INTRODUCTION

Reflecting back from the middle, the 2021-2022 season has been rewarding, exhausting, and empowering. We welcomed back staff, hired new staff, and invited guest artists back into our rehearsal halls and theaters for the first time since March 2020. Our teaching artists returned to classrooms and we resumed partnerships with other companies and renters. While the return to producing live theatre was exciting, it was also a big adjustment that took significant time and energy. We used our ASAP to guide our work as we rebuilt our processes and reminded ourselves how to produce theater again. As exemplified in the ASAP released in August 2021, we strove to center principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, access, and anti-racism in every corner of our operations.

For some objectives, this was easy and joyful! There was an appetite and enthusiasm for change and it was great to start fresh with some new ideas about how to make the workplace better for everyone, especially BIPOC staff and artists.

For other objectives, change was slow or non-existent. Centering and concretizing anti-racist work was not always easy to prioritize at the same time as returning to the demand of in-person production and programming. We are still working on finding the right balance and instituting each policy and procedure in the ASAP to add up to a holistic throughline of demonstrated change. In the second half of the 2021-2022 season, we will be refocusing our efforts toward these areas of challenge and taking an honest look at where we may have been too ambitious for the short term and where we need to allocate more energy and resources as we move forward.

Below please find an update on our progress from August 2021 - January 2022 toward meeting the objectives outlined in the ASAP. A few notes as you read:

- As many objectives fall within the purview of HR, progress on these was tabled in between HR directors and will be reported on at the 12-month mark.
- The larger impact of each of these objectives will be assessed via qualitative surveys that will be implemented in time for our 12-month report.
As always, we welcome your feedback or input to the HEAR Task Force at hear@huntingtontheatre.org or directly to the chair of HEAR at wehearyou@huntingtontheatre.org.

HUNTINGTON EQUITY AND ANTI-RACISM TASK FORCE

- Over the course of this year, we will create or update existing training handbooks for all patron-facing jobs to include a section dedicated to anti-racism and de-escalation. Handbooks were updated based on guidance and resources provided by Wellspring-supported Front of House trainings to include the following language:

  Steps of De-escalation
  The Huntington, with guidance from The Wellspring Group, has established the following simple steps when faced with a challenging or escalating situation. Rely on the tools below when dealing with problematic scenarios. When approaching patrons, always remember to take a “Kind, yet firm” approach. If the situation does not improve, bring it to the attention of the House Manager, Assistant House Manager, or Crowd Attendant.

  1. “Carefully observe oneself, one’s situation, one’s environment, and others.” Situational awareness is paramount. Take stock of your state of mind, as well as those around you. Make a quick assessment of whether you are able to handle this scenario safely.

  2. “Seize the initiative in whatever you undertake.” If you observe a situation beginning to develop it is always better to approach before anything escalates further. Whether this involves closer observation, immediate intervention, or the attention of management, it is best to act soon after an issue is identified.

  3. “Keep to the middle.” Put another way: Listen. Allow the patron to vent their frustration. Do not just hear their concerns, listen to what they are saying. Allow the patron the space to speak and calmly take in what they are saying. Remember, patrons are not mad at you, they are mad at the situation they find themselves in.

  4. “Consider fully, act decisively.” Speak deliberately and calmly. Consider all aspects of the situation in front of you and commit to a solution (if you have one). Repetition is a shield. Reiterate applicable policies and explain the logic and reasoning.
5. “Know when to stop.” Be aware that we cannot make everyone happy. There will come a time where the best thing you can do is remove yourself from the situation. Bring the issue to the attention of your manager on duty and assure the patron that the situation is being brought to a higher authority.”

- We are developing policies centered on providing ongoing support, growth, and professional development to new and current BIPOC employees; this includes a newly established mentorship program for new hires. The mentorship program has launched but codifying it and establishing a robust process embedded in staff onboarding has been delayed due to the overall transition in the HR Department. All department heads are eagerly on board and excited for HR to move the process forward. The new HR team is actively working on providing new hires with orientation on the mentorship program and assigning mentors to new hires not yet paired. All new hires who have been partnered with a mentor have expressed appreciation in the connection to a colleague outside of their department and have stated it has helped them feel welcome. Mentors have also conveyed their appreciation and have additionally requested mechanisms for program monitoring and benchmarking to strengthen mentees’ process of professional development. Mentors have also expressed interest in expanding the program after this season to include apprentices, Brighter Boston students, and others involved with The Huntington early in their careers, to help them build skills and networks supporting their success in the industry.

