

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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September 17, 2019
Start: 1:09 p.m.
Recess: 3:00 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Joseph C. Borelli
Laurie A. Cumbo
Karen Koslowitz
Francisco P. Moya

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

Tom Finkelppearl, Commissioner New York City
Commission of Department of Cultural Affairs

Daniel Fonner, Director of Research, SMU Data
Arts

Keith Stubblefield, Brooklyn Academy of Music, BAM,
Cultural Institutions Group Member

Stephanie Wilchfort, President and CEO of Brooklyn
Children's Museum

Lisa Gold, Executive Director, Asian-American Arts
Alliance

Rossllyn Barber, Public Theater

Jeffrey Amora, Fair Wage on Stage

Robert Stanton, Fair Wage on Stage

Valerie Paley, New York Historical Society

Amy Andrew, MoCADA

Jeffery Amora, Fair Wage on Stage

Robert Stanton, Fair Wage on Stage

1 COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS.

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2 [sound check] [pause] [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good morning or
4 good afternoon.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good afternoon
7 everyone. My name is Jimmy Van Bramer, and I am the
8 Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries
9 and International Intergroup Relations. I want to
10 thank you all here for this important hearing on
11 diversity and cultural institutions and the New York
12 City Department of Cultural Affairs, Workforce
13 Demographics, Pilot Study: Findings, Results and
14 Next Steps. As everybody here knows, it is always a
15 busy day here at City Hall, and there is a major
16 hearing going on next door, which I, too, need to
17 check in at some point because I am a part of that
18 committee as well. So, members will be coming and
19 going throughout the hearing, but this city is known
20 wide and far for its great racial, ethnic and
21 cultural diversity, and also, of course, as one if
22 not the major cultural hubs of the world, and while
23 diversity has been an integral part of many of the
24 city's cultural offerings and our advances in the
25 arts, there is a lack of diversity in culture and

1 art, and institutions that has been widely noted. I
2 will say that our community is not the only community
3 that faces these challenges, but the Department of
4 Cultural Affairs and the cultural world at large is
5 thinking about these issues and acting on the
6 findings. It's part of why we're having a hearing
7 today. So, as some folks know, obviously the
8 Commissioner knows, in January of 2015 DCLA launched
9 a diversity initiative to study, promote and
10 cultivate equitable representation among the
11 leadership staff and audiences of cultural
12 organizations in New York City. The first major
13 project of the DEI Initiative was to conduct a survey
14 of the demographics of the workforce of the 987 at
15 that time DCLA grantees in partnership with the
16 research firm Ithaka S&R. In January or 2016, DCLA
17 released the results of this study, which found that
18 the cultural workforce did not reflect the diversity
19 of the city's population. In particular the study
20 found that the cultural workforce was 61.8% white
21 while less than a third of the city is comprised of
22 non-Hispanic whites. This committee held a hearing
23 on the results of the Ithaka S&R Study on February
24 25, 2016. In 2017, DCLA launched the city's first
25

1 comprehensive cultural plan creates NYC. Equity and
2 inclusions was and is one of the issue areas
3 identified in the plan, which cited the results of
4 the Ithaka Study and "troubling" and included a
5 number of objectives and strategies related to DEI.
6 After the release of Create NYC, DCLA partnered with
7 SMU Data Arts to conduct another pilot study on the
8 demographics of the workforce of cultural
9 institutions, the results of which were released in
10 July of 2019. The SMU Data Arts study use different
11 methodology from the Ithaka Study in that it relied
12 on self-reported responses of the cultural workers.
13 The results of the two studies were largely similar
14 with respect to the racial and ethnic demographics of
15 the workforce. However, the methodology of the SMU
16 Data Arts Study allowed the collection of better
17 information on disability and sexual orientation and
18 gender identity. Today, we are here to the explore
19 the results of a 2019 SMU Data Arts pilot study and
20 the committee will seek to gain a deeper
21 understanding of DCLA's diversity, equity and
22 inclusion initiatives and the best practices to
23 increase DI in the cultural sector. I want to thank
24 my Legislative Director Jack Bernetovitz, my Chief of
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COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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1
2 Staff Matt Wallace, the committee's Finance Analyst
3 Alia Ali, our Policy Analyst Christy Dwyer to my left
4 and our interim Committee Counsel Mel Beekman who is
5 stepping for Brenda McKinney who is away on family
6 leave celebrating the birth of her daughter Valencia,
7 and also Aminta Kilawan who served as our Committee
8 Counsel for years before moving on is also here in a
9 guest-special guest performance, and thank you Aminta
10 Kilawan. So, with that, I think we will swear in the
11 Commissioner. You, young man, do not have to raise
12 your right hand at this point, but the Commissioner
13 does, yes.

14 LEGAL COUNSEL: Please raise your right
15 hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
16 truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony
17 before this committee and to respond honestly to
18 Council Member questions?

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes. I do.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: You may proceed
21 Commissioner. Then I presume after your testimony
22 we'll hear from...

23 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes, from Data
24 Arts from Mr. Fonner and then--

25 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes, great.

COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Entertain.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Great.

COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Okay, good

afternoon Chair Van Bramer and members of the
committee. I'm here today to testify in regards to
today's topic: Diversity in the Cultural Institutions
and New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs,
Workforce demographic, the demographics, pilots that
are finding results in next steps. Making our city's
arts and cultural institutions more welcoming and
reflective of all New Yorkers has been a priority the
Department of Cultural Affairs since the start of
this administration. To work towards this ideal one
of the core strategies we've been—we're encouraging
among our constituent--our constituents is increasing
diversity in the cultural workforce. We believe that
staffs encompassing a variety of voices ultimately
create programs that speak to a variety of audiences.
Before you can move forward on any, you need to
assess where you're starting. That's why in the fall
of 2015, as Council Member Van Bramer said, we
commissioned a survey of every cultural non-profit
organization receiving support from the Department of
Cultural Affairs. Using private funding we selected

1 research firm Ithaka S&R to collect demographic data
2 from over 900 organizations and report on how diverse
3 our city's cultural workforce actually was. This is
4 the first study of its kind conducting in the New
5 York City cultural sector. The results were
6 published in 2016. We found some data that were
7 troubling to say the least. Most concerning was the
8 fact that although two-thirds of New Yorkers identify
9 as people of color, only around one-third of those
10 working in arts and culture non-profit jobs
11 identified that way. On top of that, high level jobs
12 with people curating collections and making decision
13 were significantly wider than lower lower level
14 supporting staff. The 2015 study gave us a great
15 starting point despite the launch of several new
16 programs and efforts to address these challenges.
17 For instance, working with Theater Subdistrict
18 Council we directed \$3 million—over \$3 million to
19 training programs aimed at fostering fairer more
20 inclusive theater workforce. Theater is an iconic
21 cultural industry in New York City, but it faced
22 particularly steep challenges outline in the Ithaka
23 Report. CUNY Cultural Corps, who has just kicked off
24 its fourth year last year has placed over 400
25

1 students into paid internships of cultural groups.
2
3 The Cultural Corps is aimed at squarely at the often
4 referred-referenced pipeline problem. It leverages
5 CUNY's diverse student body to open up new—a new pool
6 of talent for cultural organizations. [coughs] But as
7 we dower deeper into thinking about diversity, equity
8 and inclusion, realized that we wanted a high
9 resolution snapshot of the a cultural field. We also
10 wanted to find ways to draft the—involve the cultural
11 organizations we fund in these projects. So, in 2018,
12 we brought in the organization now known as SMU Data
13 Arts whom you will hear from shortly. [coughs] We
14 worked with them to develop a demographic survey that
15 would be distributed to small subs of the
16 organizations we fund as a pilot. This survey has two
17 important features that make it particularly useful
18 to us. First, it's a survey distributed directly to
19 individual staff members, contractors, volunteers and
20 board members. The data is self-reported. The
21 previous study relied on data from Human Resources
22 records of cultural institution. As a result, it did
23 not capture statistically significant information
24 about disability status, and it did not address
25 sexual orientation at all. [coughs] As an anonymous

1 self-reported survey, it can get us a much clearer
2 picture of diversity. In my recent report in access-
3 I'm not sure what that sound was there.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: It was just the
5 other room, the door opened. You're good.

6 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Oh, the door
7 opened.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: It's all good.

9 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Okay, that's
10 the other hearing.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Keep going.

12 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Okay, I'm
13 putting my theme (sic) down this way. Second, the
14 data and its process allowed individuals cultural
15 institutions to benefit from understanding their own
16 organization along with the—along with the others as
17 a whole. We at DCLA would only receive a report
18 containing aggregated data from the surveyed
19 institutions. However, if an individual—if a given
20 organization had a level of participation that meets
21 significance, which you'll hear about in a minute,
22 Data Arts would issue them their own organization's
23 specific report. [coughs] We're proud to say that
24 SMU Data Arts collected nearly 7,000 responses to the
25

1 survey. Many of the 65 organizations that
2 participated in this pilot including all 33 members
3 of the Cultural Institutions Group accumulated enough
4 response from the staff and volunteers to qualify for
5 individual reports. This bodes well for the coming
6 year when we will roll out the survey to all of our
7 constituent organizations, over 1,000 arts and
8 cultural non-profits. You'll hear more about the
9 process from Daniel Fonner shortly. In addition Data
10 Arts has put together an analysis of the data from
11 the pilot study, which we're happy to share, which is
12 available on our website. I urge you to remember
13 that this year's research is a pilot so the results
14 aren't permanent. However, I do want to point out a
15 few takeaways where we've been thinking about it.
16 For one thing, racial distribution of cultural
17 workers in these organizations still skews to about
18 two-thirds white, non-Hispanic as compared to one-
19 third of NYC's population. Clearly our work with
20 this field is cut out for us in terms of increasing
21 racial diversity particularly in senior level
22 positions. Now we have data about sexual orientation
23 that we didn't know before. Fifteen percent of the
24 surveyed workforce identifies as members of the LGBTQ
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1
2 community, and a bigger percentage of that percentage
3 increased to around 25%. We also have new data about
4 people with disabilities who work in the arts and
5 culture. The self-reporting aspect of this survey
6 and us—enabled us to discover that 8% of respondents
7 identify as having a disability. So, it's worth
8 pointing out that even an anonymous environment
9 questions about disability and sexual orientation
10 each had 11% of respondents declining to state their
11 status or identity. Why is that? This is one of the
12 many—of the many questions we hope to answer with
13 further study and engagement with our constituents.
14 You have heard me compare some the results from the
15 study to the New York City population as a whole, but
16 I want to emphasize that the demographics of our city
17 as reported in the census serve only as a guidance
18 and inspiration. We're not looking to impose quotas.
19 Seeking diversity and equity in our field requires a
20 much more nuanced conversation than that. This is
21 especially important to remember when looking at
22 individual organizations. Consider organizations
23 whose mission it is to preserve the ethnic heritage
24 to their community or highly localized organizations
25 serving one specific neighborhood or a very small

