

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: JAMES G. VAN BRAMER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Elizabeth S. Crowley
Julissa Ferreras-Copeland
Peter A. Koo
Stephen T. Levin
Andy L. King
Costa G. Constantinides
Laurie A. Cumbo
Helen K. Rosenthal

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Edwin Torres, Acting Commissioner
NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, DCA

Laura Raicovich, President & Executive Director
Queens Museum

David Freudenthal, Director
Government Operations
Carnegie Hall

Stephanie Erlich, Director
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Queens Botanical Garden

Sami Abu Shumays Deputy Director
Flushing Town Hall

Aaron Bouska, Vice President
Government and Community Relations
The New York Botanical Garden

Jorge Daniel Veneciano, Executive Director
El Museo Del Barrio

Carl Goodman, Executive Director
Museum of the Moving Image
Vice Chair, CIG, Queens

Shawn Renee Graham, Artist Services Manager
The Field and Working Artist

Leslie Schulz, President
BRIC, Brooklyn Information and Culture

Karen Atlas, Director
Arts and Democracy and Naturally Occurring Culture
Districts New York

Andrea Louie, Executive Director
Asian American Arts Alliance

Ronnie Ferretti, The Lark Theater Company
Appearing for: Michael Robertson,
Managing Director, The Lark Theater Company

Charles Rice Gonzalez, co-founder of
Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance, BAAD

Ellen Pollan, Deputy Director
Bronx Council on the Arts
Member, Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts

Alana Chang, Associate Director
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Theater Communications Group, TCG

Gus Schulenburg, Director
Communications and Community Engagement
Theater Communications Group, TCG

Mark Rossier, Executive Director
New York Foundation for the Arts, NYFA

James Bartlett, Executive Director
Museum of Contemporary African Disporan Art, MoCADA

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[sound check, pause]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: All right.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good morning everyone, and welcome to the very timely and important meeting of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations. My name is Jimmy Van Bramer. I am Chair of this committee. We're joined by Council Member Peter Koo of the Committee, and several others are either across the street at other hearings or on their way, and vice versa. So our members will be coming and going. We're thrilled to take up the issue of diversity in our cultural sector, and very pleased that the Department of Cultural Affairs under the leadership of Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl and the Acting Commissioner Eddie Torres. We have conducted this very important survey, and we're anxious to in a very public way look at the results of the survey, and more importantly to determine what the next steps are, and how we can strengthen this already incredibly important sector. So just a few words from--from my perspective. Obviously, we all know diverse the City of New York is. I live in

Queens, and probably no other place is more diverse than the great Borough of Queens, but it's obviously important that our cultural organizations reflect that, and I want to say that I think our cultural community does an amazing job of--of serving the public, our diverse public and have done more probably than most other sectors in--in reaching out to every single New Yorker. I think everyone here knows how important the IDNYC program has been to the City of New York, and that just simply doesn't happen in the way that it has happened without the cultural community, the SIGS in particular, but--but others as well coming to this program and supporting it in the way that they have, obviously. And I want to say that we as a--as a community the Department of Cultural Affairs, and--and the cultural community have--have participated in this look at ourselves. And I want to make sure that--that no one in the city of New York in any way pinpoints or focuses only on the cultural sector. The truth is every single sector, every single organization could probably benefit from the look inside that we all have taken on. And--and so, the result are--are not just for just for us to look at and study and think about, but

1 actually for the entire city of New York. And--and I
2 want to thank all of the organizations who responded,
3 participated and/or have taken this look into
4 ourselves as to how we're doing with the diversity
5 of--of hiring and pipelines, and programs to develop
6 leadership among all sector in--in every way that we
7 measure diversity obviously, and we want to make sure
8 that people of color are well represented at every
9 level of organizations. But equally important are
10 the questions of gender and sexual orientation, and
11 gender identity, and so many other things. And I
12 think our community and I want to say the cultural
13 community and--and everything that you all do are so
14 key to so many of those things because art and
15 culture creates the space for people to feel safe and
16 to be able to explore and share identify in so many
17 different ways. So, this is a very, very powerful
18 and profound community that allows for--for
19 expression in every single way. But the study that
20 was conducted is very important, and I certainly
21 applaud Commissioner Finkelpearl and--and
22 Commissioner Torres and the Department of Cultural
23 Affairs for taking this on, and conducting this very,
24 very important survey. And we're going to call

Commissioner Torres to testify and tell us a little bit about what the survey was intended to accomplish, what it's found, and what we hope to do next and where we go from here. And I want to thank him and every other person who's here to testify. I know many folks care deeply about diversity equity access, and this community has really done amazing work, and obviously if there are areas where we need to do more and do better, we will undertake that. But, so should every other sector in the City of New York. So with that, we will ask Commissioner Torres to begin his testimony, but before that we'll ask you to be sworn in.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Commissioner, will you please raise your right hand? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before this testimony--before this committee today, and to respond to Council Member questions honestly?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: I do.
Great. So good afternoon. I already started off on the wrong foot. Good morning, Chairman Van Bramer and members of the committee. I'm Edwin Torres, Acting Commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and I'm here to present

testimony regarding the results of the Diversity
Survey of DCLA grantee organizations released last
month. Let me first provide some context in terms of
why we're making this issue such a priority. Among
the goals for DCLA during this administration are
that more New Yorkers be engaged in cultural and
creative activities at many touch points in their
lives, and that our cultural organizations have new
opportunities to engage more people. Therefore, one
of our guiding beliefs is that a more diverse cultural
workforce will in turn cultivate more diverse
audiences and supporters of the future. This
diversity is the source of sustainability and growth
for the entire cultural community, and a source of
strength for our city as a whole. I'm here to report
on the findings of the survey of cultural non-
profits, and what comes next including \$3 million in
support for diversity efforts among our constituents.
From the launch of the DCLA Diversity Initiative last
year, we understood the need to set a baseline
understanding of where our culture community stands
with regards to diversity. So with support from the
Mertz Gilmore Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers
Fund, DCLA works with the research firm Ithaca SNR.

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It's a survey of nearly 1,000 non-profit cultural organizations that receive funding from the city. Last month on January 28th, Ithaca released the full report on the results accompany--encompassing 36,441 paid employees at 987 organizations. The results while revealing some bright spots and major opportunities to achieve real progress makes it clear that we have work to do in order to create a more inclusive cultural community that truly reflects the city it serves. To call out one of us sort of headlined, the survey found that New York's cultural workforce is 61.8%, 35.4% people of color and 53.1% female. By comparison, New York City's residents are 33% white, 67% people of color, and 52% female according to the 2010 U.S. Census. This means that arts and cultural organizations here while more diverse than the national counterparts are far less so than New York City's population as a whole. The results are also indicated that diversity decreases as organizations increase in size, and senior leadership is generally less diverse than low and mid-level staff. Research has show that these trends to be true of many professions in the U.S. So, while this is clearly a larger challenge for our society,

it's one that we're eager to lead the way in
addressing with our partners in the cultural
community. Putting this information in the hands of
the public and our constituents to help guide
strategy and develop programs is in itself a crucial
step in addressing these issues. We're eager to
support and partner on concrete solutions and
initiatives, and this data will be key to guiding
these activities. We'll continue to engage in
dialogue with our constituents about the successes
they've achieved, and how we can all learn from those
successes. The challenges laid out in the data are
real, but there's also good news. New York City's
Museum workforce is considerably more diverse than
the national average. Multi-disciplinary
organizations, which employ a relatively large and
growing number of staff are significantly--
significantly more diverse than other parts of the
cultural sector pointing to possible lessons for
other groups. Certain types of positions within
organizations are more diverse than others. Forty-
six percent of employees in Finance; 45% of employees
in programming; 50% of employees in visitor patron
services and 42% of employees in education identifies

people of color. With nearly 22,000 employees this is the larger--excuse me--and overall the workforce is becoming more diverse. Forty-three percent of employees hired in this decade self-identified as people of color. So with 22,000 employees, this is also the largest cohort, and the numbers on gender equity are encouraging especially the quality of representation of women in senior positions. The survey results also show some blind spots including people with disabilities and those that identify as being nonbinary gender. We're absolutely committed to making sure these groups continue to be engaged in efforts to create a cultural sector that welcomes everyone. We're working with the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities, the NYC Commission on Human Rights, and the Alliance for the Inclusion of the Arts. We also have a powerful ally in Simi Linton, a national leader in the field of disability studies who is a member of the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission, will inform and advise our work moving forward. As we announced with the results were released, the urgency on this issues with--have provided opportunities to take serious action toward addressing the issues highlighted by the data. The

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city's Theater Subdistrict Council is exploring a funding initiative of up to \$2 million in grants from the development and training of theater professionals with a focus on people currently underrepresented in the professional theater community. The Theater Subdistrict Council is expected to make a formal announcement, and issue a request for proposals in the spring of 2016. DCLA will also commit a million dollars of our support for the Cultural Institutions Group to--to support diversity efforts, an RFP, actually an application, will be sent later this spring. This is in addition to the more than \$150,000 that has been contributed by the Ford Foundation, Mertz Gilmore Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund to support the effort. We're also working closely with partners including the City University of New York and private philanthropies to build and support new pipeline programs and create internships and employment opportunities at cultural organizations, and will develop leadership with these organizations. We'll provide regular updates on these and other initiatives as they develop.

In January 2015, the Department of Cultural Affairs launched this diversity issue in front of an overflow crowd at the Ford Foundation where we were honored to be joined by Chairman Van Bramer, along with hundreds of representatives of cultural organizations, foundations and other leaders with a stake in the future of the cultural sector. A second event--a second event held--held several weeks later at BRIC was also at capacity. So, from the very start it was clear that the cultural community shared Mayor de Blasio's vision for a more inclusive and equitable city. Engaging the full breadth of our city's diverse residents as the audiences, staff, leaders and supporters of the future is crucial to positioning our cultural organizations for sustainability and growth. We came together with our constituents because we share an understanding of just how rich an opportunity this is. As a cultural sector it is not only fairer, but more vibrant. I also want to make it clear the valuing of diversity, equity and inclusion are central goals of this administration and this agency, and inform all our work supporting the residents of New York City. So I'm here to specifically address the results of the

survey today. This will continue to be a crucial part of everything that we do. As I said earlier, one of the most important outcomes from the survey will be empower the public with the information they need to advocate for and develop new programs, partnerships and other solutions for our most pressing issues. The information will also point ways we can build on the strengths inherent in our sector toward a richer, more inclusive cultural community. We want to hear from our partners in the City Council, and from members of the public who have come to testify today. For anyone not able to join us today, I encourage you to visit nyc.gov/culture/diversity, and use the speak up feature to share your feedback, and use the hashtag culture for all in the discussions online. It is only by working together I was able to make substantive progress. It's clear that we have work to do. The scores of interactions we've had with staff at organizations large and small from across the city, it's also clear that the overwhelming majority of people recognize the opportunities that increasing diversity represents, and has committed to working together to make real measurable progress.

