KCAI Art Store continues its research to add more items to the store's inventory in the spirit of IDEAS, including more environmentally-friendly versions of existing items, open stock versions of items without excessive packaging, and vegan or hypoallergenic alternatives as well as expanding the campus life products to serve a more diverse student body. The KCAI Mail Room has been working to eliminate unwanted mail such as catalogs and magazines addressed to former employees and students by sending out cancellation requests. A Zero Waste Coordinator has been hired to lead KCAI's Target Zero initiative to become a zero-waste campus. In addition, the faculty EcoSARC committee implemented a number of improvements this year:
 - Hosted an e-waste recycling event in Fall 2021 where over 650 items were collected and diverted from the landfill.
 - Created a presentation on Target Zero Waste goals with practical info on proper recycling and waste reduction practices; this presentation was shared in Foundation Orientation and Faculty & Staff Development Day.
 - Partnered with TerraCycle to purchase collection boxes for items that would traditionally be thrown away, including art supplies, candy and snack wrappers, and pens, pencils and markers. These boxes will be filled up with used supplies and then mailed back to TerraCycle for recycling.
 - Ripple Glass recycling bins and composting bins have been placed in the Residence Hall common areas and more will be placed across campus.
 - MISC Stations were updated and are now located in several buildings throughout campus, allowing students to place unused or extra supplies and materials for others to use. EcoSARC has connected with ScrapsKC to discuss a partnership to recycle leftover items from MISC Stations.
 - EcoSARC is currently working on a partnership with Food Rescue US to establish a program to divert leftover food from the Dining Hall to feed people in need and is also finalizing a composting program in partnership with a faculty team focused on a KCAI community garden.

Challenges & Work In Progress:

- **Campus Policies** - Following are campus policies with changes pending approval for the 2022-2023 academic year:
 - Academic Probation and Dismissal
 - Assembly and Demonstration
 - College Closing Due to Inclement Weather
 - Discrimination and Harassment Related to Protected Class
 - Incomplete Grades
 - Posting on Campus

- Student Code of Conduct
- Withdrawal Due to Hardship
- In addition, there may be also be changes to the following campus policies:
 - Course Withdrawal
 - Holds
 - Minimum Passing Grade for Major Studio
 - Parking and Parking Fines
 - Social Media
- **Cost of Attendance / Budget** - KCAI, like all other colleges, is facing soaring costs for everything from food to utilities. The administration continues to identify ways to cut costs while not sacrificing the quality of education at the college. For example, the Art Store continues to research more equitable and affordable textbook options and alternatives to suggest to faculty. KCAI's endowment is primarily restricted for student scholarships, so the administration continues to solicit donations to grow the endowment and increase scholarships for students to help offset rising prices. This is an ongoing concern for all.
- **Sustainability / Net Zero Energy / Green Infrastructure** - IDEAS Council supports EcoSARC's recommendation that KCAI expand the KCAI: Target Zero initiative to include a path to net zero energy consumption and that the KCAI President sign the Presidents' Climate Leadership Commitments of American Colleges and Universities. In addition, IDEAS Council and EcoSARC continue to advocate that the administration look at ways KCAI can promote adoption of model tree protections/native landscaping ordinances, and connect with larger projects around urban forestry, native landscaping and watershed planning; while KCAI's landscape team does focus on native plantings and maintenance, additional consideration and work is needed in this area.

4.0 Student Services

Achievements & Highlights:

- **Academic Planning / Degree Audits** - The Registrar's office and Academic Advising have implemented virtual academic planning and degree audits on the MyKCAI student portal, providing students with 24/7, user-friendly access to this information.
- **Cafeteria and Food Services** - Effective the 2021-2022 academic year and going forward, Student Affairs now coordinates a food pantry during college breaks (Thanksgiving, winter break, and spring break); for larger and ongoing needs, Student Affairs is working with St. Paul's Church on Main Street as they sponsor a more robust 12-month service and is within walking distance from KCAI. Effective the 2021-2022 academic year and going forward, the cafeteria shares with students who may be experiencing food insecurity leftover food from the previous meal session; the food is left at the grill following the meal session and students may come and get the food without question; the door between Cafe Nerman and Wylie is also open to encourage students to eat the food.
- **Counseling and Mental Health Services** - Information has been added to the MyKCAI student portal to explain the protocol for accessing diverse counselors. During the