- We will reaffirm our core company values and commitment to anti-racism at the start of all institutional meetings and gatherings (staff and board meetings, first rehearsals, events, etc.). We have developed a new rehearsal-room orientation process that includes a video created in partnership with the Wellspring Group focusing on our core values, centering mutual respect and anti-racism. The video is followed by a debrief with members of the HEAR Task Force to answer questions and promote dialogue. HEAR created Community Agreements which are read at the beginning of all-staff meetings as follows:

  To center our Core Company Value of Respect and the company’s value of radical hospitality, we’d like to offer the following agreements to help create a brave and supportive space for everyone to engage in our discussion.

  - Share honestly and from a place of grace, compassion, and kindness.
  - Honor the humanity in the room by allowing room for learning and growth.
  - Speak from the “I” – share your own experiences. Do not speak for others.
  - Everyone has the right to participate or pass.
  - What’s shared here, stays here. What’s learned here, leaves here.
• Give permission and space to yourself and to your colleagues to speak in rough draft.
• Stay engaged in the meeting – avoid side conversations, private chats, texts, etc.
  • BUT – take breaks when you need to. Hydrate, stretch, take a quick lap around the room, etc. Self-care is essential to staying engaged
• Assume best intentions and adopt “Ouch” and “Oops” to acknowledge that intention does not equal impact.
• Use the “parking lot” for questions/comments that aren’t related to the current topic.

HUMAN RESOURCES

• To decrease incidents of implicit and unconscious bias in the hiring of new employees, we have initiated the practice of Interview Committees to support hiring managers for full-time positions. The committee consists of an intentionally diverse and inclusive panel of current staff. Interview committees have been mostly successful with questions and scoring rubrics based on Wellspring guidance. HR Director interviews were guided completely by Wellspring which was beneficial to both the candidates as well as the staff who served on the committee. Due to high volume at the start of this process, there was some disorganization that made it challenging to provide equal experiences for all applicants. With the slower volume of open positions and with new HR staff in place, this has become a more regular and sustainable piece of our recruitment efforts. Interview committees have been composed of a diverse and inclusive panel of staff from a variety of departments.

• We are reviewing job descriptions to expand opportunity, create transparent criteria, and avoid credentialism (for example: when pertinent, we will eliminate unnecessary educational requirements which could discourage applicants lacking these criteria). HR and department heads have been working diligently to prioritize these ideals when releasing job descriptions, even when recruitment was at a high volume.

• We will expand hiring transparency by creating an equitable salary grade system which will be made available to all staff and job applicants, and we will engage a consultant in the creation of a pay equity study during the coming year. This was paused until the hire of our new HR Director; per the new HR Director the equitable salary grade system and pay equity study will be overseen internally using external tools and resources for data analysis. We aim to complete this over the next six months.
HR will be provided with the resources necessary to expand its outreach on job searches to diverse websites and to work with recruitment agencies to help meet our goal of hiring more BIPOC staff. Positions have been advertised on the following platforms: The Huntington website, Indeed.com, Hire Culture, and StageSource. We have begun posting jobs on new sites with the intention of diversifying the applicant pool. Efforts are ongoing to identify and consistently post in forums reaching diverse communities. Search processes for department head-level positions have been run in partnership with The Wellspring Group for robust recruitment work. The search for the new Huntington Artistic Director was run by AlbertHall&Associates with a focus on equity in hiring practices.

The Huntington's Apprenticeship Program will be re-conceived during the 2021-2022 season, with the expectation that overall programmatic administration will be primarily facilitated by the Education dept.

- This may include the creation of a new position within Education which will oversee the implementation and facilitation of the revamped program in partnership with HR.

Apprentice job descriptions are being prepared for recruitment for FY23 apprentices. Discussions on compensation for incoming FY23 apprentices will take place as part of the upcoming FY23 budgeting cycle. The Education Department is in the process of hiring for the new position of Associate Director of Education and Practical Learning, which will manage the apprentice program and all workforce development initiatives in partnership with Education, HR and department heads.