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Now we have a foundation for our conversation and
action. We look forward to Council's close
collaboration on further efforts. I'm happy to
answer any questions you may have at this time.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much, Commissioner. I'd like to recognize Council
Member Elizabeth Crowley from Queens who has also
joined us. So, you know, I think that it's
incredibly important to me and to everyone here that
everyone in the City of New York understand the
importance of our cultural, believe in them and
support them, and particularly as we embark on an
ambitious but very deserved \$40 million increase to
funding our cultural community this year. It's also
important that everyone understand that culture and
the arts are for all in the city of New York. That's
how we get by. So the survey has provoked some
interesting questions, and obviously our sector are
doing some things well, and then there are some
things that we can do better. I guess what I'm
interested in is in terms of leadership and people of
color being able and allowed to gain access to those
positions of power, clearly the student reflects some
work to be done in that area. But, did you gain any

insight into why that is happening, and why it is that while in certain parts of finance, 46% of employees, 50% in visitor patron services that in leadership we struggle, and what kinds of insights did you gain there? What kind of blocks or impediments to access are there--and--and how do we--how do we fix that?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Sure. Yeah, I mean part of that I'm sure it's--it's far more nuances than an anonymous aggregated survey can--can point to, but that was actually one of the--to my mind one of the big learnings. You know, we sort of all experienced these dynamics, but to see it analyzed in this way, what we recognized was that the most recently hired cohorts were increasingly diverse. Like the most recently hired cohort is the most diverse. And so, therefore, it makes sense that, you know, the people who have been in positions longest are who moves internally into leadership positions. So when you realize okay the most recently hired diverse--cohort is the most diverse, they're going to be bunched in--in usually junior and mid-level roles, you know. So that's a great opportunity longitudinally to diversity leadership

roles, but it happens over time, and it doesn't just happen by itself, you know. So, you know, we--we walked into this kind of thinking okay this would be a great opportunity to build pipelines into the field, and I still think that's actually hugely important. But what it really impressed upon us was the necessity of also building pipelines within the field from junior and mid-level roles into senior roles. You know, I had very much been--I think a number of us had been very much thinking of--of the huge importance of thing like paid internships and paid apprenticeships. And, I think those things maintain, you know, I maintained they--they remain very important, but I think also the issue of just professional development for people who actually have gotten a foothold into the field is just as important, you know. So people are able to move into positions of increasing agency and authority.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [coughs] I appreciate that. I mean I would also say, and I--I--I believe that we all share this goal, but it starts at the earliest of ages, right, and--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Right.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --and having a--
a robust arts and education program where arts and
culture are part of every single child's experience
from the youngest of ages both exposes folks to the
arts, but also that it can allow for the--the dreams
to start to--to form. Both being an artist and, of
course, we know that a lot of folks who are artists
then ultimately go into arts administration---

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] Uh-huh. Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --in their
careers, and--and--and so we have had a period of--
of disinvestment in arts and education. I'm very
proud of this Council and the Administration for
putting \$92 million more dollars into arts and
education, but I think that's where at the earliest
starts right at where we're sewing the seeds of
having the--the--the cultural workforce--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --and leadership
reflect the diversity and making sure that there are
no barriers for--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] Thank you for--for that.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: -- for people of color in particular. And--and I know that over the last ten years the hiring has become diverse, and did you do any drilling down into where those new employees are being hired, and at what levels? Because obviously if--if every single person of color is hired at a very junior level position, then we might be talking about a very lengthy period of time.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Right,

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, these pipelines that we both agree are necessary produce diversity and leadership. So what are you learning about those hires and--and--and how quickly are we going to move to a better place?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah, yeah. I mean in terms of the--the speed at which internal promotion happens, this wasn't able to show us that. You see a--I think kind of two patterns within the--the hiring patterns. So, you know, one is to my mind fairly surprising, which is things like finance roles, programming roles. Just because they--they--don't get me wrong. Not all non-profit salaries are

inadequate. There--I mean, they--they tend to be slightly better. The other thing is that programming roles are also roles of some agency, some sort of decision making authority. You will see something on the stage because of somebody in the programming role, or the organizations health will be at a certain place because of a finance role. I also like compared it to the National Bureau of Labor Statistics Information for regional hiring patterns, and we actually see higher levels of hiring in the non-profit cultural community in programming and finance roles than you actually see in the aggregate, which is I think fantastic. The others weren't quite a surprising in that they were sort of education roles, and visitor patron services. I think those are very important roles, but Visitor Patron Services is important because of the visibility of somebody in a Visitor Patron Service role. I think you still need to do some internal movement to--to have increased agency in that regard. And the education roles I think are hugely important, but when you drill down on the data a little bit, those tend to be a lot of part-time roles, you know. So there's also just the issue--I mean this is where you start moving

into--from diversity to equity argument of how financially sustainable that is as a career when you're hobbling together this part-time job, that part-time job.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: What about the different--the different types of cultural groups across disciplines--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --and what have you found in terms of music, dance--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Sure.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --and are there more disciplines that are more diverse? Are there some disciplines where we see particular challenges? I don't see that in the testimony, but you must have data on that.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Sure, sure. I mean, you know, the highest levels of diversity are in folk arts, and multi-disciplinary organizations. Folk arts is actually a--a very small field. I mean I think there's just a little over a hundred formal employees in folk arts. Multi-disciplinary is

probably the largest part of the field, and short of folk arts the most diverse part of the field, and that's extremely encouraging. We also know anecdotally that it is the--the number or new applications that come into agency where that number of applications that self-identifies as multi-disciplinary is steadily increasing. So that's fantastic. It's fantastic for two reasons. I mean one just on principle where we're happy to see that, and also it gives the rest of the field great opportunity for learning. You know, we can capture best practices from the multi-disciplinary field. It's also when you, you know, sort of look at it a little bit more. It's a lot where our culturally explicit organizations are, organizations, you know, like Asian American Arts Alliance, or the Museum of Contemporary African Dance and Arts are, you know. Then there's kind of the--the middle part where you'll see a lot of the field, which is, you know, sort of in the 40% range where people of color are represented. I'm--I'm speaking largely just race and ethnicity although we can get into other parts, too, which is like dance. Museums we're actually more diverse than we had anticipated. Nationally this is

kind of a gasp inducing moment for museums nationally. Here in New York they're about four times more diverse than the national average, which is encouraging. Surprising, it's probably theater and music, which had sort of the most--the most serious challenges. I was actually taken aback by that. I think part of it is some specific roles within the theater community, which historically haven't been as diverse, and that creates again just sort of workforce development opportunities to diversity those roles.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [coughs] And so, theater and music among the--the least diverse that--that you found. So we know that there are specific challenges there. And--and again I want to say because I really think this is important to say I think this is--is somewhat historic that our cultural community has taken on this work, and every other agency should probably taken on a similar exercise to make sure that no one singling out the cultural--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] Oh, sure.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --community,
but--but--but this is important work, and I'm glad
we're doing it--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --to make sure
that the workforce reflects our city, and that
programming is culturally competent and responsive in
every way that it needs to be, and--and I know-- You
know, I feel this way, too, that when I've gone to
the Philharmonic and--and others there are not enough
people of color playing--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --and--and
we've seen that in other places as well. So we have
to do more to make sure that again there are
instruments in schools and--and-

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --you know,
young people are affordable those opportunities to
learn and fall in love with the joy of creating
music. I know that this survey is rightly so focused

on diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, and agenda.

I do not see sexual orientation--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --reflect in
the survey, and I was wondering if you could comment
on that.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah, so we
basically structured it so that organizations,
directors whoever, the equivalent of an HR function
could fill it out without having to literally walk up
to their employees and ask them a bunch of sensitive
questions. So we basically structured it around the
questions that are asked on the Equal Employment
Opportunity Commission surveys, which are federal.
So that the information could be (1) sort of compared
against national averages because that's the
information that's collected nationally, and (2) so
they could be collected in a uniform manner so that
the--the comparisons aren't apples to oranges. And
the EEOC just doesn't ask questions about sexual
orientation. So to introduce new questions could
have created legal vulnerabilities for employers that
we didn't want to go into.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Well, I
understand that the-

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] But we did--we did actually ask--I'm
sorry.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I--I
understand that the federal government is clearly not
where it should be with respect--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --to sexual
orientation and gender identity, but obviously we
have all sorts of legal protections in the city of
New York--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --and--and I--
I do think that it is--it is possible to ask--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Uh-huh

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --particularly
in this nature if folks would like to self-identify
in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity,
and that is a missed opportunity to sort of

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ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: --

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[interposing] Yeah.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --assess where
we're at in--in that equally important category. So

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I just want to point out obviously--

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ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: [interposing]

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Uh-huh.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --as a--a gay
man. It's disappointing to--to read through the

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survey and not see sexual orientation and gender

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identity reflected in a way that I think is--is

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meaningful--

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ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

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[interposing] Sure.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --and--and

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it's--it's not enough just to say that we think that

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there are a lot of gays in theater, right? Like we

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want to do better than that, and--and--and make sure

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that are--are counted, right?

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ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yes.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: It's

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important--

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ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

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[interposing] You bet you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --that all of
our--our people are counted.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: So--so what's
the takeaway, right? So, the Department of Cultural
Affairs, the City of New York, this City Council,
this committee cares a great deal about diversity.
We want to make sure that this community represents
the--the people that we all serve. We and we along
really have taken on something very profound, and--
and we've found some successes and--and some areas of
improvement. So where do we go from here--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --and--and I
know that there's some funding in here that you've
mentioned which is--which is great, but I--I bet
everyone here would argue that we probably need a lot
more--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --for--for the
arts.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: We can raise our hand. If everyone agrees with the arts you get more funding [laughter] for--for both programming and services, and these--these programs of leadership development right--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --and--and-- and, you know, as someone who's step-father was a-- was a janitor--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --at--at a public school, no one appreciates that work, and the importance and the dignity and the value of that work than myself. But we want to make sure that the folks who are hired to--to guard the art, or to take the tickets are afforded those opportunities to--to get promoted, and to one day run the institution---

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --that they started out in the junior position of. So--so what is the Department of Culturals--Cultural Affairs'

vision for taking this information and--and getting
us to a better place?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Sure. I
mean, you know, two things. You know, first of all,
is, you know, when we first started this process, we
were thinking of this like as a project like as an
initiative of though--sort of this discrete thing.
And over time we realized we realized this really is
basically a--a core value for the city. You know,
this is New York values, you know? And so we really
wanted to over time make sure that this informs all
the work being done by the Department of Cultural
Affairs who are, you know, the largest public funder
of the arts in--in America, you know, And so, with
all of our resources this has to inform every
decision that we make, you know, going forward, first
of all. You know, second of all with the issue of
the--the resources that are immediately available
through the Theater Subdistrict Council, and through
the--part of their support to the CIG. And then
finally, the issue of making sure that those who are
engaged in effective practice are able to be held up
as leaders of the field that they are. So that this
can inform all of our practice moving forward, you

1 know. So that making sure (1) that we're sharing
2 what is working, but (2) that this actually being
3 done in a way that's organic to the field as opposed
4 to our pretending to be experts in this regard when
5 we are, in fact, as much a part of the field as
6 anybody else.
7

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Just one last
9 question before I turn to my colleague who may have
10 questions. I believe you said in the testimony that--
11 --that the largest organizations are less diverse than
12 the--

13 ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
14 [interposing] In the aggregate.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --than the
16 smaller organization, which is a little bit
17 surprising to me because the--the large organizations
18 sensibly have more funding and--

19 ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
20 [interposing] Uh-huh.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --and--and
22 more resources, and the ability to hire and--and--and
23 promote and--

24 ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
25 [interposing] Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --have pipelines of leadership for--for a more diverse workforce, and--and the smaller organizations obviously have less funding. So, (a) I want to say I' proud that that Council has supported my Cultural Immigrant Initiative--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: --
[interposing] Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --which is a now almost \$4 million fund to go a specifically smaller organization survey in immigrant communities. But what do you attribute that finding to--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: --and how do we--how do we fix that?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah. I mean what I attribute it to and I honestly don, you know, don't literally know. My assumption is that with the bigger organizations you tend to hire a lot more people who are trained as scholars. I mean like a museum curator is usually trained as a scholar, and it's usually a field of study that's not particularly enticing to somebody who-- I mean I told my father I

1 was--you know, I was born and raised in the South
2 Bronx--I told my father my degree was going to be in
3 art history. He nearly hit me, but--so there's that.
4 My other thought about it is in terms of what one
5 does about it, I think first of all you've hit right
6 on the head around arts education, one, and two
7 making sure that organizations are--and I think that
8 the best ones are being very deliberate about
9 engagement. I mean being deliberate about more than
10 outreach, but about engagement. You know, some
11 systemic interventions, you know, and as a public
12 agency, you know, encouraging systemic interventions
13 with our systems in the city, and I--I think that
14 best ones are doing that work.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you for
17 that. I know we have some questions. We've been
18 joined by Council Member Constantinides also of
19 Queens, and Council Member Crowley I know has some
20 questions.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you to our
22 Chair and for having this important hearing, and
23 thank you Commissioner and your agency for conducting
24 this survey, which is very important and I, too,
25

agree that all of our agencies should be conducting a
similar survey. Do you have a copy of the survey?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah, I have
a copy. Yeah. Are you--are you asking me for a copy?

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Yeah, I would--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] Yeah, sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --like one. I--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] I can send you a second by the way.

[laughs]

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I don't know

because what we have here is just a--a short overview
even in our--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --even in the
briefing report that the Council got.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah, and we
have full copies on our website--

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]
Okay.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: --but I can
also send you a copy.

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1

2

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]

3

I'm just, you know, I--I would like to see--

4

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

5

[interposing] Yeah.

6

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --what was

7

covered and if there was--

8

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

9

[interposing] Okay.

10

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --certain areas

11

that could have been covered better. It's just--

12

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

13

[interposing] Sure.

14

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --that we're

15

going to have other agencies replicate it.

16

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Sure, yeah.

