

Introduction

Over the summer and fall of 2021 Hyphens and Spaces (H&S) partnered with ATHE to help define and enact an organizational-wide social justice and equity-centered strategic plan, embedding anti-racist practices at the heart of everything ATHE does.

Our process included assembling a volunteer task force from across the organization to draft a strategic action plan with support from a Hyphens and Spaces consultant. The group invited feedback from the entire membership on the draft goals, vision, and purpose statement by conducting five listening sessions with approximately eighteen participants who shared feedback on the draft. After incorporating their feedback, this final version of the action plan will guide our work in this area over the next two years.

The ATHE task force leading these efforts included President Chase Bringardner, President-Elect CarlosAlexis Cruz, Vice President for Advocacy Khalid Long, Gibson Cima, Ann-Marie Costa, Donatella Galella, Patricia Herrera, Alexandra Ripp, Dani Snyder-Young, Immediate Past-President Josh Abrams, and Executive Director Aimee Zygmanski.

Vision Statement

To fight actively for racial justice in theatre practice, research, and pedagogy in higher education. To interrogate race-based imbalances of power and labor, and dismantle systemic inequities. By building equitable systems within ATHE, we will generate collective action towards change.

Purpose Statement

ATHE's mission is to advocate for theatre and performance scholars, educators, and artists in higher education.

We acknowledge that both current and historical structures, policies, and attitudes of our society are racist and oppressive. Racism pervades society across the structural, the organizational, and the personal, affecting our classrooms, departments, institutions, artistic decisions, labor practices, and funding allocations. In order to dismantle systemic racialized inequalities and support all of our students and colleagues to thrive, we must engage in anti-racist practices. By engaging in anti-racist action, we work to dismantle inequitable practices that impact systemically marginalized groups overall.

Our discipline is built on white supremacy and has historically privileged the white gaze. Our discipline also values lived experience and embodied practices in the classroom and studio. ATHE's collective nature empowers our organization to drive changes to current practices, not only in our academic institutions, but also in the professional arena. By centering the experiences of members of the global majority, ATHE will better advocate for a sustainable anti-racist future of theatre in higher education and beyond.

General Governance and Accountability

While the individual objectives will be managed and advanced by those parties identified in respective sections, the strategic objectives and action items will be monitored and managed by the ATHE President-Elect with direct support from the Executive Director and members of the Governing Council. They will provide bi-annual updates on the progress, learnings, and adjustments to the plan then report to the entire organization via a clear communication plan, including e-newsletters, website, and social media.

Goals & Actions

The following goals represent the priorities for the organization at this time. Specific tactics and intended outcomes of each goal are outlined further to ensure accountability and timeliness.

- Goal 1) Implement anti-racist and accessibility practices into conference planning, year-round communications, and focus group administration.
- Goal 2) Actively decenter whiteness and to create more equitable spaces and center needs of Global majority membership.
- Goal 3) Embed anti-racism into budget decisions.
- Goal 4) Resource higher education institutions to carry out anti-racism work.

Goals & Actions

Goal 1: Implement anti-racist and accessibility practices into conference planning, year-round communications, and focus group administration.					
#	Action Step	Intended Outcome	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Accountable person(s)	Timeline
1.1	Share strategic plan with Focus Group Summit to ensure future planning will take into consideration feedback gathered from listening sessions and to ensure future planning is aligned with anti-racist practices.	Focus Group summit will foreground anti-racist practices at the heart of ATHE; work with FGs on enacting steps of the strategic plan in their conference and year-round planning and embedding accountability	Create a recommendation report based on the three different meetings that are scheduled to happen in the 2022 conference in order to design a more affordable and accessible conference in future years	President, VP Advocacy, Exec Dir	Summer '22 at conference
1.2	Equip members with anti-racist education and tools to build an anti-racist organization. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear concrete anti-racist goals for conference planners and for focus group leaders • Anti-racist impact assessment tool with helpful questions • Strategies and training for addressing harm in sessions • best practices documents and training for focus groups 	Anti-racist practice and philosophy are embedded in the conference.	Track and report progress bi-annually on ATHE's website	VP Advocacy; MAL for Focus Groups; MAL for Outreach	Discussion begins at FG Summit 2022 - training 2022-2023 and ongoing