In the 2021-2022 season, The Huntington will continue its commitment to education across the institution through training opportunities and internships that are separate from the Apprenticeship Program. The Artistic, Education, Marketing, and Public Affairs Departments each hosted a Bloomberg Arts intern in Summer 2021 with one of those interns staying on for the rest of the 2021-2022 school year; a Northeastern Co-op worked in the Scene Shop in the Fall of 2021; Artistic and Front Porch have collaboratively hired a Northeastern Co-op for Spring 2022.

In 2019, we began hosting Brighter Boston students in paid internships in our Lighting Department so as to expand awareness of production staff opportunities for BIPOC youth; we continued this partnership into the 2020-2021 season for a season-long residency at the Calderwood Pavilion. We plan to expand the Brighter Boston placements moving forward as we look for more ways to leverage outreach opportunities that will increase awareness of production career paths. We expanded from having two Brighter Boston placements in 2019-2020 to three placements this season. We currently have two lighting interns and one scenery intern, and are in
conversation about adding a sound intern in the spring.

- During the 2021-22 season we will work to establish and implement a 360-review process for leadership and key managers. This was tabled until the hiring of our new HR Director in January and will be implemented under her purview in the coming months.

**ARTISTIC/PRODUCTION**

- In order to reduce the burden on individuals and teams, we have expanded our rehearsal period by shifting the 6-day rehearsal week to 5 days and eliminating "10 out of 12s" (the longest technical rehearsal days, with actors working 10 hours and other staff members working even more in support). This is underway and has been in place all season. We are determining how to assess the larger impact as part of a survey/evaluation process. Anecdotal discussions with guest artists suggest this is having a positive impact on guest artists and staff alike.

- Hair and wardrobe staff participated in a virtual workshop with ActTRESSES Hair Consulting’s Nikiya Mathis (Wig Designer for The Huntington's 2018 production of *Skeleton Crew*). A follow-up workshop in September addressed the lack of natural hair education that persists in hair design and coaching on the styling and design process when working with actors of color. The workshops have been very well-received by staff, who report being better informed on what questions to ask and how to make each performer comfortable. We will continue to seek out training opportunities to strengthen and build upon these skills. The department has been in the process of recruiting more backstage staff members of color and is looking for ways to expand its search.

- The Huntington is expanding its engagement with BIPOC-led theatre companies by cultivating reciprocal relationships and partnerships with local institutions as well as deepening continued collaboration with peer institutions nationally. Working with the Front Porch Arts Collective and benefiting from their expertise as producing consultants, we have been able to expand our lists of BIPOC designers, playwrights, and directors with whom we wish to engage. The Education Department continues its partnership with Kenny Leon’s True Colors Theatre Company as the Boston Regional Partner for their new program, the Next Narrative Monologue Competition.
• We will ensure our artists have access to counseling for productions that engage topics of racialized experiences, especially racialized trauma.

In December 2021 we brought on Dr. Stephanie Pinder-Amaker to consult on supporting the mental health of *The Bluest Eye* company while they explore the script's themes of trauma and racial identity. Dr. Pinder-Amaker is the Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer and Director of the College Mental Health Program at McLean Hospital. She spoke with the cast regarding strategies for developing a trauma-informed self-care practice and has made herself available on an ongoing basis for one-on-one sessions with cast members who wish to go further in developing skills for exploring trauma in psychologically safe and supported ways. Dr. Pinder-Amaker is also consulting on referrals and recommendations to mental health providers, bodywork, and other practices as requested by company members.

• When pertinent, we will hire cultural consultants who can advise on stories of the BIPOC community, Trans individuals, and persons with disabilities. We will ensure these individuals are properly credited for their work.

We hired an expert on African ritual storytelling practice for *The Bluest Eye*. Other production roles (such as dramaturgy) are also being evaluated in part based on their practitioners' abilities to center culturally informed storytelling and equity in their work. Discussions regarding cultural consultants for the FY23 season have also already begun.