17

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Did you survey

18

the boards?

19

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yes.

20

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And--because I

21

don't see the results of the boards. I see that 75%

22

of management--

23

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

24

[interposing] Uh-huh.

25

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --people who are
white.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: It looks
almost identical. Yeah, and yes I can give you--I
can send you a copy of the--of the survey.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Right, I just,
you know, because, of course, like senior management
if the board is more diverse--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --then you would
see a more diverse workforce.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I'm pretty sure
about that. So, when you mentioned the--the program
about the theater district--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --is that
including like stage hand and people who work--yeah,
because if--if I saw the survey then I would know all
the different jobs--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --which would be helpful as well.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And now, did every organization that you looked to survey respond?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah, virtually everyone. I think a small handful or organizations didn't, and so we are just working out with them how they can get us that information, and where that's meaningful.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Do they have to respond?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: They have to respond to apply again for funding, and a small handful said, oh, we're actually--we weren't going to be applying this coming year. So we'd rather not go through the paperwork or whatever, but it was very unusual.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Because I have a bill in the City Council that's had a hearing, that hasn't passed yet, but it has to do with all organizations that--organizations or private companies that contract with the city.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Uh-huh

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Perhaps give us
their diversity.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Tell us what the
diversity of their board is--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --and their top
management.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Uh-huh

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But it's had
some legal problems internally because--because of a
state finance law, and they said that you couldn't--
you couldn't mandate companies that do business with
the city, which would be the same as companies
profit, non-profit receiving a grant.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Have you had any
pushback saying that you--legally you can't ask for
this information.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: We haven't
and I honestly don't really know anything about state
level law so I--I couldn't give you an informed
opinion on that. No, I haven't had any pushback.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Well, our own
city budget has to follow the State Finance Law.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Because I--I
believe it's important that we have this information.
It's just that I have a similar bill that would
extend to every single dollar that we're spending in
the city.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Because knowing
whether a company is MWBE is one thing, but knowing
just how diverse their board is and their top
management is another thing.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: So, what we
would look to do is take similar information that
given here and just make it part of a policy. If
you're receiving funds from the city, you would have
to do that. That's about it. So--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: --thank you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Thank you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you
very much Council Member Crowley. I want to
recognize that we have been joined by Council Member
Helen Rosenthal from Manhattan and Council Member
Laurie Cumbo from Brooklyn, and I would ask if either
of you has any questions. Council Member Cumbo.
[pause]

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you, Council
Member Van Bramer, and I'm so happy to see you here,
Eddie. Very happy to have you. In the findings in
the readings that I saw, it was documented that a
certain amount of funding would go to the cultural
institute groups in order to be able to create the
infrastructure in order to train the next generation
of cultural leaders as--in terms of diversity. Was
there any thought to also expanding that amount of
money to also incorporate smaller not-for-profit
organizations that would have an opportunity to also
participate in this because many smaller institutions
are also feeders to many of the larger institutions,
and I've seen that and experienced that first hand.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: So have there been
any meaningful thought or dialogue about how to

incorporate smaller institutions as training grounds
in order to create the diversity throughout New York
City.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Sure, yeah.
The--the funding--money set aside for the CIG that's
actually money that they get every year anyway. That
was actually specifically a ring fence for--for this
effort. So that's not new money being added to the
CIG. In terms of efforts that's--that--those are
all, you know, ongoing conversations. So, you know,
that--yes it he short answer.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Do you think that
those ongoing conversations will result in a dollar
amount--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
[interposing] I don't think--

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: --prior to the
budget being finalized?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: The short
answer is I don't know, but you know, as I said
earlier on in the testimony, we think that this is
essential value for this agency and for the City. So
we also want to make sure that, you know, this is--

1 is--this informs everything that we do from here on
2 in.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay. Also wanted
5 to ask, and this question might have been asked
6 already, and if it is then I'll just reserve that
7 time for additional questions later with my
8 colleagues. Has there been any thought in terms of
9 what the benchmarks are for the work that's being
10 done? Will you be able to categorize in five years
11 this is what was accomplished? In ten years this was
12 what was accomplished?

13 ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah, yeah.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Was that asked?

15 ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: I mean the
16 short--No, it wasn't, but the short answer is yes. I
17 mean, you know in terms of the organizations with
18 whom the--you know, we're in dialogue, they can
19 certainly do that on an organizational level. So
20 certainly.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: But will it be
22 documented in terms of a similar way with this
23 survey? So five years from now, ten years from now,
24 will--is there already a plan in place to document
25 the--hopefully the great changes that have been made,

and what were the procedures, or ways that
institutions were successfully able to do that?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Uh-huh. I
mean we don't have specific plans for another survey
in the near future but, you know, we're--we're--we
are open to suggestions in this regard. So we're
happy to talk with you about that.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay, and through
this process were there organizations that came to
the forefront that you looked at and said, these
particular organizations are not reflective of what's
happening across the board. These organizations have
certainly risen to the level of doing exemplary work
in terms of diversity, diversity recruitment,
diversity retention. Were those organizations
documented and if so, are they going to be utilized
in some sort of way to assist organizations--other
organizations in this process?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah, those
kind of organizations have been identified by type.
Now, it's an anonymous survey so it's not like
organizations have been named, but what we're doing
is we're going to be engaging organizations by type
and asking them to come forward so that they can

share their--their effective practices with the
field. So, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay. Those were
the main questions that I wanted to ask. So I will
turn my time over to my other colleagues, but I thank
you. I think this is a really important project. I
think that this is going to be great for the field,
and I hope again just to reiterate wanting to see the
smaller culturally based institutions in their own
neighborhoods be a part of this process. Wanting to
make sure that those organizations that are doing it
right that their expertise is certainly utilized, and
wanting to make sure that we have clear benchmarks
all along the way to make sure that the diversity of
the City of New York is reflected in our cultural
institutions. And then just last that came into me
that I wanted to ask from the survey. Can you
describe, if it wasn't brought forward before, what
role will CUNY play in all of this? I read about
that in many of the articles and wanted to know how
will CUNY that is predominantly 70% minority going to
be utilized as a partner in this work?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah. Those
are--those are conversations that are still underway.

1 So it's not like we've landed on a, you know, program
2 or anything, but we would love to--and we've been in
3 conversations with CUNY for some time because exactly
4 of your point, Laurie. We would love for CUNY to be
5 a part of something systemic with the--with the
6 cultural institutions. That--that would be
7 fantastic. So we haven't come up with a--we haven't
8 landed any place yet, but we're here to answer CUNY.

9
10 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay, look forward
11 to it. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
13 much Council Member Cumbo, and we have several
14 cultural organizations who are about to testify about
15 their own practices and experiences. So I suspect
16 that will be very informative. Council Member Levin.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very
18 much Chair Van Bramer, and thank you Commissioner. I
19 wanted to ask about how--last year we--we passed the
20 Cultural Plan Bill, and we're--

21 ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:
22 [interposing] Uh-huh.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --looking forward
24 to working with--with DCA on the implementation of
25 it. How can the process of working on the Cultural

Plan help--help DCA and the broader cultural
community look at ways to increase diversity and--
and--and--and make the--the cultural institutions
and--and our cultural framework in New York City more
reflective of--of--of--of our city?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: It's--it's a
very smart questions. I think that this--I see these
two things as really, really closely related. I
think that the Cultural Plan is a great opportunity
for New York City to really articulate how important
culture is to its residents, and I think that the
overlap between the valuing of culture by New York
City's residents and the cultural diversity of New
York City's residents are really of a piece. I think
that putting forward the cultural community as one
that cares about diversity, as some of whom are
exemplars of the embrace of diversity as an
opportunity to serve the city's residents. I think
that needs to be central to the Cultural Plan.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: In--in terms of
the mechanics of it, do you see any ways in which the
Cultural Plan can actually--how there can actually
be, you know, confluence or--or the--the work of the
Cultural Plan could be leveraged to make real gains?

I mean is there any ways in terms of outreach, in terms of professional development? Any--are there any ways in which you could see some concrete steps that could--could be incorporated as part of the Cultural Plan planning process--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --to--to meet or to kind of facilitated in meeting some of these-- these goals?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: No, I mean I don't have the details worked out, but I think that when we have the opportunity that this survey provided to identify whole pockets of the field that are really in deep dialogue and are deeply reflective of the communities that they serve, that creates a great opportunity to, you know, provide platforms to engage the residents of this city. And I think it's through the engagement of the residents of the city that the Cultural Plan will be something that's really reflective of the city's desires, and make this a--a cultural plan for the city's residents as opposed to something that reflects in an old

fashioned notion of culture as sort of elitists or
separate from the city.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Uh-huh. I don't
know if this was--was asked by the Chair already but
does DCLA intend to implement peer-to-peer sharing of
successful practices with diversity workshops. I'm
not--I'm not sure if that was asked before I got her.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: It was and
the short answer is yes, yes we do.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And to--how so?
What's--what would be the mechanism to do that?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Sure. We're
bringing a diversity and equity and inclusion expert,
a firm that is actually going to be reaching out to
the organizations by type that have been identified
as being particularly effective at diversity, and
having a combination of roundtables and workshops
with the field so that effective practices can be
shared horizontally.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: All right. Thank
you very much. I appreciate it.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I look forward to
working with you especially on the implementation of

the cultural plan, and how all of these goals can be--
-I mean this is another example of why I think the
Cultural Plan--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] Great.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:--is--is an
important endeavor to take on in--in New York City.
I look forward to working with DCLA on--

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES:

[interposing] Thank you very much.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --this and its
implementation. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I look forward to
working with you, too.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [coughs]
Council Member, of course, and Council Member Crowley
has one last question.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Did your survey--
-survey of the industry that does filming on the
streets like the--no. But does the Department of
Cultural Affairs give funding toward those programs,
and did it--did your survey ask about who lives in

the city versus people who commute from New Jersey or
Westchester or outside of the city?

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: No, it
didn't.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much, Council Member Crowley. Commissioner Torres,
thank you. Obviously, there will be a significant
amount of follow up on this, but I do want to thank
the department for taking on this on this historic
step and, of course, all of our culturals for
participating and being so eager to--to promote
diversity, and achieve diversity. So with that, I
want to thank you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER TORRES: And I want
to thank you for doing this, and I want to thank you
for all you do for the city. This has been
fantastic. Thank you so much for this.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much, and now we're going to hear from some of our
amazing culturals. Laura Raicovich from the Queens
Museum; David Freudenthal from Carnegie Hall;

Stephanie Erlich from the Queens Botanical Garden;
and Sami Abu Shumays from the Flushing Town Hall
followed by Aaron Bouska, Jorge Daniel Veneciano,
Carl Goodman, and Sean Graham. So, you are quick
there Laura.

LAURA RAICOVICH: I was quick, yes. I
was ready.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes.
[background comments, pause]. I think you're up
first Laura.