2021-2022 academic year, the college secured 4 part-time contracted counselors to provide mental health services to KCAI students; one of the counselors identifies as a counselor of color. For the 2022-2023 academic year, 5 practicum counselors have been hired. In addition, KCAI has partnered with Color Collective and identified counselors who are excited to work with KCAI students. Color Collective of Kansas City is a collective of counselors of color in the Kansas City area and the website was developed to help folx match with therapists that fit their needs. Details for referrals are still being worked out, however, the hope is that this will be another opportunity for students to work with counselors in our community at a reduced cost.

- **Health and Wellness Fee** - Effective the 2022-2023 academic year and going forward, KCAI will implement a \$75/semester health and wellness fee for all students to provide telehealth services, including counseling and medical services. All students will receive access to care for acute medical needs as well as counseling support through the telehealth platform. The health and wellness fee funding will also expand the network of providers, both medical and mental health, for students requesting counselors of color, specific identities, specialties, and/or other specific needs. The service will be accessible 24/7/365 for 12 months and may possibly include dependents. In addition, the funding will allow KCAI to continue to hire on-site contracted licensed counselors.
- **Financial Aid Office** - The Financial Aid Office has updated documents to allow for digital completion and upload to a secure platform for financial aid and work-study; FA is also researching the possibility of allowing for digital uploads of the FAFSA verification documents. By removing these technology barriers, students and families have an opportunity to complete the financial aid process in a timelier manner to meet deadlines and maximize their aid eligibility. The Financial Aid Office is working to develop better resources for students and families related to understanding the billing and payment process, as well as financial aid and scholarships. One example is a new “Spotlight on Billing and Payment” for incoming students and their families; this spotlight will feature how to review bills, make payments, etc. The FA Office has also started an initiative to improve the communication process of campus names from Jenzabar to PowerFAIDS, the financial aid processing system; currently, campus names from Jenzabar must be manually entered into PowerFAIDS (which is not very efficient), but the legal names reported on the FAFSA control the name field in PowerFAIDS and overwrites campus names; research is being completed to determine if a bridge between the two systems can be built to communicate with each other.
- **Foundation Mentorship Program** - The Vice President and Dean of Students and the Chair of Foundation began a mentorship program for Foundation students to be mentored by upperclassmen; approximately 7 students were hired to serve in this role for the 2021-2022 academic year. Each student mentor participated in training with the Assistant Dean of Students during Resident Assistant training and participated as orientation leaders during new student orientation programs for the Fall 2021 semester.
- **International Student Engagement** - A new program is being developed which will include regulation training, informational sessions, and engagement activities coordinated by the Registrar’s office for international students.

- **International Student Orientation** - Effective Summer 2022, in addition to the regular orientation required for all new students, the Registrar's office will host a virtual orientation for new international students prior to their arrival on campus.
- **International Student Resources Webpage** - The Registrar's office has prepared, but not yet published a new webpage for international students containing resources and other information geared toward this population. The new webpage is anticipated to be published Summer 2022.
- **MyKCAI Student Portal** - Effective the 2022-2023 academic year and going forward, more time will be spent going over the MyKCAI student portal at orientation.
- **Student Housing** - Legal and dead names have been removed from the BMRH housing roster and all applicable communication when a resident has an official campus name on file; this has reduced exposure to incorrect names and lessened the potential for deadnaming students. Admissions has pledged to provide demographic information on incoming students to Student Life in order for Student Life to continue to monitor the trend of a disproportionate number of first-year Black men in overflow housing and make adjustments to the housing assignment process as needed for 2022-2023.

Challenges & Work In Progress:

- **Counseling and Mental Health Services** - Though progress has been made, counseling and mental health services are not keeping up with student demand.
- **MyKCAI Online Portal** - This has a lot of information, but the search functionality needs improvement so users can find what they are looking for.
- **Student Housing** - The trend of a disproportionate number of first-year Black men in overflow housing must be addressed.