• When pertinent, the Line Producer will hire Intimacy Consultants and Fight Coordinators who have competency in supporting the psychological safety of BIPOC artists or who will engage in such training before they begin their work at The Huntington.

Intimacy and fight coordinators on the first four 2021-22 productions have all been experts in providing intimacy and/or fight direction in culturally informed practices. The intimacy consultant for *Hurricane Diane* and *The Bluest Eye* is Dr. Ayshia Mackie-Stephenson who centers racial and sexual justice in her work. Dr. Mackie-Stephenson will also consult for our upcoming production of *Our Daughters, Like Pillars*. We also had intimacy consulting for *Witch* provided by Ted Hewlett, who has provided fight coordination services for many Huntington productions.

• We will create a system to track how projects are selected for the season and how each creative is identified and hired, so that larger trends can be seen and addressed. This is being considered and this season’s hires are being considered holistically.

• We will also begin to monitor and document how Guest Artists engage with our Code of Respect in order to determine the possibility for future engagement with The Huntington.

This will be evaluated as part of the 12-month report.
• Moving forward, for all remaining 2021-2022 season hires and beyond, we will proactively disclose all confirmed creatives to additional team members as offers go out, as well as expand the distribution of the internal casting/artist update emails to include confirmed artists.
We are not yet in the habit of sending producing/casting emails with everyone listed every time there is a new collaborator added to the team. Although the assembly of each team does not fall into a set sequence, more frequent communication to the company as collaborators are added can become practice.

• Beginning with this season, we will reaffirm our Core Company Values and commitment to anti-racism at all first rehearsals.
Our Core Company Values are included in the welcome packet delivered to local and visiting guest artists by Company Management and discussed at first rehearsals as part of a process also including the EDIA training video we developed with Wellspring, as described above.

• We will create a clear and transparent structure by which artists will be compensated for additional duties outside of their jobs, such as promotional activities that take place outside of their contractual work week.
A policy was crafted and General Management has created a spreadsheet to track consistent implementation. In general, artists have reported feeling less pressure to participate and that their time is being valued as asks are based on value to the institution. Compensation is being offered up front along with the invitations to participate.

AUDIENCE/MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

• We have made subscription model changes to extend access, affordability, and flexibility to a broader audience.
  o We have recast subscriptions as season tickets, lowered the entry point to three plays, eliminated zones/series, flattened pricing, and introduced more expansive payment plans in order to make our productions more accessible and our seating policies more equitable.
The new sales model was generally well-received. We saw a good number of new season ticket holders, especially 35 Below. While it has been difficult to measure with the pandemic, we are seeing many season ticket holders taking advantage of the three-play season ticket option and many season ticket buyers enrolling in extended payment plans. The nine-month plan has been unexpectedly popular. We will continue to offer the three-play entry plan and an extended payment option in FY23 and as we start to pull out the renewal information from this season we will go deeper into demographic analysis.
In the next fiscal year, we will increase and expand access to the best seats for all productions:
  o We will implement new sales practices that expand access to early seating and presales beyond donors and patrons with higher financial capacity; we will begin by incorporating our Huntington Community Membership Initiative (HCMI) members into pre-sales and removing the boundaries attached to our special access and discounted ticket programs (i.e., our 35 Below and student ticket programs).

Our new sales practices were put into place; their overall impact for FY22 will be assessed in our 12-month report. Price no longer determines access to the best seats for season ticket holders. We expanded pre-sales to include HCMI members and are working to broaden pre-sales to include more community contacts.

Our Community Engagement Manager and Promotions & Community Specialist will work cross-departmentally to communicate the value of The Huntington in the community to underrepresented audiences, tracking events and performances that we host in different neighborhoods as we assess our development of relationships outside of our theaters. Through this work we will create a long-term vision for how to support BIPOC audiences both in and out of our spaces.

We have had success in reviving the Community Membership Initiative. We have had several virtual events for HCMI and BIPOC-centered audiences that were well-attended and received. We have also established relationships with a handful of new organizations and are constantly recruiting more each month.

When pertinent, we will hire consultants who can advise on show positioning, artwork, and overall strategy to responsibly market stories of the BIPOC community, Trans individuals, and persons with disabilities. We will ensure these individuals are properly credited for their work.