LAURA RAICOVICH: Okay. Good morning,
Chairman Van Bramer, council members and friends. My
name is Laura Raicovich, and I'm the President and
Executive Director of the Queens Museum. I'd like to
thank you first of all for calling this important
hearing on the recent Diversity Survey. The Queens
Museum is a public institution in a public park, and
in the very near future will become the first art
museum in the country with a branch of--a public
library within its walls. I begin with this because
our mission is deeply rooted in serving the public,
the whole public. To that end, over the past decade
we have experimented with programming, staffing and
basic museum structures, all to attract new voices

into our galleries, into events, into our offices and into our board. While I understand that neither this hearing nor the Diversity Survey is particularly about programming, it is the programming that has attracted a diverse group of staff and board members to the museum. It is not by accident that our head of Exhibitions, Sotomi Wasaki (sp?), our Director of Education, Jason Yoon, and our Director of Community Engagement, Preana Reddy. They were attracted to the museum because they like us were intent on serving and engaging different communities in an ongoing discourse of issues that go way beyond the visual arts. We do not have all the answers, of course, and there is a lot more work to be done. However, we and our colleagues across the city's cultural sector are making great strides on leading the way for a more diverse cultural community nationwide. If I may, I'd like to touch on five programmatic initiatives that we have undertaken in the past decade that in a very profound way sheds some light on the Diversity Study. For the past 30 years, our Art Therapy Program has allowed individuals young and old to participate in cultural offerings in ways that complement their particular physical, emotional, behavioral and

cognitive abilities. What began as a vehicle to help visually impaired experience the visual arts, has evolved into a multi-disciplinary initiative that has the most--that has most recently contributed to changing art therapy practices for those on the autism spectrum. Six years ago, Michelle Lopez, one of our three full-time art therapists met a mother from Corona who was visiting the museum with her family. As an undocumented immigrant who spoke little English raising two children on the autism spectrum left her feeling isolated and overwhelmed. In speaking with her, Michelle discovered that other Latino mothers were in the same predicament. The Museum decided to pilot a small weekend play group in Spanish for a few of these families where mothers could ask Michelle and each other questions, and where art making was employed to help children express themselves. Since then, the program has expanded, built an international network, empowered parents and changed hundreds of lives. A few years before Michelle's fateful conversation, the Museum hired a young artist named Jaishri Abichanddani fresh off a long stint ringing doorbells for the U.S. Census. Jaishri grew up in Corona, and wanted to

help fellow immigrants and deeply knew Queens. Her census work was based on helping people by engaging them in conversation, and we wanted to incorporate that ideal into our own efforts. We shifted our attention away from solely growing attendance figures, and engaged our--our neighbors in meaningful conversations asking them what the museum could do to help them regardless of whether it was through the visual arts or not. Jaishri has since moved on, but our team of community organizers continues to harness the museum's resources to give opportunities and voices to our neighbors utilizing art and social practice to enter into civic processes, to energize public play spaces, include the community in urban design discussions and provide direct social services to thousands of people. It is with that same ethos that the Queens Museum has presented our ongoing art project called Immigrant Movement International launched by artist Tanya Bruguera six years ago. Since then in a storefront on Roosevelt Avenue, 30,000 people a year receive immigration and legal consultation, OSHA certification, English language instruction, basic computer training, exercise and wellness sessions and workshops and workers' rights.

The space is open to individuals and groups alike and serves as a setting for street vendors to organize the local youth orchestra, art making activities, and homework assistance for children. Social practice projects like this on are defined--are redefining the way we envision what art can be and do in the world, and we are directly exactly positive change in realms that our communities are identifying. Since the immigrant movement began, it has shifted from an artist fun project to one run directly by the community, with a council of community members deciding what concerns to tackle while the museum offers guidance and raises funds to keep it operating. Bruguera, the artist who conceived it is now in our second week as the city's first artist and resident for the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. In 2007, the Queens Museum contracted--contact--sorry--contacted the Queens Library, a powerhouse organization with more than 60 branches and a keen understanding of the needs of each of the neighborhoods they serve. We wanted to know what they knew, to pick their brains of their programmers and demographers. What emerged from those early discussions is the New New Yorkers Arts and Literacy

Program, a collaboration with the library that has offered free programs to recent adult immigrants in 12 languages over the past nine years. Conorda-- coordinated by a Noshan Hu (sp?), the Multi-session classes take place at both branch libraries and at the museum and range from digital photography and basic web design to traditional Korean brush painting and Tibetan Mondala making. Each is taught by a teaching artist in the native tongue, and many infuse art making with ESOL learning. The skill building aspect of the New New Yorkers Program has encouraged participants to adopt new passions, and even start their own businesses. But beyond that, it has created a community of recent immigrants with a tight bond that crosses ethnic and geographic boundaries. Those bonds are the foundation for the soon to be built Queens Library at the Queens Museum. Lastly, a visitor to the Queens Museum will encounter a core of VEAs or Visitor Engagement Agents. Essentially, our version of gallery ambassadors. These predominantly young people are interested in art, in museums and in community engagement in varying degrees. They work part time at the museum, come from diverse backgrounds, speak ten different languages, and are

at distinct points in their educations and lives.
Each is initially introduced and eventually immersed
in all aspects of museum operations. They receive
professional development on a monthly basis before
moving on to a more in-depth apprenticeship with in a
department of their choosing. Since we started the
VEA Programs two years ago, three former members have
joined our full-time staff including Dominique
Hernandez who just started as the full-time Project
Coordinator of the aforementioned Immigration--
Immigrant Movement Project. As the make up of the
city and the country are--more closely echoes the
remarkable diversity of Queens, it is obvious that
there is more work to be done. However, it is
important that we not overlook the groundbreaking
work that is already being done through New York
City's Cultural sector. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

Whoever wants to go next.

DAVID FREUDENTHAL: Mr. Chair and
committee members. I'm David Freudenthal. I'm glad
to offer comments from Carnegie Hall about the de
Blasio Administration's initiative to measure
diversity among the city's cultural institutions and

organizations. Some context. The city along side the Ford Foundation and others have framed the initiative using demographic information about New York as one of the most multi-ethnic cities in the nation with residents who speak more than 200 languages, and no single dominant racial or ethnic group. As the survey has confirmed, our cultural workforce does not full reflect this racial and ethnic diversity. Looking beyond New York, and into the future the United States is going to become a truly multi-ethnic nation within the next two or three decades. Diversity is an increasingly pressing topic of dialogue across sectors in our nation. Rapidly shifting demographics along with a recent pattern of current events that touch on issues of equality and inequality, racism, access and opportunity for people across the country has resulted in increased awareness and dialogue relating to these topics. As well as a shift in the philanthropic community towards causes in work that might address these challenges. In early 2015, grant makers in the arts adopted a statement of purpose for their work in racial equity in arts philanthropy to increase funding for a lot of African, Latinos,

Latina, Asian, Arab and Native American artists, arts organizations, children and adults. The Grant Makers Board has quote "Made racial equity and arts philanthropy a primary focus of our organization" committing to address quote "structural inequities and increasing philanthropic and governmental support of the arts for Atlanta (sic) artists, arts organizations, children and adults through a set of specific actions." All of that reinforces the commitment that Carnegie Hall and colleague arts organizations here and across the city have been making to examine ourselves in relationship to diversity and the opportunity gap. The Diversity Survey has been an effective means to engage in public dialogues like this one In looking at Carnegie Hall in relationship to these issues, we're evaluating our array of functions of a cultural organization including education programming, audiences, volunteer leadership, and employment. I'll touch on some of these briefly. In terms of the programming, we regularly present high profile artists from a broad range of genres. Recognizing that classical music presents certain challenges in relationship to diversity and inclusion because of

its Western European origins, the Hall has increasingly featured large scale programming initiatives such as Honor, a celebration of the African-American cultural legacy curated by our Trustee Jessie Norman; Voices from Latin America, and Ubuntu, music and arts of South Africa, which was organized around the 20th anniversary of free elections. We regularly present important artists of color within our programming especially as we consider the diversity of our audiences and our--and our artists. But while music an institute, our music and education community--music education community arm has over the past decade been designing programs directed at the issues of artistic and musical access, equity and diversity. Most recently we launched NYO2 and Play USA. Both programs, which are specifically targeted at increasing diversity among young people who have had access to--who have access to high quality instrumental instruction nationally in the early and pre-conservatory years. That's a large scale national program that we've taken on. Locally, tens of thousands of individuals reached by our service in city schools and communities are also reflective of New York's diverse demographic profile.

We've also focused in recent years on aggressive diversification of the artists within who we collaborate and who represent Carnegie Hall in school and community settings. We're doing all this work to try to help move the needle on the arts access gap, which is so key to the challenges raised in this survey. We've also been addressing issues of diversity and inclusion among our staff and board. In 2013, we engaged a consultant to consider the work at the board level and we're examining our practices at the staff level for example in recruitment. We're looking how to expand our internship program to allow for greater access to employment opportunities and job training, and we're receptive to the city's plans for the pipeline from local universities and colleges. As the cultural communities work and our own efforts around diversity and inclusion continue, Carnegie Hall will seek to advance in this area. Our efforts to programmatic, educational and employment initiatives have established a path to greater-- greater inclusivity and diversity in all aspects, and we're excited to see how they'll continue to evolve so that we can most effectively represent and--and serve our city. I welcome any comments or questions.

[background comments, pause]

STEPHANIE ERLICH: Good morning. Thank you Chair Van Bramer and council members for your support and for all you do for this great city. Thank you for having us here this morning. Thank you to the Department of Cultural Affairs. Your active support is vital to--to the work we do at Queens Botanical Gardens. My name is Stephanie Erlich, and it's an honor to be here to speak on behalf of Queens Botanical Garden. We're a 39-acre green space located on Main Street in Flushing where we happily provide our 210,000 neighbors and visitors with sanctuary in one of the most bustling neighborhoods in New York City. And for those of you who are not familiar with QBG, we are a part of the 1939-40 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, and we moved to our current Main Street location just in time for the 1964 World's Fair. Our mission reflects the diverse--diverse borough where we're situated by design. In 1997, the Board of Trustees and staff when through its first strategic planning process, and decided that it was imperative to incorporate people into the garden's mission, which is this: Queens Botanical Garden is an urban oasis where

people, plants and cultures are celebrated through inspiring gardens, innovative educational programs and demonstrations and environmental stewardship. Quite simply, we are the place where people, plants and cultures meet. This is what sets us apart, and what guides us in all that we do. Because the garden has made it its business to be welcoming to everybody for almost 20 years, we're devoted to diversity in everything that we do. We present large scale cultural celebrations throughout the year. I know this isn't about programming, but from Lunar New Year to Columbian Festival de Las Flores to Taiwan a World of Work is, and we try to weave cultural music, art and dance into everything we do wherever possible. Our plant collection features plants from around the world, but perhaps even more important our interpretive signage throughout the garden is written in Chinese, Korea, Spanish and English. We have printed brochures in multiple languages. Our frontline staff speaks Mandarin, Cantonese, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Hebrew and English, and we're recruiting volunteers. So if you speak Korean or Urdu, you can talk with me out in the hall after this. Please see me. Our many volunteers and

interns come from local high schools, and they reflect the great diversity of this city. One of our teenage interns, Leon, spoke only Mandarin two years ago when he first started with us, and now he's a real joker in English, and he's getting ready to select which college he'd like to go to. So far--so far, he's been accepted to every SUNY and CUNY school he's applied to. Leon works at the front desk, and has been a real asset communicating with IDNYC card holders looking to apply for Queens Botanical Garden membership, but Leon is not alone. He just happens to be my favorite. There are 60 summer youth employees who work with in July and Augusts, and they're exposed to all areas of the garden from horticulture to Visitor Services to membership to public programs. Throughout the year, many of the continue to do their community service with us. They keep coming back. Because Queens comprises multiple immigrant communities, the majority of our interns are first generation Americans. Many like Leon are immigrants themselves. I'm proud to say that our diversity efforts extend to staff as well. We're a small organization, and while our leadership and senior staff are primarily White member, our board is

unusually diverse. At 53% non-White that's 8 of our
15 people. They're Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese,
Latina and Caribbean-American, and our full-time
staff is 48% non-White. That's 14 out our 29 people.
This is not something that feels artificial. This is
because we're in the great Borough of Queens, the
third most diverse county in the nation. And because
our leader, Executive Director Susan Lacerte, has
made it part of our institutional identity to reflect
the borough's residents in every facet of what we do.
By working with community leaders and elected
officials she's met wonderful people who have
ultimately become supporters of the garden, and in
some cases board members. This work is also not
static. When we filled out the Diversity Set--Study
early in the summer, our numbers were not even as
good as they are now. We were fortunate to hire
three managers since then, all women of color, and
what we take from this is this: The work is constant
and ever-changing. Yet, we're committed to it
because we're committed to serving the city of this
diverse city. As someone who works at a public
garden, I look to plants and nature for inspiration.
In the forest biological diversity is a good thing.

You want to have variety in plant and animal life to ensure the strong survival of all living things through adaption. A forest's ecology is dependent upon the maintenance of its diversity. I'd say a city's is, too. Thank you.