1 organization or very small organizations. It makes
2 no sense to demand the demographic profile that non-
3 profits like these should match that of the city as a
4 whole. In addition, there's been some discussion of
5 the new—in the news of certain populations being over
6 “over-represented” in the cultural reference. Let's
7 take people with disabilities for example. Yes, it is
8 true that 8% of the study respondents who report
9 having one or more disabilities is greater than the
10 4% of New York City's total workforce to do so. But
11 that 8% is less than the 11% of the city's entire
12 population who going to identify as people having a
13 disability. Rather than indicating over-
14 representation, that statistic highlights another
15 challenge. Certain groups such as people with
16 disabilities are actually significant and under-
17 represented in the workforce as a whole, but the
18 field of rights and culture is doing a better than
19 average job after removing barriers to employment for
20 members of these groups, and that's something to be
21 proud of in saying it's fact. So, now what? How do
22 we move forward with this nuanced conversation?
23 Where do we go now when the pilot study is complete?
24 One important step is to broaden the pool of
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1 respondents, which we're doing in the coming year.
2 That will establish our baseline, and become a tool
3 we can redeploy or return to monitor the progress of
4 the field. I'd also like to share a few other
5 programs and projects we're already working on to
6 help increase diversity in the cultural workforce.
7 As promised in the Create NYC Cultural Plan, we have
8 required that members of the Cultural Institution
9 group to adopt diversity and equity inclusion plans.
10 We've worked closely with the HCIG member to produce
11 these plans that make sense for them, while also
12 contributing to the goal of a more inclusive cultural
13 sector. The resulting plans saw customized benchmarks
14 and increased accountability and will be reviewed
15 annually. Incidentally, all of these institutions
16 qualify to receive individual reports from Data Arts
17 Survey. Several mentioned to us that these reports
18 were invaluable to us in shaping meaningful diversity
19 goals and strategies. We're also working with
20 organizations outside the CIG as they strive to
21 diversify their staffs. For example, in February we
22 partnered with the Mayor's Office for People with
23 Disabilities to host Disability and Inclusion in the
24 Cultural Workforce. This event drew over 150 people
25

1 running-representing over 90 cultural organizations.
2 Attendees learned about local state and regional
3 resources often support in developing more inclusive
4 recruiting, hiring and retention practices. This is
5 the second such even we've held in the effort to
6 address in some small way the joblessness crisis in
7 the disability community, and we intend for this to
8 be our last. In 2017 and 2018, the Theater
9 Subdistrict Council, as I mentioned before, dedicated
10 over \$3 million to help increase diversity and
11 opportunity in the theater workforce. The 2015
12 Demographic Study indicated that theater industry was
13 frankly less diverse than other areas of arts and
14 culture. The TLC gave funding to 11 theater non-
15 profits to begin to address this challenge. The
16 organizations established fellowship programs for
17 members of under-represented populations particularly
18 people of color and people with disabilities.
19 Several of these programs have continued even after
20 the TLC funding ended. Another program offering
21 opportunities to young people just starting their
22 careers, the CUNY Cultural Corps continues to grow
23 strong. For the 2019-2020 school year over 100
24 students from a variety of CUNY colleges are
25

1
2 beginning paid internships with cultural institutions
3 throughout the city. These internships are funded by
4 the city with additional support from the Rockefeller
5 Foundation and represent what a strong public-private
6 partnership can accomplish. This spring after just
7 four years, a tremendously diverse group of nearly
8 450 students will receive excellent work experience
9 in the cultural sector. They all began building
10 solid professional networks an essential component of
11 great development, and they will have performed over
12 100,000 work hours at non-profits in the cultural
13 sector. This means that students will not have to
14 choose between discovering careers in the arts and
15 earning a paycheck. Data shows that employers at the
16 lower rungs of cultural employment are a more diverse
17 cohort. What can we do to nurture this talent? We
18 renewed our partnership with CUNY to create NYC
19 Leadership Accelerator attempts to do this. The
20 program, which is free of charge for the
21 participating—for the participants thanks to city
22 funding provides professional development and
23 leadership skills training to a diverse group of mid-
24 career cultural professionals. By the end of this
25 fiscal year, the program will have given over 100

1
2 future leaders invaluable tools and strategies
3 they'll need as they extend their research—their
4 reach in their careers in the arts and cultural
5 field. These are all steps on the journey towards a
6 more inclusive cultural workforce, and we're not
7 stopping. As a city and a society committee to
8 fairness, we have an obligation to ensure that
9 transformative social, intellectual, and emotional
10 economic—and economic benefits are there in culture
11 and open to everyone. We at DCLA look forward to
12 working with City Council, our city agencies and our
13 constituent cultural organizations to achieve this.
14 Thank you for the opportunity to discuss today's
15 topic. Now we'll hear from Daniel Fonner of SMU Data
16 Arts. Following that, I am happy to answer questions
17 that you may have.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Feel free to go
19 ahead, Daniel, but before that, I want to recognize
20 Council Member Francisco Moya, a member of the
21 committee from Queens has joined us.

22 DANIEL FONNER: Good afternoon, Chair—
23 Chair Van Bramer and members of the committee. My
24 name is Daniel Fonner, and I'm the Associate Director
25 for Research at SMU Data Arts, the national center

1
2 for arts research at Southern Methodist University in
3 Dallas, Texas. I offer my thanks to this committee
4 and to the Department of Cultural Affairs for
5 inviting me here today to testify about the pilot
6 workforce demographic study conducted by the SMU Data
7 Arts on a subset of DCLA funded organizations
8 including members of the Cultural Institutions Group.
9 Over the past seven years, SMU Data Arts has
10 conducted workforce demographic studies for
11 governments, foundations and service organizations
12 across the country collecting demographic information
13 that includes employee heritage, age, gender, sexual
14 orientation, and disability status. Through an
15 iterative and reflective design process SMU Data Arts
16 regularly updates and refines our survey methodology,
17 instrument and reports to best capture the
18 demographic characteristics of the arts and culture
19 workforce. To ensure privacy of all respondents, our
20 survey platform captures data anonymously, and our
21 reporting standards prevent the identification of
22 individual respondents. Prior to survey deployment
23 for this pilot study in New York City on August 7,
24 2018, SMU Data Arts coordinated with DCLA to
25 determine which organizations would participate. Once

1 selected, a designated individual at each
2 organization was tasked with providing SMU Data Arts
3 with total workforce members for their organization
4 and with email a url for all employees, board members
5 and independent contractors directing them to the
6 survey. The survey, which takes about five minutes to
7 complete was opened until October 2, 2018. 6,928
8 individuals affiliated with 65 arts and cultural
9 organizations participated in the study allowing us
10 to be 95% confident that our sample in general is
11 representative of the total workforce of the
12 participating organizations with a margin of error of
13 plus or minus 1%. Organizations that received a
14 sufficient level of participation from their
15 workforce were given a report that analyzed the
16 demographics of their individual organization.
17 Responses from all organizations were aggregated to
18 create the Pilot Community Report we are discussing
19 today. In 2016, the firm Ithaka S&R conducted a
20 similar demographic study on a much larger group or
21 DCLA funded organizations. While the Ithaka provided
22 valuable information on the demographics of the arts
23 and cultural workforce in New York City, the
24 methodology employed in data collection reporting
25

1 left unanswered questions. Topics such as disability
2 status and sexual orientation were not fully explored
3 and some role in employment status choices led to
4 some ambiguity in reporting. Most importantly, the
5 methodology employed Ithaka required a single person
6 at each organization to fill out spreadsheet that
7 contained demographics for all employees. This method
8 invites assumption into the data collection process
9 potentially misrepresenting the demographics of the
10 workforce. To that end, while broad trends appear in
11 both reports it is not possible to compare the Ithaka
12 study and SMU Data Arts Pilot Study on a one-to-one
13 basis. When reporting on workforce demographic data,
14 we strive to provide benchmark information for
15 organizations and policymakers to draw comparisons
16 and make informed decisions. We provide context to
17 the data collected by comparing it to standard
18 demographic data such as data from the Census Bureau.
19 In cases where the census does not collect certain
20 data, we compare data to other reputable research in
21 the field. The demographic analysis provided by SMU
22 Data Arts is not prescriptive. We do not make
23 recommendations on what should be done. We simply
24 aim to capture and report on many aspects of
25

1 demographics. Primary findings from this study
2 include in terms of gender identity board and
3 executive leadership closely matched the make-up of
4 New York City with other roles leaning more female.
5 With regard to sexual orientation, 15% of respondents
6 identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual compared to 4%
7 of the New York, Newark and Jersey City Metro area.
8 Regarding heritage, 66% of the arts and cultural
9 workforce identified as white and non-Hispanic
10 compared to 32% in the general population. All other
11 races and ethnicities including—including Asian,
12 Black and Hispanic were represented in the arts and
13 cultural workforce at less than half the prevalence
14 occurring within the general population. Respondents
15 identifying their role as community engagement most
16 closely mirrored census data. In terms of disability
17 status, 8% of respondents identified as having a
18 disability compared to 11% in the general New York
19 City population. Since these definitions around
20 disability status include those who are in the labor
21 force both employed and unemployed, and those in the
22 general population, the census definition of the
23 labor force only captures those not—who are non-
24 volunteers and are age 20 to 64. It is more
25

1 appropriate to compare against the general population
2 in the context of this study, which included both
3 volunteers and those over age 64. In our study, 16%
4 of respondents and 32% of boards, which are voluntary
5 positions by nature, were over the age of 64 and 19%
6 of respondents identified as non-board volunteers.
7

8 The results of this pilot study shows similar trends
9 to other studies conducted by SMU Data Arts in cities
10 such as Los Angeles and Houston particularly in
11 relation to racial and ethnic identity and gender
12 make-up of arts and culture workforces. While we
13 view the study as successful, we always look for ways
14 to improve our survey and our reports. Since the
15 completion of this study, we have updated our
16 questions and definitions for sexual orientation and
17 gender identity, improved our statistical methods for
18 determining participation thresholds, and added
19 questions to further employee work place perceptions
20 related to wellbeing and psychological safety.

21 Additionally, we are currently testing a potential
22 question to distinguish between incidents and
23 prevalence of demographic characteristics within a
24 workforce. SMU Data Arts aims to build a national
25 culture of data drive decision making for those who

1 want to see arts and culture sectors thrive. Data
2 without context of place, time and community
3 understanding is irrelevant at its best, and
4 misleading and destructive at its worst. We are SMU
5 Data Arts aim to provide our partners and the arts
6 and culture sector in general with objective data,
7 insights and tools to empower them to make informed
8 decisions to better serve their communities. I'm
9 happy to answer any questions you may have at this
10 time. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you for
13 your testimony, and thank you for your commitment to
14 including sexual orientation and gender identity
15 more. As a gay man, I can tell you that the gays
16 love the arts. [laughter] So, it's very important
17 that you include us. Having said that, obviously we
18 have some questions for the Commissioner in
19 particular. So, I guess I would start off by saying
20 to you what do you think is the most disturbing
21 finding, and-and how are we going to address that
22 which you think is the most disturbing finding in
23 these surveys?

24 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Well, I mean I
25 think with the, you know, we'll continue as Mr.

1
2 Fonner just said, to be these big discrepancies, but
3 particularly around race and ethnic identity in the
4 cultural workforce, and I think that, you know, we've
5 already taken a whole bunch of steps. I outlined
6 those before. I think that the—you now, you're going
7 to hear from the Cultural Institutions Group who have
8 now developed the first step, the inclusion plans
9 with goals that have been vetted and accepted by us
10 as being legitimate plans. So, I think that, you
11 know, this is the big, um, challenge I think of
12 keeping the doors open to folks that, you know, like
13 LGBTQ folks that have found good employment within
14 the sector is extremely important, but I do think
15 that, you know, just on the face of it, it's pretty
16 clear that the biggest challenge remains what was
17 just mentioned in the testimony those terrible
18 discrepancies.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So the—

20 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, you can
21 accept that. (sic)

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yep. So, if-if
23 the racial and ethnic diversity is so far behind that
24 of the city, what specific plans does the

1 Administration have to address that? You know, one
2 time it was we discussed tying this to fund it.

3
4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That there would
6 be a-a, um, percentage of a-an applicant that was
7 tied in terms of their funding to achieving goals
8 associated with diversity. Is that still--

9 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --something the
11 Administration is open to pursuing. I'm trying to
12 get at so, we've--we've done two studies now. I know
13 that you're going to expand this pilot to, um, to all
14 the groups, but there have been studies that have
15 come up with basically the same finding, and--and what
16 specifically is the Administration doing to address
17 it?

