

**Report of the Working Group on Inclusive Practices  
for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture**

*Submitted to the OI Council and Board, April 30, 2020*

*Recommended by the OI Council at its annual meeting, May 2, 2020*

*Accepted by the OI Executive Board at its annual meeting, May 2, 2020*

The Working Group on Inclusive Practices for the OI has been meeting during AY 2019/2020 to develop a set of best practices and suggestions for presentation to the OI Council and Board in May 2020.

Working both as a whole body and in subcommittees, we have developed suggestions for best practices and OI policies in three areas: Events and Conferences, Fellowships, and Publications. While we intend for these suggestions to be comprehensive, we do not see them as complete. We welcome the engagement of the Council in advance of a vote to adopt and circulate these in advance so as to prepare for a careful consideration of our suggestions.

**General Best Practices**

- Increasing awareness about inclusivity, especially in terms of colleagues/students of color, but generally.
- Encouraging talented undergraduates of color to pursue academic careers. Encouraging talented scholars of color especially, but younger colleagues generally, to publicize & publish their work in different venues.
- Encouraging support for history as a discipline in academia and in the wider world.
- Amplify our Best Practices by exchanging them with those institutions we partner with, and requesting information about their own Inclusive Practices.

Positive Incentives and Encouragement could include:

- Creating networks such as some of those on twitter but also more local and in-person networks. Three good examples include:
  - The Magnet Program at the CUNY Graduate Center  
<https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-to-Increase/245456>
  - The Mellon Scholars Summer Workshop <https://librarycompany.org/academic-programs/paah/fellowships/mellon-application/>
  - The #WomenAlsoKnowHistory network which is both a database as well as a social media hashtag. Could there be more such networks, and is the OI uniquely poised to “host” one on early American history?
- A partnership with history departments at HBCUs, HSIs or ISIs.

Committee on Adjudication

We suggest convening a board that includes at least one current member of the council and two former members, as well as one grad student, and possibly others to serve as a venue to listen to concerns about potential problems with access, inequity and academic integrity and to make recommendations for responsive action.

## **Events and Conferences**

Conferences and other public events are a primary means by which the OI develops and shares scholarship with other professional practitioners as well as the wider university community and the public. Therefore, they are probably the most public-facing activities of the Institute and offer an opportunity for the OI to put its values into practice.

We propose language for all conference registrations/programs/materials for OI events, as worked out October 2019:

The OI strives to make its annual meeting and other sponsored events a welcoming space for all participants and guests. We expect that everyone in attendance shares our values of free inquiry, respectful engagement, and professional behavior. Following the [American Historical Association's Code of Professional Conduct](#), we maintain a zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual, racist, or other harassment. The OI Director reserves the absolute right to take appropriate action, including but not limited to removal from OI conferences or other sponsored events. We recommend that this language be included in registration forms and that all attendees be required to tick a box affirming their acknowledgement of this policy, and that this language be included on all printed conference or event materials as well.

We suggest that an outreach program be put in place whereby the OI supports attendance at the annual meeting by underrepresented graduate students.

In addition, we recommend that particular attention be paid to physical access and accommodation. Recognizing that there are costs for some of these accommodations, we recommend that the OI Director earmark a portion of conference funding towards accommodation costs, and that moving forward in the future all conference planning take accessibility into account as a first step towards securing a conference site.

- Ensure that the registration form asks registrants what kind/s of accommodations they need.
- Ensure that the online registration form itself is accessible to people with different abilities.
- Ensure that all venues can accommodate people with mobility issues through the front door (i.e. not have people use a “back door” or even differentiated entrances.)

## **Publications**

The editorial staff of the Quarterly and of the Book series are in a unique position to encourage greater racial and gender diversity across the profession. Publication in our series conveys a

mark of recognition and seriousness that is unparalleled in our field and that is of tantamount importance in situating a scholar and her research in the profession.

- encouraging best practices in citing other historians' work as carefully as possible, particularly when that scholarship is by people of color and women, but also generally. This includes helping spread the word when colleagues' work is taken up by journalists.
- Protecting the vulnerable from exploitation, sexual and academic. This especially applies to younger colleagues.
- Creating venues for inclusive exchange across social media and traditional platforms to encourage the sharing of information across generations. There was some discussion of older colleagues feeling irrelevant. Creating partnerships for the exploration of neglected topics, possible mentoring across generations.
- Expanding the reach and breadth of scholarship through our podcasts and social media presence by amplifying the work of underrepresented scholars and researchers.

## **Fellowships**

We encourage the OI to prioritize race and gender equity in fellowship awards. We are aware that there are systemic challenges for scholars at institutions that will not “top-up” fellowship awards or who don't grant competitive leaves to take year-long residential fellowships. Similarly, scholars with obligations to care for family members also find it difficult to relocate to Williamsburg. We therefore encourage the OI to increase the numbers of short-term fellowships and to explore non-residential fellowships that include travel to the OI once or twice during the fellowship period for collaboration with other fellows, William and Mary's own students, and OI staff.

We also suggest considering summer support that includes travel to OI during the following semester, and/or attendance at Huntington and OI Conferences.

Respectfully submitted:

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