SAMI ABU SHUMAYS: Good morning. Nice to see you all today. My name is Sami Abu Shumays and I'm Deputy Director at Flushing Town Hall, one of the smallest members of the City's Cultural Institutions Group located in Flushing, Queens. I'm Arab-American, one of the only Arab-Americans in senior-- senior leadership of CIG. That was a category, by the way, not included in the Diversity Survey because of the--as the Commissioner mentioned, Federal Guidelines. Of our seven senior staff members, our Executive and Artistic Directors is a first generation Eastern European Jewish immigrant; our Finance Manager is an Ecuadorian; our Director of Marketing is a Korean immigrant; our Manager of Chinese immigrants is an open gay Taiwanese immigrant. My position on the Chinese outreach position have been funded by DCLA's supplemental support for the last several years. Our Director of Facilities and Operations, one of only three White

men employed at Flushing Town Hall, is a first generation Irish immigrant and gay. Our Education Director, a White woman is a folklorist completely fluent in Spanish who has worked deeply with Native American communities and with immigrant communities in Queens having founded Pachamama Peruvian Arts. Of our seven mid-level staff, five are African-American and two are White. Our six junior staff members include two White, two Hispanic, one Asian-American and one African-American. Of the 12 members of our Board of Directors, fully one-third are Asian-American including two of the four officers, and one is Asian American--one is African-American. And of the four new board candidates we are cultivating, two are African-American including a Haitian immigrant. Our institution does look like New York City, and already provides opportunities for training advancement and leadership for people of color. But, the current focus on staff and board of cultural institutions ignores one crucial factor, the programming. In that arena we excel. Since our founding in 1979, our mission has been to create intercultural exchange through the arts and to serve one of the most diverse communities in the world with

1 culturally relevant arts and arts education
2 programming. We don't just include diverse
3 programming. It's around other offerings. It is and
4 has always been our central mission. It is those
5 programs that communities and audiences come for,
6 those programs that allow young school students of
7 color to see their culture celebrated. Those
8 programs that make people consider a career in the
9 arts, whether as an artist or an administrator. I've
10 included some samples of our brochure so you can see
11 what that looks like. You can see here. I'll note
12 since my colleague David is here, that on--on this
13 page we have a program in partnership with Carnegie
14 Hall [laughs] that's bringing Brazilian music to
15 Flushing Town Hall. So thanks for that, Carnegie
16 Hall. So no single culture dominates our programming
17 though we present a tremendous amount of jazz, a
18 significantly portion of Chinese, Taiwanese, and
19 Korean programming to serve the community of our
20 immediate neighborhood. A significantly of Latino
21 programming, a growing number of South Asian
22 programs, frequent Native American programs, and a
23 smattering of programs representing other cultures
24 from around the globe. One of our highlights is our
25

cross-cultural programming that pairs master tradition barriers from different cultures such as our Global Mashup series, which is really intended to break some of the self-segregation barriers that people from immigrant communities might not necessarily appreciate each other's cultures. So we applaud the City of New York and the Department of Cultural Affairs for spearheading this diversity initiative. In working to improve the diversity of the cultural sector as a whole, it's crucial simply-- not simply to create new programs, but also to continue to expand support for institutions such as ours that are already leading the city in diverse employment and programming, and are embedded in communities where the need for cultural services is high. Thank you very much for your time.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very much, and I think it's just coincidence that the tree of the four of you are from Queens.

STEPHANIE ERLICH: Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Let me just say that. You know, I--I--I--I guess I have just basic questions. I think your programming speaks for itself and it's amazingly diverse and response and--

and special in every way. And some of you have
incredibly great stories in terms of diversity and
staff and the board. But in terms of the--the--the
survey, did you find it useful, and--and--and--QBG
went there a little bit and--and has it influenced or
changed how you operate in any way? [pause]

LAURA RAICOVICH: I guess I'll say that I
know that for my predecessor, the current
Commissioner of Cultural Affairs and for myself,
diversity on a staff level has always been an
enormously high priority particularly given the
community is better served at the Queens Museum but
also in my past job experiences. This is something
that we've always put strong attention to. So it's
actually we have done the good thing of reinforcing
why this is important. You know, you--the--and I--
and I just want to point out that, you know,
diversity for us not only is, you know, around
questions of ethnicity, race, gender and sexual
orientation, but also the economic diversity and the
kinds of backgrounds that folks come from as they're
entering the workforce. It's something that just is
very much a part of daily realities, people with
differently abled bodies. You know, these are areas

1 that we've traditionally worked in, and so it has
2 actually given us a great boost in terms of how to
3 talk about the work that we're doing in these areas,
4 and--and I think, you know, frankly opportunities to
5 grow--grow that--grow that impact beyond perhaps what
6 we're going internally at the museum, and to share
7 that work with other institutions.
8

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And the--the
10 amazing work that you're doing programmatically, and
11 even with your--your staff, and--and board, do you
12 think that if one of the points of this survey is to
13 diversity or further diversity, our cultural
14 organizations in every way, at every level that if
15 you were to received say a significant increase in
16 funding, that you would actually be able to do more
17 to achieve the very goals of the survey.

18 LAURA RAICOVICH: Absolutely.

19 STEPHANIE ERLICH: [off mic] Absolutely.

20 LAURA RAICOVICH: We already are planning
21 programs that will facilitate that work. For
22 example, you know, this--this notion of advancing.
23 Once folks are working in the organization, advancing
24 them up the chain is really important, and through
25 the VEA program, we're introducing not only

ethnically and racially diverse folks, but folks from really diverse economic backgrounds into the actual wok of the department. Because some things have like front-of-house staff that's diverse and then, your back-of-house staff is not quite there. But, you know, to bring those folks up into the office space and--and have that work happening, that's one program that we're eager to expand. That's something we've just begun to do. With some funding behind it, that could have a real impact. And, of course, you know, I think I speak for probably all of us when I say that, you know, we--we're relatively--we're relatively small staffed for the size of the institutions that we all operate. And so, you know, additional funding would help us to bring some other additional folks online potentially in key roles where they're desperately needed, and--and that could really, you know, skew the numbers as well.

STEPHANIE ERLICH: I would--I would second that.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I would imagine everyone in the audience would. [laughter] So, look, our--our budget hearing is--is--is coming and we'll talk more about all of this in a--in a few short

1 week, but I want to thank all of you for--for your
2 participation in the survey, and for the amazing work
3 that you do, and--and now I think we--we go to work
4 on--on addressing some of the issues that are--that
5 are prominent in the report, but also making sure
6 that you are funded at levels that you should be so
7 that you can accomplish that important work. So
8 thank you all very much.

9
10 LAURA RAICOVICH: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And our next
12 panel Aaron Bouska from the New York Botanical
13 Garden; Jorge Daniel Veneciano, El Museo Del Barrio;
14 and Carl Goodman from the Museum of the Moving Image,
15 and Sean Graham from the The Field, and we are going
16 to go to a--a clock because we have a number of folks
17 still yet to testify. And with that [squealing mic,
18 pause] You can choose the order in which you would
19 like to appear.

20 AARON BOUSKA: The order in which it was
21 spoken. All right. Sure. All right, good morning.
22 In the interest of--

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]
24 The rest of you sat in the order that you were called
25 as well, which is remarkable.

AARON BOUSKA: We follow directions well, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. My name is Aaron Bouska. I'm the Vice President for Government and Community Relations at The New York Botanical Garden. I'd like to thank Chairman Van Bramer today for holding this hearing on this important issue. I'm going to summarize some of my statements, which have been provided since I'm on the clock now. As everybody knows here, NYBG is an advocate for the plant kingdom. We pursue its missions as a role through a museum of living plant collections, and comprehensive education programs in horticulture and plant science. It's through the wide ranging research programs of the International Plant Science Center. Like the complex ecosystems of some of our most frag--fragile plant volumes, diversity is also a key indicator in a healthy--healthy ecosystem of an organization. Fostering and supporting diversity without organization is key to long-term effectiveness in carrying out the garden's mission of connecting people to plants and plant science. It's clear that our cultural sector has a lot to do, and NYBG is not absent from that. From the first roundtable hosted by DCLA, that included the Garden's

President and the Garden's Board Chair, collective efforts to build employment pipelines for an under-represented population is a primary goal at the Garden, and echoes some of the Garden's own recent initiatives to diversify our workforce that I'd like to tell you about today. Consider that the Garden now has an affirmative action plan to which we evaluate the hiring of women, minorities, veterans, and disabled workers in all equal opportunity--equal employment opportunity programs. A summary of the most recent data found that 52% of the Garden's workforce is female. Forty-seven percent of the Garden's workforce is comprised of minorities. In eight of the nine categories, the Garden's workforce reflects the demographics of the area, and in one category where we do fall short, the professional categories, we believe the shortage of candidates in the field of horticulture and botanical science research, which we're really trying to do something about. Adding to this challenge within the diversity of these departments is the fact that many of our senior level positions have had long tenures often years or more, and our second tier people that are being trained to take those places are--are there and

1 in line. And like the Survey recommends--points out,
2 it's very demonstrative of the population at large.
3 So what three things is the Garden doing right now
4 that I want to tell you about to help build this
5 pipeline to careers in plants and plant science? The
6 first is Explainers Program, which is 145
7 individuals. Most of them are high schoolers from
8 neighborhoods in the Bronx, and other parts of New
9 York City where they're receiving on--the-ground
10 training for careers in plant science. They teach
11 kids in some of our other programs, and many of them
12 go on to be employees of the Garden. The second,
13 which I'm particularly proud of is our NYBG CUNY
14 Graduate Studies Program where we actually have a PhD
15 program with CUNY to train people phytochemistry,
16 molecular biology, and genomics, bioinformatics,
17 ethological physiology, and all the other sort of
18 things that goes into plants and plant research.
19 [bell] And I will say in conclusion that through
20 City Council, urban advantage is also a key category
21 that helped develop the pipeline, and we're a key
22 partner and thank the American Museum of Natural
23 History for founding that. I would be remiss in not
24 saying, Chairman, that I have the three
25

recommendations coming out of this for future funding. Obviously support in DCLA's budget is key, and we thank you for championing that this year. At the Botanical Garden that goes exclusively for DC37 employees, which tend to be a very diverse workforce that we're very proud of and would like to support. Second, the creation of a paid internship through CUNY. And my recommendation is that--focus on marketing and development sort of categories where those skills are transferable and often sort of step up to senior level management positions. And finally, DCLA, as the Commissioner testified, that it's going to earmark its one million supplemental support to do a diversity survey. I would say that that would be additive that supplemental support at least for the New York Botanical Garden has helped us do ADA Compliance, and other sort of small scale that are not at that sort of capital level, and that's really important. So, I would ask that if the Council could see that that's additive and not in--in place of, and thank you very much.

[background noise, pause]

JORGE DANIEL VENECIANO: Good morning.

I'm Jorge Daniel Veneciano, Executive Director at El

Museo Del Barrio, and also Vice Chair of the CIG Group representing the Borough of Manhattan. And with my colleagues, I also applaud the Department of Cultural Affairs and the City Council for turning its attention to matters of diversity in our cultural institutions. As--as Director of El Museo Del Barrio, I work at an institution that was founded on the recognition of this very challenge. In the late 1960s, in--when the museum was founded, Puerto Rican art and culture was nowhere to be found in the city's schools or in its museums. In 1969--well, actually forgive me. But since the late 1960s now El Museo in its 47th year and its history we have been addressed to the--the city's needs for diversity inclusion not only through our programming, but certainly through our staff and--and our services to our communities. It was in 1969 that the museum was founded. At that point, we became the first Latin-American museum of art in the nation. We have continued being the first by instituting the binding role of museum education. We have organized the first bi-annual exhibition for promoting the careers of Latino artists. We have also been first in organizing an annual exhibition of major retrospectives promoting the careers of women

artists, an annual commitment, and with our colleagues at the Queens Museum, we've also been among the first to offer museum health services to-- in Spanish--to individuals suffering from Dementia, Alzheimer's as well as children in Autism spectrum. We do this by recruiting the caring staff, and we have a philosophy of caring that's fundamental to the El Museo Del Barrio. Our caring staff as well as the Board of Trustees, and a core of volunteers and interns from all walks of life. We are primarily a Latino staffed museum, but we also include non-Latino Europeans, African-Americans, Native-Americans--I'm sorry--Asian-American and Middle Eastern. El Museo historically has served as a pipeline in developing and providing professionals who then serve the cultural field not only in the city but in the nation. I offer [bell] El Museo Del Barrio as an example of success among cultural institutions in terms of diversity inclusion. I call ours a proactive model of effective inclusion, but we are not, certainly not the only ones. There are many examples in the city, and I encourage the Department and the City Council, as you said yourself, in this moment of reflection about what are--might be our

1 next steps to--to seek out these examples, to seek
2 out these models, and incorporate them in the--in
3 your thinking and the department's thinking, and
4 reflective process in this--new course of this study.
5 Diversity is embedded in our missions. It is the
6 foundation on which our services to the community
7 rest. This is important. Our need to serve the
8 increasingly diverse populations grows with the
9 expanding profile of the city's residents. At El
10 Museo we, of course, are more than willing and happy
11 to be of assistance in the effort, which has at times
12 [coughing] concerned us and other institutions now
13 for more than five decades. We feel we have lots to
14 contribute. I do thank you for--again, for your
15 attention to this matter, and certainly the members
16 of the Council, and as with everyone else here, I am
17 happy to answer questions you may have.