18 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, what
19 you're--

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]
21 Other than citing it some more but--

22 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: No, no, yeah,
23 but the studies are super important, and I think that
24 the individual information that the groups have
25 gotten out of this study is important. I've heard

1 from cultural organizations for example that they
2 didn't know how many people with disabilities are
3 working on their workforce, and that's important for
4 them to know that 8% of their—I can't remember the
5 exact number, but 8% overall, but to make it possible
6 for those folks to be fully productive, it's
7 important to know that. So, again, what you're
8 referring to, and again this is a moment we were
9 sitting there together with the mayor, the
10 announcement of the Cultural Plan, which as everybody
11 in the room knows was a bill sponsored by the
12 Chairman, that we sat there at that moment and said,
13 and it was quite clearly stated that we are going to
14 be asking the Cultural Institutions Group, which is
15 the group which we invest the most heavily in, to
16 develop diversity, equity and inclusion plans with
17 goals that are measureable that we're going to hold
18 them accountable to or to face this possible
19 diminishment of their subsidy from the city. That's
20 still the case. That first threshold or the first
21 moment of that question has been called right now,
22 which is we have--all of these groups have now
23 developed diversity, equity and inclusion plans that
24 they have submitted to us. They were reviewed by our
25

1 legal team led by a civil rights attorney who's very
2 well versed and has read a million of these plans
3 every day. So, those—the first threshold has been
4 reached. Nobody got their funding cut because they
5 all submitted diversity, equity and inclusion plans
6 with goals that will be administered—reviewed on an
7 annual basis. A lot of these groups are already
8 taking actions not simply—and by the way, I think
9 it's important to say we continue to do the research.
10 We think research is valuable, and we think we're
11 working with—with one of the top. By the way,
12 nothing wrong with S&R. They did a great job. They do
13 a lot of good research other places in the city. We
14 felt the methodology used by Data Arts and the more
15 inclusive methodology is a better way to measure.
16 We're going to continue to do surveys. It's not that
17 that's all we're doing. Simultaneous to that in a
18 way that hasn't been done in any other city, we are
19 working very closely with our cultural institutions
20 to ensure that they're making progress on diversity
21 and equity.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, all—all that
24 is—is terrific. I hear that, but while the—the new
25 information on—on disability and sexual orientation

1
2 may be new to the heads of institutions or
3 organizations, you know, the--the racial and ethnic
4 breakdown of--of the staff and senior staff may have
5 been more apparent within these organizations. So,
6 that would be less surprising, the findings of those
7 studies. So, I guess--and I'm not advocating for
8 this, but it's the Mayor himself whose, um, that if
9 some of these groups don't start showing progress
10 here they, as you just said the Administration is
11 still open to a demission of their funds as you said.

12 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, I guess--I
14 guess the question is then when

15 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yep.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --and at what
17 point is this administration and your department open
18 to cutting people's budgets because they're not
19 reaching--well, you tell me like what goal and when
20 and where.

21 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Okay, so, yes.
22 So the answer to that question is the next threshold
23 is going to be next spring. These diversity, equity,
24 inclusion plans that you're going to hear about from
25 the CIGs, are going to be reviewed on an annual

1 basis. These plans have a one-year, three-year and
2 five-year—was it six year thresholds. So, you know,
3 short, medium and long term thresholds. A lot of the
4 organizations have set themselves very specific kinds
5 of goals. Those kind of goal are different from
6 organization to organization, and I think that that's
7 very important. We are in the beginning of a phase
8 in New York City where cultural institutions are
9 really taking this not, and by the way, plenty of
10 cultural organizations have been working on this for
11 a long period of time. Like I want to—it was very
12 important to me in Queens, you know that, and lots of
13 cultural organizations around the city. I think to
14 institutionalize it, to have these plans, to have a—
15 is as a whole new phase, but there's a lot of
16 research about what kind of cultural diversity,
17 equity and inclusion plans bear the most fruit or the
18 most successful. It's not clear what that is. We
19 have a—a diversity of diversity plans, but just to
20 answer your question quite literally because you
21 asked for a date. Next spring they are going to be
22 all reporting to us, and that's the next time we're
23 going to be looking at these cultural organizations
24
25

1 who are making progress they're making on their
2 diversity plans.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And—and because
5 you mentioned in your testimony that there aren't
6 quotas. As you're measuring that progress in the
7 next reports, are you simply looking for progress or
8 are—are you—do you have benchmarks or—numbers that
9 you're looking for?

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: But again
11 it's—it's different from cultural organization to
12 cultural organization, and again, it is a very
13 different question to ask for a cultural explicit
14 organization, an organization that serves a very
15 specific geographical community. So, again, there
16 are different kinds of thresholds that are being—that
17 where these cultural organizations are going to be
18 holding themselves accountable, and we're going to be
19 holding them accountable for. What we have as we
20 continue to do research and we continue to do our
21 Data Arts surveys over the next years, is an
22 aggregate statistic of how the—the cultural community
23 is doing in relationship diversity cumulatively and
24 that's what I think is the most important not to
25 reach quotas at an individual organization, but to

1
2 have diversity is a goal, and there are lots of great
3 creative right in your district. PS1 has said we're
4 getting rid of unpaid internships. That has been a
5 detriment to diversity in a lot of cultural
6 organizations, and that's like it's starting already.
7 It's already happened. Folks who can't afford to
8 volunteer their time are now not going to have that
9 barrier to working at PS1 Contemporary Art Center.
10 So, it's examples like that all throughout the city,
11 and we're waiting to see, you know, from now. We've
12 just gone through this big effort 500 pages of
13 reports that we've read through that—that the
14 cultural organizations have submitted. I think it's a
15 very exciting moment in that history of diversity,
16 equity and inclusion in the city.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Um, so you
18 briefed the Mayor directly on these reports?

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, I haven't
20 briefed him on this report, but we have definitely
21 talked. This is a subject very close to the heart of
22 the mayor. This is something I've talked to him on
23 numerous occasions about. I haven't sat down and
24 shown the results of SMU Data Arts.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, you've not
3 talked about this particular study, which came out in
4 July?

5 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And in your
7 previous I guess discussions with the Mayor, what
8 does he want to see happen here because you may have
9 your own ideas about what should happen here , and
10 what specific plans the department should have
11 working with the cultural organizations that--that
12 you--you may not be able to--

13 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, it's like-

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --implement all
15 of that without the Mayor actually, signing off on
16 those things.

17 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yeah, and so
18 like we--we, um--he understands the general direction
19 we're going in. We've talked about it. We've talked
20 about the idea of these--these plans, executing the
21 plans, monitoring the plans year to year. He's
22 really left it in the hands of us to implement. So,
23 the general direction, enthusiasm, thumbs up is an
24 important thing for the agency under this
25 Administration, and again it allowed the sort of

1 structure of it to be designed by the agency. We
2 have been talking to other cultural agencies around
3 America. We've been talking about cultural
4 institutions about how to execute this, but he's
5 really left it in our hands. It's not micromanaged
6 by the Mayor, but he is enthusiastically behind it.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Have you, um,
9 briefed--does the Deputy Mayor Vicki Been--

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes, yes,
11 absolutely. Yep.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --particular
13 study?

14 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yep.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, are you
16 frustrated by the-the lack of progress or the-the
17 persistence of some of these numbers?

18 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: No, I'm not
19 and so I'm inspired by the way that the cultural
20 sector is embracing this, and look, we--we have seen
21 and Mellon for example national survey, progress is
22 being made in the cultural sector. That's true I
23 believe in New York City, but we're going to prove it
24 with actual statisticians, that other side. I see it
25 anecdotally on organization after the next, and again

1 there's diversity in the cultural sector what's
2 important to us, and by the way I don't want to in
3 any way--and I'm sure you're at my side of this--
4 diminish the importance of those union jobs of
5 maintenance and security. Those are important jobs
6 at institutions. They are part of the backbone, but
7 I'm saying we want to see diversity in the decision
8 making process in the curators, in the programmers.
9 As Mr. Fonner said that the--the organization, the
10 part of the organization that most closely matches
11 the city, this community engagement. So, but there's
12 incredibly talented people. I've met them. They're
13 at CUNY some of them now. They're future leaders or
14 there are those folks who have been leadership
15 accelerator, not--not all of them, who are ready to go
16 and take on these positions. It is happening. I'm not
17 frustrated on this, but we have to keep pushing, and
18 I think that it's good having hearings like this, and
19 getting us all together on a regular basis. It is
20 important. I--I believe progress has been made.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, if we
23 acknowledge what you did, sort of one of the--the
24 biggest issues that we confront or senior leadership,
25 and even board positions, right?

COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Uh-hm.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And that screams to a, you know, the need for a pipeline right, a real incubator of talent and—and, um, is—is the CUNY Corps that, which you see as being the primary vehicle for achieving that, or what is—what is the best way to achieve diversity at the highest levels whether it's the director, the Artistic Director, CEOs, those sorts of positions?

COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, I mean, look, I think the key to a cultural career is a long-term proposition. Um, I've met a lot of these people. A lot of these people have fantastic, you know, experiences at CUNY Cultural Corps and then still go off to med school or something terrible like that. I'm kidding about that, but you know what I'm saying. It's not all—what a waste of talent for somebody to become a doctor. I see the—the Leadership Accelerator as something that's much more immediate. These are people in cultural organizations who are already employed who need to understand that the mechanisms of getting up through that and not being stopped at some kind of glass ceiling along the way. So, I think Leadership

1 Accelerator is extremely important. I also think it's
2 not just us doing this. There are all kinds of
3 professional development opportunities at
4 institutions, and there are also other funders.
5 Mellon has been working on this—these kind of issues
6 for a generation. If you look at the number of people
7 with PhDs in our history of color who currently have
8 professorial jobs across the country who have
9 profited from that Mellon pipeline development, it's—
10 it's really inspiring to see. So, again, I want to
11 CUNY Cultural Corps as the highest students of
12 graduates. I'm a CUNY, grad—CUNY graduate myself. I
13 want the CUNY students to have that. That's by far
14 not only the only mechanism we're using, and again,
15 there's a lot of different avenues to that, but I do
16 see lots of experiments happening across the cultural
17 sector.
18

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I have some more
20 questions, but I know another member of our committee
21 has joined us, and I know has some questions on this
22 topic and has some experience with this issue. So, I
23 want to ask Laurie Cumbo to say a few words, and ask
24 her questions as well.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you, Chair
3 Van Bramer. Thank you, Commissioner. I just wanted to
4 start off by thanking you for your support of
5 Weeksville Heritage Society, and we're very happy
6 that we were able to come to an agreement with Chair
7 Van Bramer and myself, and many of the faces that I
8 see here today. So, I certainly want to thank you
9 for that because that was a long fought battle and
10 we're glad that we were able to come to a resolution
11 or a meeting of the minds ,and that you all were able
12 to see things my way. [laughter] Just wanted to
13 start off with gaining an understanding as—as you
14 know, as Council Member Van Bramer alluded to that I
15 have some experience in this area where I've lived
16 this experience. How do you foresee the work that's
17 being done in terms of diversifying our institutions
18 impacting culturally specific institutions? So many
19 of the smaller organizations that recruit, train,
20 develop, create these wonderful professionals, seeing
21 the—the work that's being done to almost recruit
22 professionals of color into the large institutions,
23 it becomes almost a creative brain drain in terms of
24 utilizing the talent that many of the smaller
25 organizations who have done the work to train these

