Good afternoon, everyone. I’m happy to be here to provide an update on some of the projects that the Equity & Inclusion Committee has been working on this year.

The Equity & Inclusion Committee, or EIC, is pleased to present the EIC Strategic Plan for 2020-2025. We have developed a strategic plan to guide the work of the committee that focuses on actionable areas that we hope to achieve over the next five years. The goals of this plan are to lay out partnerships within AIC, and then objectively examine the structural and systemic barriers to their implementation. The Strategic Plan also serves to outline broad areas of need, which will help to define and prioritize action items for the Committee. By and large, our efforts will focus on changing the AIC culture and building a strong foundation that will ensure that future diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, or DEIA, efforts are not only successful, but also sustainable.

The goals of the strategic plan fall into four main areas:

1. Foster an inclusive and welcoming organizational culture
2. Increase DEIA training and resources for AIC members
3. Improve sustainability of DEIA funding sources
4. Integrate DEIA into all AIC programs

To read the full plan, we have posted it in the AIC Member Community Forum, as well as the EIC Forum. There will be limited time for discussion today, so we welcome any questions or comments on the EIC Community Forum thread or by emailing us directly. We also plan to hold an Open House later in the summer during the annual meeting where we can discuss the specifics of the plan.

This strategic plan is an outcome of a 2-day in person strategic planning meeting that the committee held in December. On our first day we worked with a facilitator to learn more about various equity and inclusion topics, and on the second day we focused on putting that into practice through our strategic planning. This meeting was generously supported by the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation and AIC.

The committee has also prepared some guidelines for speakers and moderators for this year’s virtual meeting.

We have created accessibility guidelines for virtual events intended to make presentations and conference sessions more accessible to conference participants, with a focus towards those with disabilities. This also makes the presentations and sessions more inclusive of all members, including participants with different learning styles and non-native English speakers. We include tips such as using sufficient color contrast for visuals, using an easy to read font, and
incorporating alternative text of important images and charts for text-to-speech software. PowerPoint actually has a built-in accessibility checker that can identify issues for screen readers and other assistive technologies.

We had originally created guidelines for an in-person meeting and quickly put these virtual guidelines together. Not everything we list is possible through this webinar platform, but we still encourage speakers to check out the guidelines and make as many adjustments as possible. We welcome any feedback you have and would really like to hear from you if you use our guidelines, or if you have more tips for us to incorporate, for both virtual and in-person meetings.

You can find the guidelines on our newly launched Wiki page, the link is on the powerpoint slide.

We also created guidelines on writing your own land acknowledgment if you’re presenting. A land acknowledgement is a statement meant to respectfully recognize the original Indigenous people who inhabited and cared for a specific area before colonization or displacement. They are often given at the start of an event, as was done by Peggy at this year’s opening remarks yesterday. Normally we are all in one venue for Annual Meeting, but this year’s online format gives us the opportunity to join in recognizing the many different tribal lands from which we will be calling from. The committee encourages speakers to consider giving a personal land acknowledgement at the beginning of a session or before their presentation. It doesn’t need to be long, just a few sentences.

So, why include a land acknowledgement in your presentation? Well, as with any cultural preservation effort, we cannot forget the importance of people in our mission to preserve memory and heritage. Providing this statement is one gesture to demonstrate our recognition of this history and respect for the community where we are holding our activities. It is also important to recognize that the history of colonialism and displacement has benefitted many of the cultural institutions in which conservators work.

You can find more information about writing your own land acknowledgments on our Wiki page. The committee would like to acknowledge the work of former committee member Kimi Taira, and her AIC News article on land acknowledgements which we pulled from.

The Wiki page that I’ve mentioned is something we have also been working on in the last few months. We have put up some content right now, and we hope it will become an important resource for the conservation community. We currently have sections on foundational concepts around DEIA, compensation and hiring, accessibility, and land acknowledgements. This is where we plan to put more information on our current projects, as well as add more resources and information. If you have ideas for more topics or would like to contribute, please reach out to us!

So that’s what the Equity & Inclusion Committee has been up to this year, I’ll now hand it off to the Member Designation Working Group. Thank you.