19 CARL GOODMAN: Thank you. Okay, because
20 so much has been said I'm going to jump around, and
21 so apologies because I'm not going to tractor this
22 document as much. I'm Carl Goodman. I'm the
23 Executive Director of the Museum of the Moving Image
24 and Vice Chair of the CIG in Queens. The museum is
25 in Astoria, and we fight (sic) in the 26th District,

1 and we are--we have the benefit of being embedded in
2 a neighborhood that is itself very diverse. I really
3 appreciate the work that's being done for the DCA to
4 measure staff and leadership diversity at our
5 cultural institutions. Since you mentioned the
6 survey, I did want to make a point, at some--it was
7 actually useful to learn what--after completing it
8 what was not in it in a way, which is par of that
9 process. Since it's a snapshot rather than a kind of
10 dynamic still rather than the moving image, we've
11 found that if we looked at our diversity hiring
12 practices over the past four years, that the--that
13 our--that we're getting better and better with every
14 year. And that while the snapshot showed about a 30%
15 non-White in our professional staff, we're now over
16 the past four years it's 55%. So that every position
17 we fill we're doing better year after year. I think
18 there are both macro and micro dynamics contributing
19 to that. Our concerted efforts, but also a change in
20 socio and economic situation in New York City. So
21 we're very happy about that. The--I'll talk about
22 pipelines, and a--and cycles. The diversity of our
23 programming is the ground level component of
24 everything we do. Of course, as--as you know from
25

the Color of Comedy our new--our sold out recent
cinema event happening next weekend, our Cuban
series, our Indian film series, the Fresh Dressed and
kind of Zombient (sic) Benaz (sic) documentary we
should in the Riis Settlement in the Queensbridge
Ravenwood Houses in Jackson Heights. What's great is
if the audience in those screenings sees a reflection
of themselves on the screen. This commitment extends
to our educational programs, which you're well aware.
And what is important there again is that the
students see a reflection of themselves in the
educators, in the staff and kind of like the museum.
Moving onto internship programs this is how we
directly acquaint students with cultural
organizations as a place of work. We have ongoing
partnerships with Urban Upbound as well as Studio in
the School for internship programs that--that are
actually funded externally. All students must
demonstrate need requirements, and while there are no
diversity requirements or mandates as such all of
them over the past three years have non-White.
Making--making these internships work is a tremendous
amount of work, but it's worth it. Our Chief
Curator, Curator of Digital Media and our Marketing

Director were once interns. So, you know, I think there are also things we need to do more quickly to move the needed, and that has to do with professional staff. And, you know, one thing we've been doing is actually taking supplemental DCA funding over the past four years --[bell] ding--in order to counter some issues that result from large decreases in funding since 2008 that have left positions unfilled. We have had to eliminate positions. We have had to freeze positions. Some of that supplemental funding has gone to actually creating new positions or opening them up, bringing in people of color at a mid-level manager or director level, and in a sense seeing it as a scholarship, or as a stimulus. It allows us to bring people in at a high level right away, and as they progress through the organization, our Director of Community Engagement, our new House Manager, our new Registrar they will see in the interns and the students they work with a reflection of themselves, which turns a pathway or a pipeline into a cycle. Thank you.

[background noise, pause]

SHAWN RENEE GRAHAM: I'm Shawn Renee Graham. I'm the Artist Services Manager at the

Field, and also a working artist in the city as a dramaturg for about 20 plus years. The Field is an art services organization that provides programming, career development, and fiscal sponsorship to artists so that they can build their business. The Field is glad that the Council and the cultural--Department of Cultural Affairs is doing this work and examining diversity in our cultural institutions and looking to provide more opportunities for people of color differently able people across the board. I want to skip directly to my response to the new initiatives proposed resulting from the Cultural Affairs Diversity Survey because I have some concerns and recommendations about those proposals. One, make sure the funding is disbursed to a variety of organizations, large, midsize and small that operate in diverse communities. Don't let smaller or fiscally-sponsored organizations struggle financially when they may already have an ongoing commitment to creating an atmosphere of diversity, equity and conclusion. There are organizations like the Classical Theater of Harlem, the Caribbean Cultural Center, African Diaspora Institute and 651 Arts who are committed, but struggle with obtaining funding

because they don't have large development departments poised to be in a funder's face all the time. They could be a prime resource for input on how to start a leadership program and also be--greatly benefit by gaining a new leader in a number of areas including artistic general management, development, marketing and audience development. Further, there are art services organizations that may be better equipped to both identify and support frontline programs more efficiently. In 2015, The Field launched the Field Leadership Fund. The Field Leadership Fund is a fellowship that offers real opportunities, remuneration and access to ambitious artists, arts organizations and arts managers who want to be leaders in The Field. I believe that FLF is a potent pipeline initiative that will sunset after one iteration without additional support. In addition, the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute also has an equity fellowship program that may be under-resourced, and become another short lived program. Two training programs need ongoing support to be sustained. I feel that the \$2 million number may be a bit small. For people with color, become an arts professional is not usually a

consideration because they do not have the economic
wherewithal to go through training only to not have a
job at the end that pays a livable wage. Other
professions become more attractive or practical.

[bell] We also need funding in more areas than just
theater. What about music, dance, visual arts
organizations and film. Work with the City
University of New York is great, but it only--I think
that if it provides a degree at the end. Large White
led institutions typically do not hire people of
color who don't have degrees from accredited
institutions. Often we must have a degree that
carries prestige. I for one would not have had any
job in my 20 career--20-year career without an
advance degree from Harvard, and that's just middle
management. Many people of color I know who have
leadership positions attended Yale, Columbia or NYU.
It's a fact of our lives that our resumes must be
polished. We do not get opportunities to go through
the ranks like our White counterparts. I recommend
an accelerated fellowship training program that
provides effective training and an actual job
opportunity with a partnering organization. The
training program should be 12 to 18 months, but it

must be administered by top arts administrators and educators in the field. It should also include a living stipend so that it is feasible for the average fellow's current economic situation or limitations. Lastly, cultural institutions must be invested in thorough institutionalized change before getting a single dime. In the end, if the cultural arts organizations are going to be successful in diversifying leadership, it must happen from the top down. Boards that are permanently White are usually charged with hiring leadership and tend to favor and hire people who are like them. The same goes for White management. Before funding organizations you must have a very thorough vetting process that includes seeing diverse boards and leadership even before funding any organization. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts. I look forward to further developments on the new initiatives.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very much. I appreciate your recommendations in particular, and we'll certainly be talking with the Administration about the--the funding issue both to Aaron's point before about it being in addition to and not in place of, and then diversifying an even

greater pool perhaps. And I guess my--my only questions is similar to the first panel in terms of the institution. Was it useful and--and will you do anything differently as a result of it?

CARL GOODMAN: Well, one comment I would make is that it was especially useful with our board, and that's because to see something in the New York Times and something that I can put on a table and say this is bigger than just the conversations we've been having. You know, it does serve as a kind of motivating for the people to whom I report that my own actions and those of my colleagues could not themselves accomplish.

JORGE DANIEL VENECIANO: I would add that the survey is immensely useful. That is a reflection of sort of the status of where we are and what we do, and if for no other reason than it helps us in thinking about, you know, what we might be able to do. So, you know even at El Museo while we have been, you know, constantly diverse as a--as a staff and in our programming, it still allows us to think about what we may yet be able to do. So, I think the first step is just in being--in recognizing where we

are, and that's always good impetus (sic) to thinking about what we might do. So in that sense yes.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

Again, I want to thank all of you for the work that you're doing, continue to do, and will do and I appreciate you being here today. Thank you all very much.

SHAWN RENEE GRAHAM: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Our next panel Leslie Schulz from the Fabulous BRIC; Karen Atlas from the Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts, and It's a Virtual Situation and is Andrew Louie with us? Of course, from Asian American Arts Alliance; and-- and I believe it's Ronnie Forretti for Work, if Ronnie is still with us.

[background noise, pause]

LESLIE SCHULZ: Do we have it on? Good morning. It's still morning. A couple more minutes. I'm Leslie Schultz, the President of BRIC. Thank you so much Committee Chair, Jimmy Van Bramer for holding this important hearing, and inviting all of us to testify. We at BRIC are very glad to have the chance to express our support for the effort to diversify the cultural sector and the cultural workforce in New

York City and to make the arts a more inclusive and equitable sector. BRIC, as I think you know, dedicated to making arts and media accessible, genuinely accessible. As the leading present of free cultural programming in Brooklyn and one of the largest in New York City, our programs are attended by hundreds of thousands of people each year, and many more participates via our innovative digital offerings. In our work BRIC strives to serve audiences and artists who reflect the diverse demographics of our city across ethnic, socio-economic age and gender boundaries. And as you know, we do this not just at BRIC House, not just at the Prospect Park Band Show, but at schools throughout the borough, and as you know as the Chair of Libraries, in public libraries throughout the borough that other borough. But our commitment to diversity cannot start and end with our programming. The commitment must extend into our workplace as well. A true connection between cultural institutions and diverse audiences is most likely only when our organizations are genuinely integrated across demographic lines. As part of the DCA Diversity Study, BRIC was fortunate to received detailed

information about diversity on the BRIC team. We were glad to learn that in most categories examined, the BRIC staff and board tended towards the more diverse end of the spectrum. But, of course, the survey and the numbers are only part of the analysis. As we New York City cultural organizations reflect individually on our workplaces, our inquiry has to go beyond the numbers, and into the sense of inclusion actually experienced by our staff. To paraphrase Anna Holmes in a New York Times magazine essay from last year, diversity should not be an end unto itself, a box to tick off. A numerically diverse workforce should be quote "A starting point from which a more integrated textured world is brought into being." Our field needs to ensure that people of color are well represented in senior management and boards at all types of organizations, culturally specific, and non-culturally specific alike, and I don't think the survey actually broke that down, but I'm not entirely sure. Enabling relationship among under-represented groups at all levels of seniority, and across organizations is one important approach as is encouraging dialogue across the field. We applaud the efforts of the New York City Cultural Agenda Fund

over the past year in exactly this regard. BRIC has been truly enriched by having crossed organizational conversations about equity in the field, and encouraging more of that is something we would recommend the--the city do. [bell] We believe that new approaches are warranted, and given the innate creativity in our field, the potential is great. For example, BRIC is partnering with MoCADA, the Mark Moore's Dance Group and Theater for a New Audience on the Downtown Brooklyn Arts Management Fellowship. This pilot program is being designed to help young professionals from under-represented groups to build the skills and the relationships necessary to springboard their careers as arts leaders. As we and other cultural organizations develop this and similarly motivated initiatives, I want to echo the comments that Council Member Cumbo made and that some of my colleagues have made in the field, we hope the city will consider providing support for innovative programs across the entire field. We believe this work is urgent. With a more representative workforce, we will ultimately improve the connections that arts organizations make with all New Yorkers, helping the field better realize its potential to

help forge a more vibrant, equitable and spiritually rich community. Thank you again for this opportunity to testify, and for your passionate commitment to both the arts and the diverse residents of New York City.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

Karen. .

KAREN ATLAS: Good almost afternoon.

[laughter] My name is Karen Atlas. I direct Arts and Democracy and the Naturally Occurring Culture Districts New York. We commend DCLA for providing a database snapshot of the state of the diversity of city funded cultural institutions, which signals that there's work to be done, and their continued commitment to support diversity in New York City. We want to make sure, though, that in doing this that the city values and supports the leadership and best practices of diverse community based cultural groups like our members for whom diversity and cultural equity are a core mission and sustained commitment, not just an outreach program. New funding initiatives to cultivate diversity should make sure to include these groups as we've been hearing. It's also important to remember that the cultural sector

in New York City is--supported by DCLA does not represent the full culture ecology of New York City, which also includes diverse cultural groups who are-- have fiscal sponsors like The Field or organized or collaboratives or networks such as the two organizations that I direct. And neither of my organizations were included in the survey because we can apply to DCLA. (sic) So we'd like to see DCLA's commitment to increasing diversity also be one of extending their funding to a larger part of this culture ecology, which is a lot of diverse groups. I've been part of public and private diversity initiatives since the mid 80s and I'm giving away my age here, and I've seen too little fundamental change result from them. I think this could be different, and I'm encouraged by the fact that the city is leading this one, and made a commitment to continuing the conversation. And that's why I agreed to serve on DCLA's Diversity Advisory Committee and fully support their efforts. But diversity along can only go so far. It needs to be addressed in the context of opportunities, disparities and inequities, and in relationship to key challenges in the city such as inequality and structural racism. My written

testimony includes some recommendations and best practices. I'll just mention a couple. This includes recognizing the diversity within groups, diverse aesthetics and the importance of ownership in first voice, of communities of color and the disability community. We've learned that a deep commitment to diversity is expressed through sustained and purposeful commitment over time, consistent action, ability to shift power, resources and structures. And in our own case, and I'm very well aware that I'm a White woman leading a diverse coalition that I need--we work hard to shift my power. So I'm not the decision maker, and the diverse members of NOCD are the decision markers. [bell] And they would be here, but it's very hard for small groups of color and--and small community organizations to spend a morning at a hearing. So they've entrusted me to speak on their behalf. We also need to have a willingness to be accountable to our diversity goals, and we need to look at equitable and sustained partnerships with shared leadership and decision making. So we look forward to working with the City to nurture the commitment to diversity and cultural equity. Thank you very much.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.
Andrea.