1 individuals. How do you feel the work that you're
2 doing impacts those culturally smaller institutions
3 that certainly just can't compete with the benefits,
4 the packages, the health insurance, the potential to
5 have all of these other things, and, of course, an
6 increase in salary?
7

8 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, look,
9 first I acknowledge the congratulations to everybody
10 around Weeksville. That's beautiful memories, but I
11 think that they—their—what you're talking about first
12 of all I think that making the pie bigger. In other
13 works making—having a pipeline that is very diverse
14 that has a lot of different pipes going into it, not
15 just organizations, and by the way, with brain drain,
16 I understand what you're talking about. It's also a
17 small to large organization brain drain in general
18 right. So there are people who go to small cultural
19 institutions, culturally specific or not who are then
20 recruited by bigger institutions. That's something
21 that's been happening for a long period of time. I
22 think that happens in my different sectors of the
23 economy and the corporate economy as well, but if we
24 talk about this idea of having a larger pie or just a
25 larger workforce ready to go that's very diverse, the

1
2 it's not going to have to be a situation of let's say
3 cherry picking from small culturally explicit
4 organizations. I could also say that there are some
5 culturally explicit organizations who have made that
6 in a way part of the mission of the organization is
7 to—to create opportunities for people to go into the
8 workforce elsewhere, but I've also seen, and I think
9 this is something that is maybe newer and more often
10 happening now, folks who simply are saying I'm
11 committed to working long-term and staying within the
12 community that I—has, you know, that is my community.
13 So, folks who have said—who have the opportunity to
14 be recruited elsewhere who are simply saying I don't
15 any longer aspire to go to this other place. I see
16 that happening much more often. So, I—look, this is
17 a problem that's been around for a long time that
18 board members have been recruited or placed or
19 whatever you want to say from smaller to larger
20 organizations, but I do think that the—the focus on—
21 on diversity and on the, um, strength of the cultural
22 sector as a whole some of the ways that we've been
23 able to put extra funding into lower income
24 communities throughout—through cultural plan
25 initiatives means that I am concerned about the issue

1 you're talking about, I think that there are
2 alternatives, and the biggest alternative is to say
3 you big cultural institution, it needs a—it has a new
4 imperative to find—hire a diverse workforce, which is
5 a good thing. It has a variety of places to look
6 that aren't just the traditionally culturally
7 explicit organizations.
8

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I hear you. I
10 think that part of what I'm hearing on the ground
11 from many of the smaller institutions is how can the
12 Department of Cultural Affairs work to create an
13 overall let's say for the 900 or so institutions how
14 do we create a universal health plan that would be
15 able to bundle a workforce across the big to the
16 smaller institutions so that things that level the
17 playing field like healthcare, like pension like all
18 of these different things that would be ways to
19 create because at the end of the day, someone working
20 at a smaller cultural institution that decides to go
21 onto the Metropolitan Museum of Art or others in some
22 way is making a choice of their healthcare or making
23 a choice of many different things. So, is there any
24 way in terms of a baseline as far as like
25 circumstances that could be bundled resources from

1 healthcare and others and even what we did with the
2 utility relief program like something allows us to
3 recognize that we have this workforce of 900 plus
4 institutions and however many people that calculates
5 into, how can we start to see these as a workforce
6 that is protected in many ways so that people aren't
7 making a choice to leave one institution over the
8 other for life or death needs or situations so that
9 people can get healthcare, paid family leave,
10 maternity. You know, all these different sorts of
11 things that one would need.

12
13 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, you know,
14 over the years there have been some attempts to do
15 this, which is this idea of, um, a sort of
16 collectively funded risk pool for insurance, right.
17 So, I-but I have them actually and so there were some
18 experiments around that, which were bearing some
19 fruit, which actually, as I understand it and maybe I
20 ought to get back to you. We could talk further
21 about this. It kind of went away with Obamacare.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Uh-hm

23 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: But as soon as
24 there was a low cost alternative for people to buy
25 their own insurance, it didn't take into account pre-

1 existing conditions, and all that kind of stuff that
2 those experiments went away, and look, we have a
3 situation, and we'll see who's, you know, in the
4 White House next or whatever, that where there's a
5 lot of, you know the idea of creating a more robust
6 health insurance situation for everybody but, you
7 know, that has been experimented with, but I don't
8 under—I don't know of any experiments of that nature
9 occurring in New York City right now. There's all
10 kinds of questions of how-how it would work
11 financially, but as I understand it, most of those
12 experiments kind of ended with—about 10 years ago.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Does the, um, CUNY
15 Cultural Corps does it have anything beyond the
16 internship or the, um, the ability to connect one to
17 an institution? Is there for example a curriculum
18 across the board with the rollout of cultural corps
19 that incorporate. It's more than an internship.

20 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Uh-hm

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: So, for me I went
22 to NYU for a degree in visual arts administration,
23 and then there are other programs like that at Pratt
24 where I connected with you, um, in the arts and
25 cultural management program. So, I know that these

1 types of programs exist in the private school sector,
2 but are there these types of programs through
3 Cultural Corps that talks about arts administration,
4 cultural programming, finance and development for
5 cultural institution? Everything from sound and
6 engineering for a theater group. Are these types of
7 degrees being developed on the CUNY level outside of
8 the internship?
9

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, you're
11 going to hear about one of those in a minute--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay,

13 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: --from a
14 partner, from a CUNY partner. What you're talking
15 about is much more like what we do in the Leadership
16 Accelerator, not the CUNY Cultural Corps. CUNY
17 Cultural Corps now is more than an internship. They
18 have--the program is--is maturing enough that they
19 have--people have gone through the program who are
20 helping mentor the students who are just fresh to the
21 program, but it's not what you're talking about. What
22 you're talking about is much closer to the Leadership
23 Accelerator, which is to say okay you are in a job.
24 Here's how this sector works.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Right.

1
2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Here's how
3 you're going to be able to make your way creating
4 social and networks amongst the diverse group of
5 young professionals.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: There you go.

7 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yeah, that's
8 what it's about. Yeah, we could show you the
9 curriculum for that. It's an intensive. It's really-
10 -

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing] But
12 how expansive is that and how many people is that
13 reaching?

14 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So we have
15 classes. Each class is about 35 people. We did two
16 last year. Just like, you know, we will have had a
17 hundred students through that, but again, we want to
18 make this a long-term proposition so that every year,
19 we can [coughs] be developing talent. Well, once we
20 hear about it I think is this new CUNY Arts
21 Administration program--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: right.

23 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: --which is one
24 and, you know, the--and Pratt is a fantastic school as
25 is New York's NYU--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: uh-hm

3 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: --for that.

4 So, but the public option meaning CUNY is one that's
5 not associated with student debt, but has a much more
6 diverse first cohort. I think our first class is
7 this year. So, there is progress being made in that
8 direction.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I think that's
10 really the way to expand a program like that because
11 the internship field that's good in terms of entre,
12 but you really need the--the development of a major
13 where you really get to explore a field to be
14 competitive, and so out of a conflict that you share
15 I'll be general about this, is there a way to change
16 the dynamics so that we're able to hire people as
17 curators as administrators without the same level of
18 degree or scholarship that's needed because you have
19 an incredible breadth of experience--

20 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Uh-hm

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: --that you are an
22 artist that's worked successfully for over 40 years
23 that you have done some of the--I'll give you an
24 example. I'm throwing these names out because they're
25 names that we both know, but I have no idea if

1 they're interested in something like this, but let's
2 say I don't even know what degrees he has, but
3 Chester Higgins, Jr. that worked for the New York
4 Times for 40 years. If he wanted to be a chief
5 curator at XY&Z museum, but did not have a doctorate
6 degree in photography, but had done the work on that
7 level or a Danny Simmons whose been on every board,
8 who's worked in every institution in some way, shape,
9 form or fashion becoming the Chief Curator at the
10 Museum of Modern Art although he does not have a
11 doctorate in whatever one. Is there a way to change
12 how we hire people based off of experiences versus
13 just the—if you don't have a PhD, you cannot be in
14 this higher level of administration here in this
15 particular institution, which I think is what's
16 stopping so many people from acquiring these jobs.
17 Well, of course, just like the names I threw out,
18 you'd be like that's a no-brainer. They should
19 absolutely do that person.

21 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, I mean
22 this is a question that is being pondered at these
23 institutions, at these institutions, and there aren't
24 that many institutions that actually require a PhD
25 some do, and we're talking about fine arts

1 institutions, which have required PhDs in their
2 history for—for a long period of time. There are
3 different kinds of qualifications. Again, I don't
4 want to just—it's not just fine arts. We have what's
5 going on at the Bronx Zoo in terms of like a graduate
6 PhD in biology or whatever. So, there is this
7 question, and this is a question in our own hiring
8 practices in the city as well, which is to say what
9 is the qualification that is the most important
10 qualification for this job is not necessarily
11 diploma. I will say that what is happening again in
12 the art history profession is a serious and prolonged
13 focus on diversity within the graduate programs. So
14 that idea that you couldn't find somebody with a PhD
15 in that particular branch of art history is no longer
16 going to b the case. I think that that is already
17 happening. There's this upward spiral of folks with
18 PhDs who are much more diverse. I'm not going to
19 reveal it but I just had a discussion this morning
20 about somebody who is going to become a curator in a
21 museum who does—who is an African-American woman has
22 a PhD. I'm just saying this is happening all the
23 time.
24
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: You discussed it
3 early this morning?

4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Before I went
5 to work, yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Oh, that's great.

7 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes, it also
8 makes it fun, yes, okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I-I-I have a
10 follow up. So, because I was going to ask this
11 question in my next round, but it pertains to, uh,
12 what was just said. So, you've--you've been the
13 Commissioner for roughly six years or so. Um, when--
14 there have been a lot of openings.

15 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Uh-hm.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: We just had a
17 lot of movement in the city. Folks moving across the
18 country and becoming director of a different museum
19 or transitions. Are you happy with the progress that
20 you see in terms of the--the hiring of--of new folks,
21 and do you and the Administration have any role or
22 input? So, when, you know, we're not going to single
23 anyone out, but when--

24 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --X institution
3 has an opening, there's a nationwide search, and all
4 this great stuff is happening, to what extent are you
5 involved, consulted--

6 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --and are you
8 happy with how these boards are--are handling this and
9 coming through with a more progressive and diverse
10 group of leaders?