Beginning with FY23 season, we are partnering with consulting and marketing firms for the best possible representation of subject matters outside of our own experience.

We will prioritize the raising of a broad range of voices from throughout the organization, particularly those of BIPOC artists/staff, in promotional materials and in press opportunities.

We have made significant progress on incorporating the voices and faces of a broad range of artists, but we are still working to better incorporate diverse staff in our marketing.

We have instituted an Institutional Access Contingency Budget for the coming season to ensure The Huntington can build the infrastructure to make every event accessible.
The Institutional Access Contingency Budget has been established and the Access Committee has put in place request and approval systems for allocating funds. The budget has already supported needs across the institution that could not have been anticipated in the FY22 budgeting process. This is an ongoing goal for this flexible funding stream which allows us to better respond to needs as they arise. One example of this use is to support our efforts to ensure all digital insurance options include captions for those who want or need them. We have also committed to providing audio-described and ASL-interpreted digital insurance options as unique links for purchase.

- We will restructure our security positions and practices to focus on both welcoming and providing security for everyone walking through our doors. We will also implement a “Code of Respect” for our venues to be shared in rental agreements, lobbies, programs, tickets, pre-show communications, and on our website.

Three Crowd Attendants have been hired and Front of House has a check-in every few months. We have instituted a Code of Respect at the Calderwood Pavilion that all staff, patrons, and volunteers must attest to abide by upon entering our spaces. It reads as follows:

The Huntington aspires to create an inclusive and welcoming space for all communities that gather here. We are committed to learning as an institution and encourage all to join us in crafting and sustaining an equity-driven culture. Therefore, The Huntington will not tolerate racism, discrimination, or harassment of any kind. Thank you for creating this community with us. We are glad you are here.

If anyone witnesses or experiences events that do not align with this Code of Respect we encourage them to seek out Calderwood Management or e-mail wehearyou@huntingtontheatre.org.

The Code of Respect is posted throughout the building and included in rental agreements, our website, and on tickets and in Education Program curriculum guides via QR codes linking to the full text.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

We understand that there must be mechanisms in place which hold The Huntington accountable for these stated commitments.

- The HEAR Task Force will generate six and twelve-month progress reports on our work, distributing these to the community along with regular updates.
This is our first six-month report. Regular updates were not as regular due to capacity, split focus with re-opening, and approval process for correspondence/announcements.

- We will create a protocol for honoring tribal sovereignty and self-determination through spoken or posted land acknowledgments in our spaces, at first rehearsals and at other official meetings.

We wrote and instituted the reading of our land acknowledgment, below, at the majority of the committed times including at the start of each rehearsal process and at public events.

The following appears on The Huntington website, in all program books, and on lobby screens at the Calderwood Pavilion:

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Huntington acknowledges that our physical spaces stand on the occupied homeland of the Massachusetts people. We’d like to begin by acknowledging the Massachusetts Tribe from whom the Colony, Province and Commonwealth of Massachusetts have taken their name. We’d like to pay respect to the ancestral bloodline of the Massachusetts Tribe and their descendants who still inhabit the land to this day. We honor and respect the many native peoples who are connected to this land, past, present and future, including the Nipmuc and Wampanoag peoples.

*This land acknowledgement was created by staff of The Huntington with input from the council of The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag. To learn more about the tribe or to donate in support of their current programs, visit their website [www.massachusetttribe.org](http://www.massachusetttribe.org)*

The larger impact of the land acknowledgment will be assessed as part of our July 2022 report.

- We acknowledge our ignorance about enslaved people who may have toiled on the land where our venues stand. We will find an organizational partner to help us with research of the history of the grounds and determine ways to recognize and acknowledge enslaved persons connected by this history.

While this work has not yet been completed due to capacity and the pandemic affecting the workflow of our partners, this is an active priority for Marketing and Public Affairs as part of the lead-up to the reopening of the Huntington Theatre and we are hoping to be able to do this in the spring.

- We will post each fiscal year’s approved Form 990 on our website to create greater financial transparency.