ANDREA LOUIE: Thank you very much. So
Council Member Van Bramer and members of the
committee, please accept my deepest appreciation to
give testimony today. My name is Andrea Louie, and
I'm Executive Director of the Asian American Arts
Alliance. I was also honored to serve along with
Karen as part of the Advisory Committee for this
project. So I have two more--main points to share
today. The Asian American Arts Alliance deeply
appreciates the efforts of the New York City
Department of Cultural Affairs to champion the study
so that all of us in the field can gain more evidence
based knowledge about our cultural workforce. The
Alliance has worked for 3r years to support
individual artists in small groups across the
spectrum of their careers. We have always know
anecdotally that there are barriers to access in
areas of arts leadership. In other words, there is a
bamboo ceiling. But this was not a story that we
could quantify or share in any compelling way. Now,
we can. Although New York City has an Asian-American
population of more than 15%, only 3% of staff hold a

position at leadership levels and only 6% of all board members are of Asian descent. So data can be a mirror and all of us as individuals, as a city and as a society are better and stronger when we take a hard look at ourselves and try to deeply understand not only who we are, but who we want to be. The exercise of doing the study and reflection upon these findings are critical first steps in learning more about how we make and experience art and culture in New York. We're excited and encouraged that these initial steps have been taken, but we all know that now the real work is what happens next. My second point is that the Asian American Arts Alliance is deeply grateful to the Council and to the support of the DCLA, and we urge the Council to continue and strengthen funding for the agency in FY17. In the end, that's why we're all here, right? We're also here to talk about money. Within--without this critical funding, organizations like the Alliance would not be able to bring arts and cultural activities to neighborhoods throughout the city's 51 Council Districts. More than half of New York City's non-profit arts organizations have annual operating budgets of \$250,000 or less and a third of them have budgets of

\$100K or less. These are mom and pop shops within the cultural workforce, and the great majority do not have access to wealthy patrons and donors. Without this critically needed public funding from DCLA, even more marginalized and vulnerable New Yorkers would not have access to arts and cultural activities where they live and work. An organization such as the Alliance would not be able to provide the culturally competent services that address the needs of immigrant communities. So on behalf of the Asian American communities and other communities of color, I urge that the New York City Council increase expense funding in FY17 to the DCLA by \$40 million to be divided equally between the Cultural Institutions Group and the Cultural Development Fund. Such an increase would create the capacity for DCLA to increase financial support for currently funded institutions and organizations including underfunded groups, grow arts funding for arts councils and to offer re-grants to individual artists and to add funding [bell] to support a wider and more diverse array of new groups. I look forward to working with all of you to make New York City a more just and equitable place. Thanks for your kind attention.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you
Andrea. Obviously, you know that \$40 million is
something that we'll be pushing, and--and require
the--the Administration to--to join us on. And so,
we are hopeful that the Administration will agree
that we should increase funding for the arts at that
level. And lastly, I just want to say to Ronnie
Friday of the Lark that I'm familiar with the Lark,
but I am getting old and I could not read your
handwriting.

RONNIE FRIDAY: Okay, I didn't know that.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's why I--I--
-I just could not say your name correctly.

RONNIE FERRETTI: That's okay. Thank
you, and I'm going to try not talk like a used car
sales person in my three minutes, but I'll try to get
through this as quickly as possible.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure.

RONNIE FERRETTI: Good morning. My name
is Ronnie Ferretti. I am from the Lark Theater
Company, and I am respectfully submitting the
following testimony on behalf of my colleague,
Michael Robertson, Managing Director of the Lark. So
Dear Council Members, I am honored to share a little

bit about The Lark's work supporting diversity access and inclusion. I am actually out of town working on an equity in the arts task force as these words are being read. Over the past 22 years the Lark has dedicated its resources to supporting story tellers who have been historically marginalized and are living at the intersection of art and social change. We focus on creating conversation around visionary playwrights from all five boroughs across the nation, and through our extensive global exchange program. If you are looking for a place for conversation around the issues facing our city and world, we are one of those places. The Lark's role is to identify writers who are community leaders who speak to the needs of the communities through their plays and also through direct theater based movement building. For example, we are partnering with Greg Mogala (sp?) from the Epithete (sp?), a company dedicated to the disabled experience to launch an unprecedented program supporting disabled artists. Another example is our partnership with playwright Joseph Atkins from Brooklyn's New Blackfest where we look at a wider range of black experiences from those we typically see in the media. Yet, another collaboration with

artist and activist Diana O. who addresses sexual violence against women. The Lark embraces community issues in other ways as well. All of our programming is free to artists and audiences. We engage with 30 to 40 organizations annually throughout the city to reach the broadest demographics possible. Our portfolio of fellowships provides financial stipends, healthcare and career support. We have created a tuition free business of art financial boot camp for artists to learn how to manage their careers, and weather rising living costs. Our Paid Apprentice Program helps lower the economic barrier for participation, and creates a pipeline for a much more diverse group of future arts leaders. Not only does our program address equity issues directly, but we have been doing intensive work internally to make sure that our staff and board increasingly reflect the demographics of the community we serve. To that end, our internal methods of addressing diversity include: A robust recruitment strategy for staff and board members; monthly conversations around current equity issues; skills building and how to talk about and facilitate difficult conversations. While the theater--while The Lark is a theater

company and we support the creation of vibrant plays,
our goal is to support artists who are leaders and
put them into contact with a diverse community.

Bringing forward stories that need to be heard and
discussed face to face through live theater

experiences. We recognize that differences in

identity bring vibrancy to our organization and the

city. The survey--the DCA Survey findings about race
and gender in cultural organizations are an important

starting place for the change we need to see, a

change that each organization needs to embrace. The

Lark is on a life long journey to be a more equitable

place and we intend to be in conversations with

organizations throughout the city to share our

learnings and learn from our peers. Equity does not

have a one-time solution, and it is not achieved in

isolation. [bell] There is deliberate ongoing, never

ending work to be done. In closing, I want to thank

you for supporting story tellers who are working to

bring to light what is great about New York while

highlighting the vast inequities that still remain.

These stories lead to conversation, and the

conversation leads to action. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very much. You did amazing and I--I--I guess I want to--I feel like I know many of the members of this panel very well, and who made the work. So I feel like this is the panel to sort of ask this question to, and which Karen has sort of alluded to it, right, which is if I wanted this, or at least many of us wanted this for a long time, and--and--and sort of--it still isn't where we want it to be, right. So, I mean you referenced the work you've been doing for 30 year, and--and, you know, why? Why aren't we making the progress that we want to, and it's great to--to hear your optimism, right. And I think we're all very hopeful. And certainly, this hearing is sort amplified that some good things are happening, and we're making progress. Never as quickly as we want, but--but good things are happening. But--but why do you think any of them aren't just cultural organizations, right? But--but why has it been so difficult to--to achieve what we're all trying to achieve here?

KAREN ATLAS: Well, I'll just say because what I've seen in the various diversity initiatives I've been part of is they don't result in structural

1 change. They often created a small pot of soft
2 money for short-term programs that are often
3 wonderful. They go away when the money goes away.
4 That--that--rather that diversity needs to be a core
5 mission, and not an add-on program, and a lot of the
6 diversity initiatives end up being an add-on program.
7 I've also seen when the directors, who are very
8 committed to the diversity program leave that the
9 organizations revert back.

11 LESLIE SCHULZ: I just wanted to add I
12 was surprised when I heard earlier that there isn't
13 an--a definite decision to repeat this survey, but if
14 we're really going to have this as a baseline, we
15 have to really look at our progress. We have to
16 survey again. We have to ask people qualitatively
17 what have they put in place.

18 ANDREA LOUIE: Like Karen, I'll out
19 myself. When I started into the workforce also in
20 the '80s, I was also having precisely the same
21 conversation in media. I was a newspaper reporter.
22 And so in some ways that conversation hasn't changed,
23 but I think the difference now is that this isn't--
24 the--the issue of diversity is not something that's
25 just happening somewhere else, and that is because of

1 the very real demographic changes that are happening
2 not only in New York City, but across the country.
3 You know, the figure that people have been using is
4 that by 2042 that the population of America will a
5 majority of people of color. So, you know, we all
6 look different, right? So, I--there is increasingly
7 a day when the way that I look is not necessarily
8 that of a foreigner, but that of an American and that
9 of a resident here in this country. So, I think
10 we're facing it in a very different and hopefully in
11 a more meaningful and compelling way.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well, thank you
14 for--for that and was a--I, too, was--was struck by
15 that, and--and my staff and I have done that, of
16 course, and we--we may--we may take that issue up.
17 So, that could be a very, very constructive for that--
18 -kind of this hearing as well. So, with that, I want
19 to thank all of you for your-- You're--you're
20 thinkers and doers, and we appreciate everything you
21 do. So thank you very much.

22 RONNIE FERRETTI: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And our next
24 panel is Charles Rice Gonzalez from BAAD, and--
25 [background comment] Ellen Pollan, Bronx Council of

the Arts, and then I think we have two people from Theater Communications Group if they're still here, Gus Schulenburg and Alana Chang. [background comments] And then we have one last panel. The folks who are sticking it out, we thank them very much. [background noise, pause]

CHARLES RICE GONZALEZ: Great. My name is Charles Rice Gonzalez. I'm the co-founder of BAAD, the Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance. I'm a distinguished lecturer at the Hostos Community College in the English Department. I'm a published novelist, and I serve on the boards of the Bronx Council and the Arts and the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture. So you can deduce that by my accomplishments and involvements I love the Bronx and I love the arts. So thanks to all those City Council members for hearing our voices, and I'm appreciative of the reports mainly because they put onto the page what most of us experience by just going to the organizations and being participants in the arts. And for some of us being creators and also the leaders of the houses where art lives. When DCA invited a group of us to a focus group, I was a part of that, and I was wondering why I was in the room.

BAAD has been in the Bronx for 17 years. It's an organization that is run by people of color and for the most part serves artists and audiences of color. Our leadership is also queer, which is also about how 64% of our audiences identify. So I wondered what would be diverse for us, but I quickly learned that the conversation was more about institutions that have predominantly white leadership and essentially predominantly white everything. So, although New York City is vastly diverse, the report showed that in terms of leadership in this town, some large institutions are white, and that smaller ones have some work to do. And so you're all getting to work. Having these hearings and starting some initiatives including the \$2 million one from City Planning and the \$1 million for the CIGs. But essentially what those initiatives spell out is that some of those organizations have a diversity issue, and will have access to funds to be encouraged to address those issues, which is good. But I don't think the Studio Museum or El Museo have the diversity issue. BAAD doesn't have it, neither does BRIC own it, neither does BCA, and many other arts organizations who serve and are run by people of color. We don't need

initiative to be diverse because being diverse is who we are and what we value. Most of our organizations came to be because of the diversity issue years and decades ago. The New York Times described BAAD as workers having the tenacity of grass growing through concrete. Our organizations are built and often sustained on tenacity, but imagine if there were initiatives to help organizations to serve and already run by people of color, if the initiatives help with staffing and fundraising, we don't need to have our arms twisted to be diverse. We don't need to be lured with money to be diverse. We need--but we need the support to be stronger to better serve our artists with livable artist fees, residencies that are adequately funded, supports and enhance and build our institutions, and the capacity to pay our staffs competitive salaries with benefits that match the years of commitment they have shown to our organizations. And this support would be simply to catch up with some of the conditions, and to get in step larger organizations. It should be embarrassing for the city to continue fortifying the nets (sic) so that they have access to more support, and that a vibrant arts group in the Bronx or Brooklyn or Staten

Island or Queens or Harlem flounder. A \$1 million initiative for our groups could make a great impact. A \$10 million could be transformative because organizations like BAAD and Pregones and the Caribbean Culture Center, BCA and many others [bell] are places where artists gain access and opportunities to make and develop art. These--and then many of these artists keep relations with us, but also have opportunities at larger venues. They should have them, and there should be that wasn't in place in the--in leadership in those institutions to bring the artists in. So while you all roll up your sleeves to get to work, my suggestion is simple: Think of the initiatives that applaud and reward the organizations who have carved a place for diversity in the culturous landscape of the city, organizations who have the knowledge and experience, and who have been beacons of diversity. Hiring people of color is a value to us. Bringing in diverse audiences is a value to us. Embracing diverse artists is a value to us. We're an important part of the solution to New York City's cultural diversity issue. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very much, and--

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FEMALE SPEAKER: [interposing] That was good.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --somehow I knew you would bring it, Charles, and you did, and I appreciate the testimony, and--and I said it before, but it's one of the reasons again why I'm very proud of the Cultural Immigrant Initiative, which is just one way that--that we in this Council have specifically directed money to small organizations. In this case, focused on immigrant services and organizations, but I definitely appreciate everything that you say, and I think--

CHARLES RICE GONZALEZ: [interposing]
Thank you

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --we'll go to Charles' right there.