11 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, um, you
12 have to understand that 20 years ago, the biggest
13 issue, and I'll you this: One of the issues that was
14 presented in these cultural institutions was gender
15 diversity. A lot of women have come into powerful
16 positions in New York City. I think New York City is
17 an exempt part of that. Across the nation, as I
18 understand it, and you might have some of these
19 statistics, women are directors of about half the
20 cultural institutions, but not the big ones. So, when
21 you have New York City now where there Brooklyn
22 Museum, the--the Garden, and the Botanical Garden,
23 Museum of Natural History those, you know, this is
24 good progress in terms of gender diversity. It isn't
25 the case elsewhere, which I'm happy, but just to get

1 to your question about what kind of role I take, and
2 I'll say very clearly, I don't get involved in the
3 individual hiring of individual directors. I'm often
4 called by head hunters, and I will not talk about
5 individual people. I will talk about the cultural
6 institution, my knowledge of the cultural
7 institution, their pass. I'm on 38 boards. I'm very
8 well aware of those cultural institutions, their
9 needs, their future, et cetera, and I express my
10 opinions. I do not get involved in individual hiring
11 decisions at cultural institutions. I will, you know,
12 not answer questions about individual candidates. I
13 don't think it's my role to do that. I thin that the
14 boards have crated the opportunities for more diverse
15 finalists than a lot of these institutions. Some say
16 that a lot of progress has been made, and if you look
17 at this, it just is again in terms of gender it's
18 been pretty good. Not pretty good, very good.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And again, where
21 we haven't seen the progress.

22 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Look, I know
23 again because I'm on all those boards, and I
24 understand. I've never—I'm never on a search
25 committee, but search committees often are reporting

1 back to the entire board and so I understand. I
2 absolutely believe that there is a more diverse pool
3 of candidates in terms of racial composition than in
4 the past, and I think that's inevitably going to lead
5 to a more diverse group of directors in the future.
6 So, I don't think that there's a lot of progress there.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, before I turn
9 it back over to my colleague, um, yes, I—I think
10 there's progress, and I—and I know you care about
11 this and—and do many folks, and having the finalist
12 pool be more diverse racially is great, and believing
13 that ultimately that will lead to more break-throughs
14 is sort of aspirational, um, and—and very hopeful,
15 but the question is how soon and when?

16 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Agreed, and—
17 but I have to say I'll say that—that the senior level
18 positions at a lot of these institutions are already
19 being populated with a much more diverse group. If
20 you have all of a sudden senior a management team
21 that includes a general counsel or a deputy director,
22 these are kinds of people that end up in the very
23 powerful positions. Sometimes they get moved over
24 to—or, you know, hunted by another—head hunted by
25 another cultural institution. So, I think that the,

1 um, the movement up through institutions is also
2 happening.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I'll hand it back
5 over to my colleagues.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. I just
7 wanted to follow up on three things. One was when you
8 talked about the, um, the funding for the--the Theater
9 Subdistrict Council gave funding to 11 theater non-
10 profits to begin to address this challenge. The
11 organizations established fellowship programs for
12 members or under-represented populations, et cetera.
13 Is this funding that's going to continue year after
14 year? Was this a one shot or how is this going to be
15 managed?

16 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: This is two
17 shot not a one shot--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: --but in your
20 district there was a coalition between OCADA, BRIC,
21 and BAM I think it was. So, this is happening all
22 over the city. I do want to make one amendment to my
23 testimony. This is the only place where we actually
24 fund for-profits as well. You just have to be
25 associated with theater. So, there is like two Gay

1 TS. I think that's—I don't think that's a non-
2 profit. In any case maybe this. The, um, we had two
3 funding cycles within the Theater Subdistrict
4 Council, awarded these grants twice. Right now we
5 don't have any money in the pot. Theater Subdistrict
6 Council is—it's not doing cultural plays although I
7 am the Chairman of the Board. It is based on selling
8 air rights in the theater district. Its mission is to
9 enrich the theater life of the city and has to, you
10 know, circle back to the Theater District at some
11 level, but if you're a training lighting technician,
12 or you're training—by the way, unions have been very
13 involved in that as well. The Stage Hands Union,
14 which has not been that diverse has got a fantastic
15 training program for diverse young New Yorkers. So
16 that's, we are waiting to get more money, but
17 somebody has to sell some air rights. It's just that
18 that's not an annual. It's not tax levy. It's the
19 transfer of air rights, and those sales happen with
20 the Theater District. A percentage goes to this
21 funding.
22

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: It's just an
24 understanding that you and I both know how long it
25 takes to actually cultivate something that has some

1 impact and meaning to it. Just want to close with I-
2 I think the thing that I'm hearing that I'm most
3 concerned with is what spoke about initially, and
4 it's just how culturally specific institutions are
5 going to fair while this campaign or movement to
6 diversify our larger institutions grow, and I don't
7 exactly know the solution to it, but I know that
8 smaller culturally specific institutions have many of
9 the same challenges that our larger institutions have
10 in terms of recruiting staff that's trained, that's
11 has a degree or experience in this level of work.
12 It's equally as hard to find those individuals and to
13 add to that to retain them. I think that one of the -
14 one of the ideas that I thought about is to-how do
15 you create stronger partnerships with the larger
16 organizations and the smaller culturally specific
17 institutions so that there is a way to be able to-
18 theses are not the right words, but to share staff,
19 to share boards, to share resources, to share
20 exhibitions, to share programming, to recognize the
21 benefits that both of them have whereas one is more
22 on the ground and probably closer to the community
23 and closer to the next generation of who is going to
24 be the next Wangechi Hutu or Ghandi Wiley that are
25

1
2 working with those individuals. It's funny because I
3 saw the photograph of Wangechi Wutu at the Met today.
4 When I was cleaning out my apartment trying to make
5 heads or tails, I saw a photograph Wangechi with my
6 dad at Mocata helping to hang up her work 20 years
7 ago. So, it's like how that transition goes some way
8 to be able to connect these institutions so that
9 they're not competing, but that they are training and
10 growing and sharing resources in a way that is
11 beneficial to both. Has that been thought of?

12 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Again, you
13 know, I think that there is--this is not the first
14 time that this has been brought up. This is
15 something that's been of concern. I have to say that
16 there's an analogy I've been thinking about as she
17 has been speaking about this. It has to do with the
18 historically by ecologists in in universities that
19 when integration happens across the nation at other
20 schools students were--who went to Harvard in the last
21 generation, they would be going to Harvard, right but
22 those colleges are doing pretty well a lot of them.
23 We know that Mary Schmidt Campbell went down to be
24 the head of Spelman College.

25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: That's where I
3 went.

4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: There you go.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: There you go.

6 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Alright, so you
7 got excellence coming out of Spelman, but you know
8 what she's been doing in terms of training young
9 professionals at Spelman to enter the cultural
10 workforce. Obviously Mary has a PhD on history
11 herself so that that is a, um, a place that has a
12 student body that wants to be at that college given
13 the choice. Now, about their employment arts—I mean
14 Educational arts.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Educational arts.

16 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: so, seeing
17 that happen with talented young people of color who
18 are saying: I want to work at this cultural studio.
19 This is where it is most meaningful to for me to be
20 and I'm not going to be recruited out of here to
21 another place because this is the place that I most—
22 the question then is strengthening those
23 institutions, continuing to strengthen those
24 institutions, and again we have pumped millions of
25 dollars into low-income communities using the maps

1 created by the social impact of the arts another
2 piece of research we did with the private sector. So,
3 I'm not sure that that fully answers your question,
4 but we're definitely thinking about it.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: But it touches on
7 an important point because I feel that a large part
8 of this is also the historically black colleges could
9 be an incredible, but it's not as if anyone was
10 directing me to go into that field. I just so
11 happened to not fair well in my political science
12 major nor in my educational minor, and so I found
13 myself in art history, which is where I really wanted
14 to be at first. I'm going to make a broad stereotype
15 or a generalization in that in many—obviously in many
16 black communities going to a private historically
17 black college I don't think it's every parent's dream
18 to say—for your child to come home and say I want to
19 be an art major or a sculptor or a writer or, you
20 know, these are not fields that our families paying
21 for college like Spelman, \$45, \$50,000 a year at this
22 point now. People aren't going to— So, if somehow a
23 marketing thing could be done in some ways to say
24 there is this profession. They want you. There is a
25 salary associated with it. You will make money. You

1 will not be starving. You will--there is a field that
2 wants you. So, if you were to come into a school,
3 you would know that this is a growing sector and a
4 field that actually wants students in that way
5 because at that time I don't think I would have
6 necessarily majored in African art with the desire to
7 think that I could become a curator at a major
8 institution that we're all familiar with right? I
9 wouldn't have thought that that was possible, but now
10 I know. I could have been at that institution verses
11 sitting here today. So, it's one of those things
12 that, you know, we really have to think about how we
13 utilize our historically black colleges and recruit
14 and openly let it be known that there is a place for
15 you in this world. This is no just some high falutin
16 field that a few people get to. This is something
17 everyone can do and that's it.

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: And I'll just
20 say one. So, I do think that's what CUNY Cultural
21 Corps is where it's exposing hundreds and hundred of
22 CUNY students to this opportunity to say this is a
23 job. This is a job that has a salary and a
24 professional outcome, which could include you as a
25 CUNY student.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I just want to say
3 that's great and it's great first step, but that
4 internship is not going to allow you necessarily with
5 the degree you're getting to become the Chief Curator
6 at that institution. So, it's how do we marry that
7 CUNY program with the realities that so much of this
8 field is based off of the level of professional
9 degree or educational degree that you have. That's
10 all.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. I
12 just one to add one-one or two more questions for the
13 Commissioner. So, we know that we have an issue with
14 diversity particularly at the senior most levels.
15 Yes, there's some progress being made, and--and yet
16 there's still so much left to do, and the
17 Administration is going to broaden the pilot, and--and
18 do some more studying--

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yep.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --and--and yet
21 there's this--this sort of looming threat of a--of a
22 reduction in funding if--if goals aren't met. So, I
23 guess do you think that's the best approach, and is
24 there any concern because even your studies show
25 that--that the--the diversity increases if there's

1 lower wage employees involved in some of these
2 positions--

3
4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Uh-hm.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --where you see
6 the most diversity and, you know, my experience when
7 budgets get cut it's--it's rare that the top
8 executives cut their salaries, but sometimes the--the
9 folks at the lower end of the wage--

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Uh-hm.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --earning
12 situation they're the ones who get hurt. So, talk to
13 me a little bit about that because if we're talking
14 about we know we've got an issue. We're going to
15 study it some more. We've got some--some--some plans,
16 but the--the--the thing that's sort of looming out
17 there is this--is this, you know, potential penalty,
18 if you will, and in the--to you as the Commissioner of
19 Cultural Affairs and representing the mayor, I think
20 that that's the best approach, and is there any fear
21 that you're actually going to be hurting some of the
22 very goals that you're aspiring to here by
23 diminishing organizations' funding?