1.3	Create a system of accountability for focus groups around anti-racist actions and commitments e.g. Collect formal commitments from focus groups around each standard for anti-racist action and how they plan to uphold them (via written document or video)	System will clarify what standards FGs need to meet in order to remain in operation annually	Track with bi-annual reports and conference proceedings	VP for Conferences; MAL for Focus Groups;	Begin in fall 2022 with statements by August 2023
1.4	Increase year-round communications about ongoing meetings and actions between the conferences.	Foster a culture of trust - particularly between leadership and membership - by being transparent and clear about organizational priorities and progress	Create quarterly videos that summarize progress against each goal. Email quarterly report that explains progress in more detail.	Exec Dir will provide deadlines/structure; GC members will submit quarterly videos; President or Pres Elect will write quarterly report	April 2022

Goal 2: Actively decenter whiteness and to create more equitable spaces and center needs of Global majority membership

#	Action Step	Intended Outcome	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Accountable person(s)	Timeline
2.1	Create and execute new membership survey to determine current demographics of ATHE and to understand the barriers to participation for global majority members	Create a demographic benchmark. Identify needs that are not being met and/or obstacles that might stand in the way of members of the global majority from joining or actively participating in ATHE	At least 30% response to survey; reaching out to past members who have felt alienated by ATHE	Exec Dir; membership committee; Pres-Elect	Fall 2022-Spring 2023
2.2	Recruit global majority members for leadership roles on FG structure, committees, and Governing Council	Increase global majority membership in leadership	Nominations committee will have annual robust slate for elections 15% increase in members in leadership roles	Nominations Committee	Ongoing
2.3	Advocacy Committee to explore and create accountability measures for organization to better support global majority members (<i>works in connection with plan steps 1.2 and 1.3</i>)	Create an environment where global majority members can thrive at ATHE	Increase retention of global majority members by 20%	Advocacy VP; Exec Dir (for reporting)	Ongoing

2.4	Adjust awards to align with vision and purpose to create more scholarship opportunities for global majority contingent faculty and grad students.	Provide the tools and resources global majority members need in order to thrive at ATHE	Increase in award nominations of global majority	Awards VP and committees	Fall 2022
2.5	Gather members who have knowledge/experience in international higher ed to formulate new ideas about how to engage global members	Respond to needs and create access for global members	Global member representation increases across key functions such as: conference planning committee, focus group leadership, governance etc.	VP for Membership	Membership cycle 2023

Goal 3: Embed anti-racism into budget decisions.					
#	Action Step	Intended Outcome	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Accountable person(s)	Timeline
3.1	Evaluate the current budget process through an anti-racist lens.	Align budget with vision and purpose of strategic plan.	Budget supports organizational priorities in anti-racism work	Exec Dir; Treasurer; Finance Committee; ultimately, full GC	Each FY year budget process (Jan-April)
3.2	Publish annual reports that explain income and expenses to membership, demonstrating how financial goals and priorities are tied to organizational values.	Foster a culture of trust and transparency - particularly between leadership and membership	Annual reports are published to web and via email to full membership	Treasurer, Exec Dir	At close of each fiscal year. Final data should be available by September annually

3.3	Apply for grants and provide funds to focus groups for anti-racist education and those engaging in anti-racist initiatives	Ensure that Focus groups must be accountable to ATHE's strategic plan	ATHE's annual budget is aligned with anti-racist strategies listed in this document	Exec Dir, Treasurer, finance committee	2023 - 24 (earliest possible due to grant timelines)
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Goal 4: Resource higher education institutions to carry out anti-racism work.					
#	Action Step	Intended Outcome	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Accountable person(s)	Timeline
4.1	Share the learning ATHE has made and position ATHE as a resource for anti-racist education and practices in theater education	Provide best practices on centering knowledge, practice, and experience of global majority in theater education, including focus on hiring and tenure processes, season planning.	Complete a position paper or centralized document on best practices to centralize global majority experiences in theatre education	Collective FG action; results from FG summit; Pres-Elect	Begin after FG Summit 2022 - ongoing
4.2	Develop a plan for dispersal of information to members and organization member institutions	Providing information gives our membership and member institutions tools and support	Create a database of resources on ATHE's website	Pres-Elect; Exec Dir (for publishing plan and resources)	2023 - ongoing