ELLEN POLLAN: Good day, committee members. My name is Ellen Pollan. I'm the Deputy Director of the Bronx Council on the Arts, and a proud member of the Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts. And I thank you for providing me this opportunity to testify regarding the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs to the Diversity Survey results. First, I would like to thank Deputy

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Commissioner and Acting Commissioner Eddie Torres,
and his team at DCLA for his hard work and dedication
to the Field never ceases to amaze. Similar to our
colleagues in the UK, I think that we can agree that
diversity and equity are crucial to the arts and
culture sector because they sustain, refresh,
replenish and release the true potential of our
city's artistic talent regardless of people's
background. And that our ambitions for diversity and
equality and equity are knitted into those of
excellence, outreach, engagement and innovation. I'm
not sure that we all would define diversity using the
same words and sentiment, but for this discussion
let's assume that diversity encompasses responding to
issues around race, ethnicity, faith, disability,
age, gender, sexuality, class, economic disadvantage,
and any social and institutional barriers that
prevent people from participating in and enjoying the
arts. Our time has come to see and value the arts as
a pathway to transform systems and redirect resources
with an equity focus. The information presented from
DCLA holds our field to task, and invites support and
participation across sectors. The importance of the
arts and culture to the health and wellbeing of

individuals in communities shouldn't be underestimated. As someone with a long history, and as I look around the room previously was filled collectively with thousands of years of profess--of professional arts and cultural success and experience. And I have an understanding of the arts, and send first hand the powerful results that bring people together through arts activity--that arts activities can have. To advance the role of arts and culture leadership toward improving diversity, we need to make our institutions more inclusive, equitable and transparent. We can do this by creating accountability relations with each other to ensure that each are working toward a common vision. This report is an important first step in helping us pursue our collective commitment to becoming more diverse, multi-cultural and multi-generational in an ever-changing and increasing pluralistic city. It goes without saying that to accomplish the lofty goals and plans that are being shared in today's session that we will need money. \$40 million comes to mind. I suggest that a next step for this Council Committee and the people that yield the power here is to guarantee that resources are allocated and

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strategies are created to ensure that our collective
voice and partnership with our boroughs, creative
communities are heard. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [off mic] Thank
you.

ALANA CHANG: Good afternoon now. My
name is Alana Chang, and I am the Associate Director
of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the Theater
Communications Group, and I'm here with:

GUS SCHULENBURG: Gus Schulenburg. I am
the Director of Communications and Community
Engagement at TCG. TCG is the national not-for-
profit service organization for professional--for
professional theater. We have 500 member theaters,
over 11,000 individual members both of whom a great
here reside in New York City. We do grant making,
advocacy at the federal level, research, convening,
professional development, publications, all of which
are in service of the work that we are here to talk
about today.

ALANA CHANG: In reference to the request
made by the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries
and International Intergroup Relations the Theater
Communications Group is pleased to offer the

following thoughts: One, We're grateful to the DCLA for their focus on diversity and equity, and believe that this work aligns with TCG's own Equity Diversity and Inclusion Institute. We hope there will be continued opportunities collaboration.

GUS SCHULENBURG: Two, we commend you for an inclusive process. A lot of the TCG staff got to be a part of that process, and we found it to be marked by transparency, thoughtful critique and a diversity of identities in the room. When the values of the process embodies the goals of the program, the work has integrity, and we hope that will continue.

ALANA CHANG: Three, TCG believes that it is critical for this kind of research to be supported by programs that build the capacity for change. When research is conducted without that holistic approach, it diagnoses the illness without providing arts organization's tools to work toward actual health. TCG takes this holistic approach, and believes we can share knowledge form our other programs.

GUS SCHULENBURG: For example, [coughs] the plan to offer professional development for theater professionals who marginalize communities aligns with TCG's Spark Leadership Program, which in

the past year provided a robust professional development curriculum for ten rising leaders of color.

ALANA CHANG: Additionally, the plan for funding organizational diversity efforts align with TCG's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Institute, which is the peer learning cohort of 21 theaters nearing the end of a three-year curriculum to effect change at the personal, organizational and field wide level.

GUS SCHULENBURG: We're also going to soon launch and represent our own field wide demographic platform and reporting tool, represent value self-identification across an intersectional range of identity that empowers the user to authentically self-identify outside the check box. In these other initiatives we hope to work with the DCLA to share learning compliance. (sic)

ALANA CHANG: We also want to offer some questions and thoughts that arose for us reading the results. These are actually things that we're wrestling with in our own work.

GUS SCHULENBURG: The DCLA knows there's a lack of staff, identifying the disabled and non-

gender binary. We acknowledge that these identities are not always visible, and often kept hidden when the organization does not have a culture of inclusion. How can we [bell] ensure the questions we're asking we're asking aren't putting staff at risk?

ALANA CHANG: We're wondering what approach the D--DCLA might take in supporting organizations to not only hire and recruit diverse staff and trustees, but provide an inclusive environment that actually retains them.

GUS SCHULENBURG: How can we ensure that we're not--that we're spending as much time and resources on dismantling racism, sexism, Ableism and transphobia, as we are offering professional development opportunities to individuals facing those systemic areas?

ALANA CHANG: How can we acknowledge that arts organizations that serve marginalized communities have a different set of needs related to diversity? How can we ensure that the diversity efforts of other arts organizations don't take away resources from these marginalized communities.

GUS SCHULENBURG: In a time of increasing Xenophobia and religious discrimination, can we ask who else is missing from the room? For example, how many people that identify as Muslim or refugees are leading arts organizations?

ALANA CHANG: And finally, how can we always center our work around the pain, exclusion and even violence that are the results of our systems of inequity? How can we bring that urgency to our conversations about research and data? Thank you.

GUS SCHULENBURG: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [coughs] Thank you. I just have to ask, do you always testify together?

ALANA CHANG: No, I think it's a new thing. [laughter]

GUS SCHULENBURG: Well, we think it's really important to model multi-voice leaderships.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: It--it--it--

GUS SCHULENBURG: [interposing] It's very good.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --it was--it was important testimony, but I have to say it was also quite engaging [laughter] the source. (sic) Sorry,

1 I--I appreciate some of what you--what you said here,
2 and, you know, and I--actually it makes me reiterate
3 what I said at the very beginning to the Commissioner
4 and that not having sexual orientation, gender
5 identity and some other things is a real lost
6 opportunity. But we will have I suspect other
7 opportunities for follow-up surveys that we may, in
8 fact, be able to mandate that we'll--that we'll
9 learning from this first experience, and what we
10 didn't do right in terms of the survey. And then,
11 measure the progress as we go forward with it. So, I
12 want to thank all of you for--for staying until the
13 afternoon, and--and being a part of--of this and for
14 all your work. Thank you so much.

16 GUS SCHULENBURG: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And our final
18 panel, Lisa Shoop (sp?)--

19 MALE SPEAKER: [interposing] I think she
20 left.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --from Fourth
22 Arts Block; Mark Rossier, NYFA; James Bartlett,
23 MoCADA; and Ryan Gillian from Downtown Art. We thank
24 them for sticking it out, and being a part of today's
25 hearing.

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[background comments]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Now, you get to
do it together, right?

MARK ROSSIER: Oh, yes, sir that we go
back and forth. Which will be nice. It will be a
sort of--sort in Beckett kind of thing. They don't
make sense together, but they do.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes.

MARK ROSSIER: All right, since I've
already started, I guess-- I'm Mark Rossier from the
New York Foundation for the Arts, and I want to thank
Committee Chair Van Bramer and the committee for
hosting these meetings. As an organization committed
to diversity, equity and inclusion, we are grateful
to the Department of Cultural Affairs for conducting
this important survey, which is a vital first step to
ensuring that the staff and boards of the cultural
organizations mirror the makeup of the city we all
love. DCA--DCA [coughs] is the perfect organization
to spearhead this effort, and it's yet another
example of the vital role it plays not only in the
cultural community, but in the life of the city
itself. It is clear from the results that there is
work to be done. Improving diversity in the cultural

sector will be long and complicated, and while the survey gives us important information, it is just the beginning and I hope the Council will provide DCA with the resources it needs to continue making progress on this front in addition to all of the other outstanding work it does. Of course, in consort with DCA's effort, it is incumbent on every organization in the city to take responsibility for their own organizational culture. At NYFA we are embarking on a variety of initiatives to try and do our part. Thanks to the support of the Council Member Levin, we have started to provide one of our key programs in both Chinese and Spanish with a goal of continuing this expansion of the course of the next year. We have been working [coughs] with a consultant to look at our internal systems and diversity issues as well as well as ways to ensure that all of our programs are inclusive and equitable as possible. I'm also pleased to report that we have received a planning grant from the Cultural Agenda Fund to work with--get ready--BAM, the Brooklyn Museum, Harlem Stage, the Lark Theater, the Park Avenue Armory and printed matter to pilot ways to create more inclusive hiring practices in the non-

profit sector, and to increase the visibility of mid-level administrators of color. We believe that while there are certainly issues when it comes to the pipeline, there are also myriad administrators with diverse background who have been working successfully in the field, and they're either passed over or not even considered for senior level positions. While we've all talked about the Rooney Rule, what is usually not noted is that it works in football because football is a small closed community. Everyone knows who the available coach is, assistant coaches, defensive and offensive coordinators are, so identifying qualified candidates is not a problem. One of the ideas our team will pilot is finding a way to have the same kind of transparency across the cultural sector. We will keep you prog--posted on our progress. Again, I am grateful to DCA not only for the information for the survey, but for highlighting the importance of these issues across the field, and I urge the Council to support the agency at the highest possible level. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

JAMES BARTLETT: Okay and I get to wrap it up. I'm James Bartlett, the Executive Director of

MoCADA, and in light of all of the great stories and testimony we have from all of my colleagues, I'm going to just jump straight to a few recommendations that I have. It's culled from my own personal experience as well as just listening to the testimony of others. I think number one in order to address this issue we have to address the systematic inequity between funding between small and large arts organizations. You know, as the Commissioner noted, smaller arts organizations generally speaking are much more diverse in their staff. And as Council Member Cumbo noted, quite frequently small arts organizations are feeders into the larger institutions. I think number two, is consistently committing to funding diverse programming. I think as we've seen, if you find diverse programming, generally speaking, you find more diverse staffs. And then third, this can't be solved simply by, you know, government by, you know, the public. It has to be solved by public and private, and I think the number one step in that is--is really pushing for more diverse boards both in small and large arts organizations, and attacking it from, you know, both directions. That's it.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much, and this is probably the first time you two did
a joint testimony.

MARK ROSSIER: It is. [laughs]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, as we speak--

MARK ROSSIER: [off mic] However, we've
worked on a lot of stuff. (sic)

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: But you did
great on the big stage, and I appreciate both of you
wrapping this up, in a--in a thoughtful way, and
obviously this is far from the end, but a part of the
beginning of making sure we get it right. So thank
you both very, very much. Thank all of you very
much, and with that, this hearing is adjourned.

[background comment and noise]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 4, 2016