24 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Okay, I hear
25 what you're saying. So, I--yes. So, yes I do think

1
2 it's the best route. I think we've thought very
3 carefully about this that what? We've been very
4 collaborative with these groups. We have been
5 working very closely. You're going to hear from
6 them. You can ask them this direct question. We
7 feel that there being some skin the game was
8 something that we had to do that we had to say we
9 take this seriously. Think these groups were already
10 on this course, and I think it was a valuable thing
11 to say this is how important it is to us. Time, you
12 know, and again we're—we haven't just been sitting.
13 We've been taking action, but his is something that's
14 been discussed over and over again for years. You
15 know, like when are we going to see the actual—what's
16 your plan? So, now we have the plans, and I thin
17 that these organizations again very-very -I think we
18 dove into it. You know the way that they involved
19 the entire staff from top to bottom of organizations
20 in a very inclusive way. I think it was really
21 inspiring to watch. That discussion isn't going
22 away. People know that that discussion has happened.
23 So, we—our goal is not to cut these groups. Our goal
24 is to have action taken, but I think that having a
25 stick or something that we think was a valuable

1 aspect of it, is something we talked over, you know,
2 at some length with the Mayor, et cetera that we
3 intend to work closely, and again the goal is that
4 everybody, you know, is working towards these goals,
5 is making, you know, real substantial commitment to
6 the plans, and that's what we expect to happen.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay, much more
9 to be had, but we want to actually hear from some of
10 the cultural organizations that you're dangling that
11 stick in front of, Commissioner Finkelpearl. So, why
12 don't we hear from some of those folks affected. I
13 know Keith Stubblefield is here representing the
14 Cultural Institutions Group members, and Stephanie
15 Wilchfort of the Brooklyn Children's Museum. Is Lisa
16 Gold here? Repr-representing Asian-American Arts
17 Alliance. Do we only have three seats or we have
18 four seats? We have four seats and Rosslyn Barber
19 from the Public Theater. Is Rosalind from the Public?
20 Yep. Great. We have four and then we have one more
21 panel of four speakers in the second panel as well.
22 [pause] Okay, who wants to start? [background
23 comments] Yes, and you have to pull the microphone
24 towards you there Keith and turn it on with the red
25 light on.

1
2 KEITH STUBBLEFIELD: Council Member Van
3 Bramer, thank you. Nice to see you Council Member
4 Cumbo as always. Thanks for the opportunity to
5 testify. We're ready? My name is Keith
6 Stubblefield. I'm here to testify today on behalf of
7 BAM a member of the Cultural Institutions Group, and
8 I'll be reporting on the impact of the DCLA Diversity
9 Study the Create NYC Plan and the creation of DEI at
10 each of the 33 CIGs. As a public institution who
11 receive funding through the DCA, the members of the
12 CIG each take the commitment to diversity, equity and
13 inclusion very seriously, and have endeavored with
14 some of this work at the core of our activities. A
15 significant undertaking has been the creation of
16 individual DEI plans, which the institution spent,
17 which each institution spent months crafting with the
18 input of their entire staffs, communities and boards.
19 Each institution in every borough created a unique
20 and specific six-year plan. The plans include steps
21 to make spaces more accessible, create more inclusive
22 marketing plans, diversify and grow our audiences and
23 create more inclusive and welcoming spaces. The plan
24 is focused not only recruiting and hiring diverse
25 employees, but also on developing them and building a

1
2 diverse pipeline for management leadership and board
3 walls. Each organizations implement measures to
4 ensure the efforts are sustained and experience
5 informed subsequent work. These plans will help our
6 audiences better reflect the diverse and vibrant
7 demographics of the city and help ensure that the
8 work we do is responsive, timely and vital. The
9 creation of these plans require critical staff work
10 and many hours of research, collaboration and work
11 from each institution. BAM's own plan was developed
12 over six months and included the input of over 250
13 staff members. The level of staff commitment and
14 engagement was unprecedented in our institution and
15 resources put towards the project were drawn from our
16 operating budget and from the funds set aside
17 specifically for this work. [coughs] Excuse me. I
18 also engaged a consultant who assisted in the
19 creation of the plan. The Wildlife Conservation
20 Society relied on internal and external experts to
21 guide the plan's development—to guide their plan's
22 development and ensure best practices. The plan
23 addresses goals pertaining to employees, the nearly
24 four million annual visitors to parks, and over two
25 million participants in extensive education programs.

1 While the focus of this first phase is on New York
2 City facilities, the dialogue that we'll expand to
3 include overseas locations in the coming year. AT WCS
4 this plan is the culmination of a year-of a year long
5 effort involving the cost function of the working
6 group of 25 employees, more than 500 employees
7 providing input by focus groups at a survey and an
8 executive sponsor group. The plans focus not only on
9 the employee experience, but also on the experiences
10 of visitors and education program participants
11 regardless of ability or income. So, as you just
12 heard, the creation of the se plants is an extensive
13 costly undertaking. Supplemental funding is
14 necessary to ensure the plans moved forward. In fact,
15 some support has already been provided with great
16 results. The Department of Cultural Affairs hired a
17 consultant for our colleagues in Queens and Staten
18 island to assist with the development of their plans.
19 The consultant was critical for the Staten Island
20 organizations to have the capacity and expertise to
21 draft plans. Without the support of DCA, the cost of
22 the consultant would have been prohibitive. In fact,
23 the Staten Island based cultural-the Staten Island
24 base organizations are very helpful. They will
25

1 receive supplemental funding to continue their work
2 with a consultant to help them advance and execute
3 their year long goals. It bears underscoring that for
4 those organizations without H.R. or legal staff and
5 with the departments of one in many cases, it's
6 extremely challenging to do this important work.
7 We're grateful that the city is providing funds for
8 resources to actualize these plans. In conclusion
9 the CIGs worked collaboratively to hire a consultant
10 who helped each organization deal thoughtfully with
11 the issues that were more relevant and important to
12 them. This is made possible through a grant from DCA
13 and the Queens groups were very grateful for the
14 support. In Queens all of the CIGs are enthusiastic
15 about the goals and aspirations underlying the DEI
16 initiative. It is evident that the diversity of the
17 borough itself is uniquely sourced that the Queens
18 CIGs can refer back to as they move into the
19 implementation phase. Their greatest concern now in
20 identifying the resources required to achieve the
21 objective in their plans, and for some CIG
22 institutions, they're showing the addition of staff
23 members. One of the leading strategic priorities
24 that has resulted from New York City Ballet is DEI
25

1 work is to create the new staff position of Senior
2 Director of the Human Resources for Diversity and
3 inclusion. This individual will provide
4 comprehensive oversight, planning and management of
5 the human resources functions of the New York City
6 Ballet while pursuing the company's commitment to
7 attract, retain, advance and support a broadly
8 diverse workforce that thrives in a safe and
9 inclusive environment. This individual will also
10 provide ongoing leadership for day-for day-to-day and
11 long term implementation of the objectives outlined
12 in their DEI Plan. The addition of a staff member
13 with this level of expertise and competency is a
14 clear sign of serious investment-of the serious
15 investment that the ballet is making in their DEI
16 work. So, as you can see, this work is central to
17 the CIG organizations moving forward, but requires
18 significant resources to achieve the best outcomes.
19 Supplemental funding from the DCA to help defray the
20 cost of consultants and in some cases new staff
21 members is crucial. Looking further ahead, funding
22 for surveys of New York City residents that will help
23 identify barriers to the arts-to arts and culture
24 participation will be needed. This information will
25

1
2 be very information in how HCIG delivers on this
3 important DEI work. Yet the cost for any one
4 institution to collect this information is
5 prohibitive. So, in closing, on behalf of all my CIG
6 colleagues, many of whom are here today, I'd like to
7 say it's been truly a privilege to do this important
8 work. As Chair of the CIG and DEIA Subcommittee, I'm
9 very grateful to have had the opportunity to—sorry,
10 to center the work of my colleagues around this vital
11 issue and have noted it in a legal, significant and
12 concrete way. These plans will help guide our
13 journeys to becoming more accessible and vital
14 institutions and to better reflect the makeup of this
15 amazing cit. I look for the best support from the
16 Department of Cultural Affairs. I'm confident the
17 next phase of our work will be very successful. Thank
18 you for your time.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you,
20 Keith. We'll go down the line and hear from our
21 four, and if there are any questions for the panel
22 we'll do it then. Stephanie, do you want to go next?

23 STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: Good afternoon.
24 I'm Stephanie Wilchfort, President and CEO of
25 Brooklyn Children's Museum, a community museum in

1
2 Crown Heights, Brooklyn and the world's first
3 children's museum. We serve 300,000 children and
4 caregivers annually most of whom hail from our great
5 borough. I'm pleased to be here today to talk about
6 BCM's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan, which the
7 museum's Board of Trustees approved last spring to
8 guide our institution's efforts over the next six
9 years. BCM's Board made-formed the DEI committee
10 specifically to do this work, and incorporated
11 feedback from the museum staff and community and
12 considering our goals in four areas: the Board of
13 Trustee's staff, vendors and procurement and
14 audience. I want to especially thank DCLA and SMU
15 Data Arts for helping us to establish baseline info
16 in many of these areas, and for reviewing our plan
17 and helping us create a really strong effort in this
18 area. Our objective was to create a plan that would
19 ensure meaningful representation of the Central
20 Brooklyn communities that we serve in BCM's programs
21 and exhibits recognizing that over 70% of our
22 audience identifies as non-white. That more than
23 half live in Central Brooklyn and that many of the
24 children we serve have sensory, cognitive or physical
25 differences. To that end BCM's plan starts with the

1 following statement: In service to our mission to
2 provide cultural experiences for all children and
3 families. Brooklyn Children's Museum seeks to build
4 an organization that reflects and honors the
5 diversity of our communities, and creates a sense of
6 belonging for employees and visitors. BCM endeavors
7 to offer all children particularly children of
8 Central Brooklyn a fair opportunity to engage in the
9 richness of the a museum experience and strives to
10 create a space where families of different
11 backgrounds see themselves reflected in BCM's
12 contents. I'm pleased to report that since BCM's DEI
13 plan went into effect last spring, the museum has
14 made strides towards meeting some of our goals
15 Today, 70% of our employees and four of our seven
16 senior management team members identify as people of
17 color. Four of our seven senior managers are mothers
18 with children six years old or younger, a
19 particularly critical group to be represented among
20 our ranks, and one which we have actively sought to
21 recruit by ensuring that BCM offers 12 full weeks of
22 paid parental leave. Ten percent of our staff
23 members identify as LGBTQ and have changes our
24 employee handbooks to use gender and non-binary
25

1 language throughout. We have also added six gender
2 neutral bathrooms, two for staff and two for
3 visitors—and four for visitors. All of our gender
4 neutral bathrooms for visitors also have changing
5 tables. Over the past year our board has added nine
6 new trustees, two of whom identify as LGBTQ parents
7 and six of whom identify as non-whites. Currently.
8 46% of our 35 member board identifies as other than
9 white. Ten percent is LGBTQ and one quarter live in
10 Brooklyn. These statistics show progress, but we
11 know that this work is never done. Even when we make
12 progress, it must be maintained, and we also know
13 that one of the greatest gains we can make for its
14 equity and inclusion in Central Brooklyn is ensuring
15 fair pay, increasing salaries and creating wealth for
16 our employees and community vendors. This takes
17 resources not just for trainings and profession
18 development or DEI committees, but to grow our
19 operations in ways that build capital for our
20 communities. We're incredibly grateful that the New
21 York City Council and the New York City Department of
22 Cultural Affairs has supported Brooklyn Children's
23 Museum, and arts and culture in this city in so many
24 ways. We hope that the city will continue to support
25

1
2 our DEI work by helping us to ensure that our staff
3 is paid a living wage that honors their hard work, by
4 making sure employees have access to affordable
5 healthcare including dental and vision and by helping
6 ensure that our staffs are supported in their well
7 being through paid time off and parental leave.

8 [bell] Thank you so much for hearing us out and for

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so
10 much.

11 STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: --hearing more
12 about the DEI Plan.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Next.