This has been completed. We have also updated our Guidestar and Charity Navigator profiles to reflect greater organizational and financial transparency, earning us the highest-level ratings on each site.
BOARD RECRUITMENT AND GOVERNANCE
The Huntington Board of Trustees and Board of Advisors each recognize that there are many ways in which members can provide institutional leadership, support, and value.

- While philanthropy will continue to be a critical tool in achieving the boards’ responsibility for the fiscal stability of The Huntington, the boards will build a more inclusive cohort of members through outreach to a broader group of theatre proponents who reflect the diversity and cultural richness of the Boston community. This continues to be ongoing for the Nominating and Governance Committee. Outreach continues.

- The Nominating and Governance Committee has begun to decentralize wealth as the primary driving factor in the boards’ nominating processes, expanding the scope of recruitment to include candidates who offer knowledge, community affiliations, wisdom, and service as primary components of their commitment. This continues to be ongoing for the Nominating and Governance Committee. We were successful with balancing a need for philanthropy and other types of gifts with the latest class of Trustees and Advisors. Similar to other demographic statistics, this can be observed through data collection.

- The Boards of Trustees and Advisors will commit to recruiting members of the BIPOC and Access communities through networking and outreach in order to build and foster equitable representation. There has been robust conversation on this topic at all meetings of the Nominating and Governance Committee in FY22. Members of the committee have dug deep to think of groups in our community that are currently not represented or are underrepresented on our board, with demographic data from a survey of the board offering further clarification. Conversations have now shifted to brainstorming potential plans for outreach to these communities. Additionally, key board and staff members have done direct outreach to leaders in the BIPOC community for advice on how to build more diverse boards.

Outcomes for board recruitment will be measured from year to year (after the induction of new members at the fall’s Annual Meeting), with statistics for both outreach and actual membership being compared over time to track progress. This is an ongoing commitment to improvement over time, and success will be reflected in the data.
• All incoming Trustees and Advisors will be assigned a mentor to ensure that these objectives are addressed and that new members are updated on best practices undertaken at the staff and institutional levels. A mentorship program is currently in progress for new members. Mentors have been assigned through the Development Department, though there has not been a set structure to the partnerships. There will be follow-up to set a structure, ensuring meetings between mentor and mentee throughout the year and making sure that a part of the curriculum is gaining an understanding of the tenets of the ASAP. Live conversations/check-ins between mentors and mentees is key to the success of this program, with specific feedback from mentees being the best indicator for success. Ideally, dates for conversations would revolve around the existing calendar of board events - for example, quarterly check-ins in line with the quarterly meetings of the board.

• The Chair of the EDIA Committee will continue to sit on the Nominating and Governance Committee and lead coordination of the Boards of Trustees and Advisors with the HEAR Task Force. In addition, the Chair will continue to play an integral role in communicating the execution and the evolution of the ASAP to executive leadership and the boards, as well as facilitating ongoing education and guidance that will create a more cooperative, value-driven culture consistent with The Huntington’s mission. The integration of new programs and processes which aim to practice and promote racial justice and equity will be included in the Trustee and Advisor handbooks and future Trustee and Advisor orientations.

The Chair of the EDIA Committee, Neal Balkowitsch, continues to sit on the Nominating and Governance Committee. The EDIA Committee has also continued to have representatives from the HEAR Task Force in attendance and was a part of the agenda for an update at the Annual Meeting of the Boards in October. The ASAP is in the 2021-22 Trustee and Advisor handbooks and was included in this season’s Trustee and Advisor orientations for new members. The Chair of the EDIA Committee also served as a member of the Artistic Director Search Committee, for which the ASAP was a guiding document. The ASAP was included in the job description for the new Artistic Director and was a key part of all interviews during this board-led process.

The Artistic Director search, in combination with transition in the HR Department, did delay the meeting of the EDIA Committee this season, but members have remained engaged in the work and the committee has returned to meeting regularly.

Thank you for reading this report and for your contributions in these efforts. We look forward to updating you further in the coming months.

The HEAR Task Force,
March 2022
Chair: Hortensia Hinds

Kendrick Terrell Evans
Bethany Ford
Charles Haugland
Diana Jacobs-Komisar
Derrick Martin
Meg O’Brien
Trisha Pham
Katy Poludniak
Regine Vital
Kevin Schlagle