

## **USC Roski School of Art and Design Commitment to Black, Indigenous and People of Color**

The events that have occurred around our country and our communities are evidence that there is still much that must be done - justice, equity and social change still need to be addressed. As the national conversation continues on Racial Justice in the US and with the upcoming contentious elections on the horizon, our community in discussion with students and faculty are resolute in adopting specific actions to address discrimination at the USC Roski School of Art and Design. As we move towards concerted steps to implement actions that will have lasting results, we also ask that every member of the Roski community reflects, listens and learns during these challenging times.

### **FACULTY**

To lead the charge – all full-time faculty will be asked to conduct Unconscious Bias Training to be completed by the end of the academic year.

Over the past five years, the Roski School has had a steady increase of BIPOC faculty, but we acknowledge that we can do more, and we can do better. The recent five new full-time hires have all been BIPOC, but we are committed to further expand diversity within the faculty and staff ranks in the next few years. The Roski community should be diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic class, gender/sexuality and intersectionally, and we are all dedicated to have our community reflect that of the larger Los Angeles landscape. We will continue and expand our current efforts with mandatory training for all full-time faculty and staff committed to review all curriculum this year. There's been great strides made in the Critical Studies courses, see below.

The University is installing a new Vice President, Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer (CIDO). Our school will be working closely with that individual and other USC diversity liaisons, to assure we continue to recruit qualified individuals that help us expand inclusivity within the faculty ranks and create “best practices” at our school.

### **STUDENTS**

#### **Roski Equity and Diversity Committee**

The Roski DEI Committee will be inviting student representatives to meet with the committee. This year's committee members are professors - Sherin Guirguis (chair), Edgar Arceneaux, Ruben Ochoa, Patty Cheng, Andy Campbell and Nao Bustamante.

#### **Financial Support and Access:**

Along with the University announcement of tuition assistance for all first-year undergrads with family incomes under 80k, and other forms of financial aid, Roski has its own, newly established **Roski Emergency Student Fund** for classroom materials and supplies for students with need. Requests for materials can be made directly to advisors.

The school is currently working on shared undergraduate spaces for BFA art and design seniors with the hope that studio space should alleviate pressures for work and gathering areas. The plans should open up opportunities for collaborations, especially with local communities. The University has many funding options to promote these types of partnerships, such as **Good Neighbors** and **Art and Action**. Roski values service and collaboration, and we encourage our students to get involved by prioritizing more community-based work in the future.

We strongly encourage student-led ventures and projects. To support these efforts, we invite students to propose projects and exhibitions that reflect USC's Principles of Community.

### **Alumni Connections:**

Roski has an incredible network of alumni and there are ongoing efforts to create a more robust alumni pipeline to current students. This semester, the **Lunch with Creatives** series will be focused on our alumni. All students are encouraged to attend, as is the public.

The Roski Lecture Committee continues to highlight the work of artists, writers, and scholars with diverse voices. Please visit the Events section of the Roski website for this year's Roski Talks with speakers and creative professionals reflecting work in social justice and diversity.

### **CURRICULUM and COMMUNITY**

We are committed to supporting heterogeneous, inclusive, and diverse creative practices, which is only possible when different ideas and approaches are supported. We will plan ongoing conversations with the faculty to discuss how diverse ideas can be addressed in all classrooms.

Progress has already been made in our Critical Studies courses. Currently, classes begin from a decolonial framework, establishing art as invented through European colonialism in the early modern period as construction to justify and perpetuate colonialism. As such art and its institutions are based on structurally racist premises, we argue that these must be exposed and interrogated to empower students to understand their potential position within these structures. Although our curriculum is inevitably biased towards US and European structures (which we, as noted, critique), we continually seek to integrate a range of artists from the African American, indigenous, and other communities of color. We strongly encourage conversation and invite students to bring in artists whose work they would like to discuss.

Design is situated within the rise of industrialism and mass production, as well as technologies, all of which are also related to colonialism. Issues of racism in design are continually discussed, and there has been a move towards research projects that challenge established canons in art and design history. Creative fields are continuously moving and evolving. We anticipate that the ideas discussed in these lectures will be echoed in a student's individual creative practice. This will be a great opportunity for all members of the Roski community to further our knowledge and understanding and fill in the gaps in history together.

Expanding the list of BIPOC artists and designers is one of the most immediate ways of introducing inclusivity to a student's practice. Please know that we are all learning, and the actions that we take this year are critically important to moving us closer to a better school and community. If we are to provide a safe place to create, inspire and have impact, every member of our community must feel supported.

I am concluding with the USC Principles of Community, which is a guiding light in how we enter these conversations and push towards actions that will make us a better community. The accomplishments and decisions that brought us all to USC should not be taken lightly and each member of our community – students, faculty and staff – should abide by these principles in order for real change to occur.

### **USC PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY**

USC is a multicultural community of people from diverse racial, ethnic, gender, and class backgrounds, national origins, faith backgrounds, political beliefs, abilities, and sexual orientations. Our activities, programs, classes, workshops, lectures, and everyday interactions

are enriched by our acceptance of one another, and we strive to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect.

We want to make explicit our expectations regarding the behavior of each member of our community. As adults, we are responsible for our behavior and are fully accountable for our actions. We each must take responsibility for our awareness of racism, sexism, ageism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and other forms of discrimination.

Bigotry will not go unchallenged within this community. No one has the right to denigrate another human being on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, national origins, and other identities. We will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation, or violence against person or property. In this context, we do not accept alcohol or substance abuse as an excuse, reason, or rationale for such abuse, harassment, intimidation or violence. Ignorance or "it was just a joke" is also not an excuse for such behavior.

All who work, live, study, and teach in the USC community are here by choice, and as part of that choice should be committed to these principles which are an integral part of the USC's focus, goals, and mission.

*(1988, revised 2017)*