14 LISA GOLD: Thank you. Hello. My name
15 is Lisa Gold. Thank you for letting me speak today.
16 I am the Executive Director, Asian-American Arts
17 Alliance, which I'm going to call A-4 for time's
18 sake. We are a 36-year-old service organization
19 representing a diverse coalition of artists, arts
20 organizations, and art supporters who believe that
21 working together as Pan ethnic multi-disciplinary
22 community is essential to nurturing the development
23 of artists and arts organizations. So, we are
24 dedicated to ensuring greater representation, equity
25 and opportunities for Asian-American artists and arts

1 organizations as well as providing a critical voice
2 for our community. I'd like to take this moment
3 first to thank the City Council for increasing the
4 Department of Cultural Affairs' budget, and for
5 addressing the issue of diversity in the city's
6 cultural organizations. My concern is that
7 organizations that are led by and are serving people
8 of color receive an equitable share of this funding.
9 I understand that the increase should offer support
10 to the Create New York Cultural Plan, but I want to
11 know how that support is going to be manifest, how is
12 it going to be implemented and how is it going to be
13 ensured that it affects our communities
14 proportionately . The Create NYC Cultural Plan is a
15 great, great step. I laud you tremendously for your
16 efforts toward equity, but our constituents need to
17 understand the details of how and what will be put in
18 place to serve our communities. We are asking for
19 trans-transparency and accountability in the
20 disbursement of those funds. At A-4 every single day
21 we work ensure that our community of artists and art
22 administrators have the opportunity to fully
23 participate in the city's cultural ecosystem, and it
24 was disheartening to read the SMU Data Arts report
25

1 that cited only 6% of cultural workers identify as
2 Asian-Americans while almost 15% of city residents
3 identify as Asian-American. Conversely, 66% of
4 cultural workers identify as white non-Hispanic
5 making up only 32% of this population, which you
6 know. But it's also disheartening to see that
7 programmatic funding is disproportionately under-
8 allocated to Asian-American led and Asian-American
9 serving organizations, cultural organizations, and
10 the DCLA FY18 Budget, which is the data that I had
11 available, 937 grantees received over \$41 million.
12 Yet, only 45 of those 937 were Asian-American
13 organizations, a total of 4.8%, and the total amount
14 of funding for those organizations is just over \$1.2
15 million. It's approximately 3% of the DCLA
16 programmatic budget. So, in recognition of those
17 issues and statistics, I am making the following
18 suggestions. I have many more, but for time's sake.
19 I would like to ask that the Department of Cultural
20 Affairs and City Council offer unrestricted [bell]
21 general operating support to organizations because
22 give us the agency to decide how we want to spend the
23 money. If we want to spend it on staff positions,
24 let us decide. Don't cap it at a certain percentage.
25

1
2 Support funding for paid internships, fellowships and
3 staff positions at POC led organizations. I
4 understand that Cultural Corps is huge but it doesn't
5 go far enough, and finally, provide more transparency
6 and funding to POC led and POC serving organizations.
7 There was great information about--in the plan about
8 the SIAP (sic) neighborhoods, but there's no
9 documentation to show how that funding is being
10 allocated. So, in closing I just want to thank you
11 for your recognition of the important role that arts
12 and communities of color play in our cultural
13 ecosystem and I urge you to take steps to ensure that
14 there's equitable funding for all New Yorkers. Thank
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

17 ROSSLYN BARBER: Hi. I'm Rossllyn Barber
18 from the Public Theater. Since--since the Public's
19 founding of over six years ago, equity, diversity and
20 inclusion has been at the cornerstone of our mission.
21 Under the leadership of Joe Pack and through the work
22 of subsequent leaders, the public has been widely
23 recognized for our commitment to a respectful,
24 welcoming and safe spaces in which differences are
25 celebrated both on and off stage. Through our mobile

1 unit, which is traveling—a traveling theater
2 production that tours all five boroughs, and our
3 borough distribution sites for free Shakespeare in
4 the Park, we reach New Yorkers in every corner of the
5 city from diverse racial, ethnic and socio-economic
6 backgrounds, and also. I just want to take this as an
7 opportunity to thank the City Council and DCLA for
8 the studies that they've produced. They've been
9 enormously helpful in us adjusting the way that we go
10 out to communities outside of the four walls of the
11 public theater, and also in engaging our board and
12 staff in the urgency that is needed in addressing
13 these issues. To continue building on—upon this rich
14 history of ambitious and successful work that reflect
15 the values and mission of the institution in the city
16 we serve, the public developed a new equity,
17 diversity and inclusion plan in 2019, which outlines
18 that goals we intend to achieve by 2023. The plan
19 created in collaboration with board members, staff,
20 and outside experts outlines the following seven
21 goals: (1) Publish EDI statistics in the annual
22 report for the directors and playwrights of downtown
23 season and Free Shakespeare in the Park performances
24 to demonstrate the public's commitment to
25

1 consistently presenting work that reflects our goal
2 as creating work that is of, by and for the people of
3 New York City. (2) Review and improve human resource
4 processes to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion
5 values and goals are prioritized and supported. (3)
6 achieve the goal of ensuring that full-time staff is
7 no more than 50% white or 50% cisgender male and
8 ensure diversity is present at all levels of the
9 institution. (4) Achieve goal to create a board that
10 is at least 35% people of color, and no more than 50%
11 cisgender male. (5) Establish and begin to implement
12 a plan for creating an inclusive organization for
13 audiences, artists and staff with disabilities
14 inclusive of all types of disability and not limited
15 to physical disability. (6) Establish and begin to
16 implement a holistic organizational language plan
17 inclusive of languages other than English. (7)
18 Establish clear goals and ethical parameters for all
19 learning activities, i.e. internships and fellowships
20 as well as community centered activity, i.e.
21 community facing programs, partnerships and more that
22 are aligned with the large public theater mission and
23 are reciprocal in nature. The public intends to
24 achieve these goals by 2023 in order to better
25

1
2 reflect the values and mission of our institution and
3 the city we serve. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
5 much. I have one question for the panel. All of you
6 can take it or one of you can take it on behalf of
7 the panel, but do you have any reaction to the
8 potential penalty and diminution in funding as a
9 result of the process that the DCLA is entertaining.

10 KEITH STUBBLEFIELD: Sure. Speaking on
11 behalf of BAM certainly and I—and I hope all of my
12 colleagues. Tom used the phrase: Real and
13 substantial commitment to the plan. So, that's what
14 they're trying to see and I'm sure that all 33 of us
15 will—will demonstrate that. We all delivered our
16 plans on time, and that involved actually having them
17 approved by our boards. So, everybody is—is very
18 supportive of this. I don't know expect there should
19 be a penalty ever assessed against any of us, but Tom
20 was correct in that he—he has been telling us about
21 this for quite a while now. so, it's not going to be
22 a surprise, and I know we're—we're all going to make
23 good faith efforts. Every organization is very
24 different. So, you know, it's hard to say that, you
25 know, you're going to assess measurements that are

1 going to be static across all 33. So, I think it's
2 still going to be a learning process for DCA and for
3 each—for all the CIGs together, but we're all very
4 aware, but we're all taking this work very, very
5 seriously as hopefully sending it to you for today.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Anyone else want
8 to weigh in on that or...?

9 STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: Yes. I am never in
10 favor or releasing any cultural funding. So, and—and
11 to the point made earlier that it could adversely
12 impact communities of color by reducing those
13 positions. I don't necessarily believe that it's the
14 best strategy. So, I'm not in favor.

15 ROSSLYN BARBER: This isn't exactly in
16 answer to your question, but I will say that the—
17 external to pressure that's been inserted or just
18 having an outside influence saying hey this is
19 important to us and there are real ways that we're
20 asking you to be accountable to it has been really
21 helpful in promoting this work with our board and
22 with our staff so that, you know, fortunately for us
23 our board and staff are already very much interested
24 in this work, but having an additional way to sort of
25 leverage that conversation has been useful, and I

1 think that the Cultural Plan and the requirement to
2 produce these plans has really helped to achieve
3 this.

4
5 STEPHANIE WILCHFORT: I'll just say one
6 more thing, which is that this really shouldn't be
7 about money. This really--this conversation is really
8 about serving our city, and I think all of us in the
9 CIG feel very strongly that these plans are--we're not
10 putting these plans together to, you know, increase
11 our allocations. We're putting these plans together
12 because we know that they will help us serve our
13 communities better.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I appreciate all
15 of you coming here today, and testifying. I
16 appreciate all of the work that you do on behalf of
17 New Yorkers. Thank you very much. Our second and
18 final panel Jeffrey Amora from Fair Wage on Stage as
19 well as Robert Stanton from Fair Wage on Stage,
20 Valerie Paley from the New York Historical Society,
21 and Amy Andrew from MoCADA [pause] Fair Wage, are you
22 doing two testimonies or one?

23 MALE SPEAKER: Two.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Two. Okay. Why
25 don't you join together so yes. [pause] To the--to my

1 left and your right. How about that? [background
2 comments] Yes, you are first.

3
4 VALERIE PALEY: [off mic/inaudible] My
5 name is Valerie Paley. I am Senior Vice President of
6 the New York Historical Society and I serve as the
7 President, but I also serve as the [off
8 mic/inaudible] [on mic] By utilizing our rich and
9 extensive collections of over 14 million objects, New
10 York Historical aims to be an active, accessible
11 community resource for all of the city, but in
12 particular to server as a destination in a broader
13 sense for audiences typically under-served by
14 cultural institutions. Past exhibitions have
15 included art as act-activism, which showcased protest
16 art from the 1930s to the 1970s in particular that of
17 the Black Panther Movement, Mava York, which told the
18 history of the Latino presence in New York from the
19 1600s through World War II; Chinese-American
20 exclusion/inclusion, which explored the century's
21 long history of the Chinese immigrant experience;
22 Stonewall 50 at the New York Historical Society, a
23 suite of three installations currently on view,
24 provides a window into the resistance and night life
25 it shaped LGBTQ history. I'm privileged today to

1
2 represent my institution in speaking of our proactive
3 commitment to diversity. On a personal level I feel
4 that most seriously as the daughter of a Filipina
5 immigrant, a scholar who might have felt intimidated
6 to darken the door of New York Historical had it even
7 crossed their mind to do so in 1956 when she first
8 arrived in New York City. It is imperative that our
9 exhibitions, collections, and programming reflect the
10 rich cultural fabric of our city and nation, but to
11 do that through tutorial and programmatic work our
12 aim is to ensure that our museum professionals hail
13 from a wide range of backgrounds. In addition to
14 prioritizing women and minority leaders, our
15 Frederick Douglas Council and Women's History Council
16 and our affinity-affinity groups from our deeper
17 discussion and engagement by encouraging support for
18 rich programming in this area. But our work also
19 extends beyond the walls of our museum as we
20 passionately imagine what future cadres of museum
21 professionals could look like. This September, we
22 inaugurated our partnership with the City University
23 of New York's School of Professional Studies to offer
24 a Master of Arts in Museum Studies Degree, a unique
25 collaboration, and a program, which I helped create

1 and implement. Its larger goal is to diversify the
2 city's museum's workforce and address the needs of
3 our increasingly diverse museum going public. The
4 most successful rollout of the Chaney SPS and a
5 program in the history of the school. Our program
6 addresses the pervasive lack of accessibility and
7 inclusion in American Museum leadership and tutorial
8 staff working towards generating equitable and
9 sustainable cultural workforce of tomorrow. The
10 program is specifically structured to attract and
11 retain students from non-traditional academic
12 backgrounds including working adults and students
13 with family obligations. Although primarily online,
14 the hands-on practical component on site at New York
15 Historical will provide a unique behind the scenes
16 view of museum's [bell] operations. We've launched
17 the program offering scholarship funds and have
18 secured new commitments from Agnes Sintang (sp?) and
19 Harold Newman that will allow us to bring the number
20 of scholarship students to 21 with 86% of them from
21 non-white backgrounds.
22

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: If I can
24 interject, I know you've been going around and—and
25

1 being expeditious with your testimony because I'm
2 following it.

3
4 VALERIE PALEY: Good.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: But if you can
6 find a way to wrap it up--

7 VALERIE PALEY: Absolutely.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --and make your
9 final point.

10 VALERIE PALEY: Okay, 58 students have
11 registered to date for this inaugural semester with
12 at least as many new applicants anticipated for the
13 program's second cohort in January. Although not all
14 admitted applicants identified their race, 39%
15 identified as coming from non-white backgrounds.
16 This program will form a vital part of our
17 institutional work towards centering diversity,
18 equity and inclusion across axis of race, gender,
19 sexuality and class in all aspects of our operations.
20 Thank you for this opportunity.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

22 AMY ANDREW: Thank you. Hello. My name
23 is Amy Andrew and I'm here to represent MoCADA.
24 MoCADA was born from our founder Laurie Cumbo's
25 graduate thesis on the feasibility of whether an

1 African museum could contribute to the revitalization
2 of Brooklyn. Inspired by the DuSable Museum in
3 Chicago the oldest museum dedicated to African-
4 American history in the U.S. Ms, Cumbo launched
5 MoCADA in 1999 in a brownstone in BedStuy. Twenty
6 years later MoCADA's mission has grown through three
7 programmatic arms: exhibitions, education and
8 community thanks to support from DCA and others to
9 use the visual arts as a point of exploration to the
10 experience of African Diaspora most especially for
11 those who have been systematically left out. Through
12 new artistic productions across a variety of
13 discipline—a variety of disciplines we create unique
14 experiences that expand beyond the traditional
15 definitions of the term museum to incite dialogue on
16 pressing social and political issues facing the
17 African Diaspora, and other marginalized communities.
18 As a result, we have a longstanding history as an
19 incubator for emerging artists of African descent
20 including Juan Jeshamutu (sp?) or Jamel Shabaz (sp?)
21 Ava DuVernay, Joyce Scott and many others. I joined
22 this rich legacy of MoCADA one year ago as a
23 consultant hoping to lend my corporate media and
24 international cultural expertise to an organization
25

1 that was and is read to realize the next level of its
2 growth. What I found in the last 12 months at MoCADA
3 and other arts institutions mainly black arts
4 institutions and those representing other
5 marginalized communities is that while creative
6 enterprise is not lacking, funding for artists'
7 general operations whether to maintain current Infra-
8 -infrastructure or to scale it, retaining staff
9 and/or healthcare and the rigmarole of maintaining
10 compliance to receive actual funding dollars to stay
11 open when reserve cash is not always readily
12 available, tend to be among the ongoing concerns when
13 considering longevity. Some fun facts: Research has
14 examined more than 40,000 art works in the collection
15 with 18 museums across the U.S. including the
16 Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. They
17 estimate that 85% of artists represented in these
18 collections are white and 80% men—87% men. Excuse me.
19 For example, the National Art Gallery there are 986—
20 986 works by black artists and of that—I'm sorry.
21 There are 986 works for art crated by black artists
22 of the 153,621 total works in the museum. Meanwhile,
23 the Met has hosted eight exhibitions focused on
24 African-American artists in the past 10 years of the
25

1 about 40 exhibitions they produce every year. Since
2 2008 just 2.37% of all acquisitions and gifts—and
3 gifts and 7.6% of all exhibitions at 30 prominent
4 American museums have been of work by African-
5 American artists. According to a joint investigation
6 by in other works in Art News, and yet over the past
7 decade purchases [bell] and gifts to work by—made by
8 African-American artists accounted for a mere 2.4% of
9 all acquisitions. Can I continue or wrap it up?
10 Should I just stop there?

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah, I would—I
13 would. It's important obviously what you're saying,
14 but if you could find a way to.

15 AMY ANDREW: Sure. I'll just say two
16 more pointes. Today museums are scrambling to meet
17 this gap in representation—to meet this
18 representation and to celebrate contemporary artists
19 who have traditionally been overlooked in the art
20 world including women and artists or color. However,
21 these public financial figures, which are great for
22 the greater art space in general and should be
23 celebrated are rarely in the black art space. We
24 black arts institutions like MoCADA never see the
25 likes of these budgets to work on the specific

1
2 practice of inclusion through its focus. Though our
3 focus is central—this focus is central to our mission
4 and has been since our inception. As an example,
5 Weeksville Heritage Cultural site, a Brooklyn
6 landmark almost closed its doors earlier this year if
7 not for funding. I'm just going to hurry up. So my
8 last paragraph. All this to say that while change is
9 coming at the major mainstream level and while we are
10 thankful for the support thus far, the work is not
11 complete. More work needs to be done. We cannot
12 forge the institutions who have worked diligently to
13 bring about this change through their exhibitions and
14 programming. Institutions who are understanding of
15 these communities because they are of and from these
16 communities. Make us your partner in training larger
17 institutions who are yet to have a handle on
18 inclusion and diversity. We can no longer ignore the
19 impact of culturally focused institutions for sake of
20 focusing more on gallery size. If there is any
21 suggestion that I might offer to the city and other
22 arts funding institutions and gate keepers who
23 oversee these decisions is to remember us an other
24 institutions that represent marginalized communities

1 when it comes to grant making time. As the legacies
2 we leave behind remain in limbo otherwise.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

5 [off mic] How do we increase--? Is this
6 on?

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yep, there you
8 are. There we go.

9 JEFFREY AMORA: How do we increase
10 diversity in cultural institutions? Pay artists
11 more. I'm Jeffery Amora from the Labor activist group
12 Fair Wage on Stage. We have some supporters. Can
13 you raise your hand. We're also members of Actors
14 Equity, the union that represents 20,000 New York
15 City stage managers and actors. More than anywhere
16 in New York's cultural scene, off Broadway shines a
17 light on diverse communities. If you—if you're
18 watching a play, you're most likely to see someone
19 who looks like me off Broadway where theaters
20 experiment, take risks, hire artists from diver
21 backgrounds who aren't household names and tell
22 stories that reflect the rich demographic tapestry of
23 our city. Companies like MYEE (sic) Nationals
24 American Asian American Theater Company, INTAR,
25 National Black Theater and Classical Theater of

1
2 Harlem focus specifically on telling stories about
3 communities of color. In recent years, more than half
4 of the actors working in at larger off Broadway
5 institutions like Playwrights Horizons, New York
6 Theater Workshop, Atlantic Theater Company and
7 Signature Theater were people of color. Off Broadway
8 fuels one of the largest economic engines in the
9 city, Broadway. The last five shows to win the Tony
10 Award for best musical including Hadestown and
11 Hamilton began in off Broadway non-profit theaters
12 and these hits helped—helped Broadway sell a record
13 breaking \$1.8 billion in tickets last year alone
14 generating over \$12 billion for the local economy,
15 but that wealth is not reflected in off Broadway
16 wages. So, ironically, as our theaters become more
17 inclusive in the stories they tell and the artists to
18 tell those stories those from under-privileged
19 communities are shut out. Low wages and high cost of
20 living hit early career artists from working class
21 backgrounds predominantly those from communities of
22 color the hardest, and they drive acclaimed actors of
23 every background into debt, bankruptcy and into
24 leaving the city and the profession altogether. As
25 with unpaid internships, on those with access to

1 wealth can afford to take these low-paying jobs. We
2 need the city's help. We propose the Fair Wage on
3 Stage Fund, and I'd like to introduce Robert Stanton
4 my fellow actor and activist who can tell you more
5 about it.
6

7 ROBERT STANTON: Hi. The Fair Wage on
8 Stage Fund would be an allocation of money within the
9 DCLA budget to make up the difference between the
10 union negotiated minimum salaries non-profit theaters
11 can afford to pay, and what we actually need to
12 survive. In a 2016 union survey all property stage
13 managers and actors reported needing \$815 a week net
14 just to make ends meet. That's \$1,129 before taxes,
15 but only one off Broadway space pays that much and
16 many pay much, much less and Trump's tax law prevents
17 us from claiming expenses that surpass the standard
18 deduction as much as quadrupling our tax burdens.
19 Non-profit theaters within the five boroughs would be
20 eligible for the fund when they hire contracted
21 equity stage managers and actors at union negotiated
22 minimum salaries that fall below the necessary weekly
23 gross salary of \$1,129 per week. Theaters would be
24 responsible for paying established minimums and
25 benefits and could only use the fund to pay the

1 difference between what artists get and what we need.
2 Last season the roughly 1,500 equity contracts at
3 non-Broadway non-profits paid an average of \$646 per
4 week gross. The standard non-profit employment is
5 nine weeks. The Fair Wage on Stage Fund would
6 subsidize workers on average with \$483 per week or
7 \$4,347 per contract. We calculate the fund would
8 disperse just around \$6.5 million annually. That's
9 less than one 100th of a percent of New York City's
10 \$90 billion plus budget, and we've had the privilege
11 to brief you, Chairman Van Bramer, Council Member
12 Espinal and staff members from Council Members Cumbo
13 and Koslowitz's offices in more detail. We're eager
14 to speak with members Moya and Borelli, and we look
15 forward to working with you to craft this proposal
16 into a budget allocation and/or piece of legislation.
17 This fund will signal that no matter what little
18 means we come from, we all deserve a chance to
19 participate in art. We're not about sticks. We're
20 all about carrots. How do we increase diversity in
21 cultural institutions in this city? We pay artists
22 more. Thank you. [applause]

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. we
25 almost got in trouble. We're not allowed to clap.

1 We—we do this, but we got away with it anyway. So,
2 um, so you estimate the total to be \$6.5 million or
3 so?
4

5 JEFFREY AMORA: Yes. Jelly beans in a
6 jar, but yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah, I mean it
8 is, it is a drop in the bucket relative to the 90
9 some odd billion dollar budget that we have, but, um,
10 we also fight incredibly hard over \$6.5 million in
11 this city--

12 JEFFREY AMORA: Of course.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --and where it
14 goes. So, I met with—with your group, and Incredibly
15 sympathetic as someone who loves Broadway and off
16 Broadway, and really appreciate all artists and
17 actors in particular, particularly actors who are
18 acting on smaller stages, right, where it is not the
19 Moulin Rouge production situation that my husband and
20 I just saw, and we loved, but, um, [laughter] but,
21 you know, the—the real—real theater that—that you
22 guys, not the custom, it's great theater, but and I
23 love musical theater, but—but, you know, there's a
24 real heart and a soul to off Broadway, right, and
25 like the productions that you're talking about and

1 the work that you're doing. So, just really-really
2 important stuff. So, we have some work to do--

3
4 JEFFREY AMORA: Uh-hm.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --right, to get
6 the political, um, will to do that what you suggest,
7 but I-I think we just need to continue the work of
8 obviously. It takes a long time sometimes to get
9 things done in-in this city, but it is a very, very
10 noble cause. Do you want to say something Jeff?

11 JEFFREY AMORA: Just wanted to thank you
12 for-for saying that, and thank you for your time.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Absolutely.

14 JEFFREY AMORA: We really appreciate it.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you both
16 as well. I want to thank everyone for being here
17 today. It was an important discussion as
18 Commissioner Finklepearl called it, but we also need
19 more action behind the talking that we're doing about
20 these issues. So, with that, thank you all very,
21 very much.

22 JEFFREY AMORA: Thank you, sir.

23 [background comments] [gavel]

24

25

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 September 21, 2019