



Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility

(IDEA)



Strategic Plan
2022–2024

idea.chq.org

Chautauqua's Shared Values

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Chautauqua is a shared community where people with a thirst for learning and an interest in ongoing self-development are drawn and thrive. Chautauqua's work and interactions with others, as an institution and a community, are inspired and guided by a common set of beliefs and commitments. Together, the Institution and its community value:

- Multigenerational and multidisciplinary engagement through the arts, education, religion, and recreation
- The dignity and contributions of all people
- Dialogue to achieve enhanced understanding that leads to positive action
- The serenity, tradition, safety and ecology of Chautauqua's historic grounds and surroundings
- A balance between Chautauqua's heritage and the need to innovate



Introduction

We are pleased to share this IDEA strategic plan with the larger Chautauqua community as a symbol of Chautauqua Institution's robust commitment to make this place and organization a fully inclusive, equitable and welcoming community. This plan is the culmination of many different listening sessions held with our stakeholders — Chautauqua community members, staff, patrons, volunteers, property owners, students, artists, Trustees, and many others. It represents those voices and underscores that its pages contain the collective aspirations of many who believe Chautauqua will only realize its mission when it becomes a true community of belonging.

Chautauqua Institution's mission is "Dedicated to the exploration of the best in human values and the enrichment of life ..." and our constituents are deeply committed to lifelong learning. One of Chautauqua's core shared values is "The dignity and contributions of all people." As a values-driven organization, Chautauqua sees this plan and its work ahead as firmly rooted in the mission of the Institution, and it directly correlates with the vision and objectives set forth in the organization's 2019–28 strategic plan, 150 Forward.

Chautauquans have repeatedly affirmed a pressing need for the Institution to welcome, serve and engage more diverse communities on its grounds and with its programs. We see this as a mutually beneficial proposition to provide a truly inclusive experience for diverse communities with the best that Chautauqua has to offer, while providing an opportunity for Chautauqua's existing community members to learn from and engage with voices and perspectives that are missing or under-represented in our current context. **To create this beloved community, we will need to move past conversations of "unconscious bias" and take on more proactive approaches toward "conscious inclusion."**

It is important to note that IDEA work is not new to Chautauqua. From a historical perspective, the Institution has evolved to welcome new and diverse communities to the grounds over its nearly 150 years. Chautauqua has made focused efforts to diversify its programs and has sought to intentionally represent the full tapestry of our world on our stages, in our classrooms, in our pulpits and now on our vast CHQ Assembly platform. In areas where we have made progress on welcoming diverse program participants, we will shift our attention toward providing a fully inclusive environment. This work in our programming precedes a recent and extremely intentional effort to diversify our Board of Trustees and our staffing ranks, with significant progress made on each while much work still remains.

This plan is aspirational, as we seek to create pathways for sustained and engaged dialogue and action. We are hopeful that the tools, ideas and skills that Chautauquans continue to develop and hone through our programs may further extend into the other communities and organizations with which they might be involved. We are reminded that Chautauqua was a place that grew into a movement. We invite all Chautauquans — current and new ones — to actively contribute to the success of these plans. In doing so, may we more fully realize Chautauqua's mission while helping to transform our world into a better place for all.



Michael E. Hill
President



Amit Taneja
Senior Vice President &
Chief Inclusion, Diversity, Equity
and Accessibility (IDEA) Officer

Background

Chautauqua Institution has established Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) as a key cross-cutting imperative in its current strategic plan, 150 Forward. This larger strategic plan was established after numerous consultations and listening sessions with patrons, staff, the Board of Trustees and the wider Chautauqua community. IDEA emerged as a key priority for many of the participants and serves as a cross-cutting imperative that feeds each of the four strategic goals outlined in 150 Forward. IDEA work is central to the mission, strategic objectives and long-term viability of Chautauqua Institution.

Engaging in IDEA work organizationally needs to be situated in a wider context of our society and the globe. The current polarized national and global climate has significantly impacted our collective ability to engage with the “other,” to have sustained and engaged dialogue across differences, and to address current or past harms. IDEA work, therefore, is fraught with challenges and often framed with a “Zero-Sum” narrative (McGhee, 2020), where one party must “lose” for another to “win.” Our greatest collective challenge will be to move past divisive rhetoric and polarized thinking, and to ask broader questions about how equity and inclusion, or lack thereof, impacts us all. Our success will be deeply rooted in our ability, whenever possible or appropriate, to call each other in versus simply calling them out — to learn, grow, re-examine and re-engage, especially when there are disagreements. We have an opportunity to chart a different path than mainstream discourse.

This strategic plan is a concrete commitment to lay new foundations, and enhance existing ones, to meet our vision for the future. This plan has five key objectives that Chautauqua plans to move forward simultaneously over the next two and a half years. This plan will take us through the 2024 Summer Assembly, and subsequently more advanced plans will be developed that build on the learnings and successes of this plan. This plan outlines the higher-level roadmap, and more concrete strategies to meet these goals will be developed as the plans are implemented.



Chautauqua's IDEA Vision, Outcomes & Objectives

Vision:

Chautauqua Institution aims to be a national leader and role model in the non-profit sector in creating a truly just, equitable and inclusive organization and community for all its constituents.

Outcomes:

1. Create a culture of inclusion, belonging and equity for all our constituents
2. Transform Chautauqua's program participant profile to reflect the robust tapestry of humanity
3. Allow Chautauqua's mission to flourish by creating a genuine invitation for all to participate and contribute

Objectives:

1. Enhance the organizational, staff and board culture to further embody IDEA work
2. Engage patrons and Chautauqua Institution community partners to enhance their ability to welcome diverse populations to the grounds and beyond
3. Build relationships, experimental pipelines and collaborations to welcome more diverse populations to our grounds and programs
4. Review current policies, programs and procedures to identify barriers to IDEA and create short- and long-term plans to address them
5. Enhance the Institution's year-round presence and expertise in convening authority via greater presence in the local/regional community and via collaborations with businesses, professional organizations and non-profits



Objective No. 1

Enhance the organizational, staff and board culture to further embody IDEA work

Focus Areas:

- Create ongoing short- and long-term trainings for the board, leadership positions, departments and staff (including seasonal and part-time employees)
- Enhance recruitment and retention pipelines for diverse employees at all levels of the organization (including seasonal and year-round positions)
- Build IDEA work into the reward and evaluation structures of the Institution so the IDEA work is everyone's responsibility, and not treated as an "add on"
- Work with the Board of Trustees, Chautauqua Foundation Board of Directors, Boundless Campaign Committee and the Executive Team to raise philanthropic support for IDEA-related projects

By 2024, we will:

- Engage the Board of Trustees, Chautauqua Foundation Board of Directors, and the Boundless Campaign Committee in IDEA-related training and strategy conversations
- In collaboration with HR,
 - Create uniform IDEA language and procedures for hiring processes
 - Institute IDEA best practices and training for all exempt staff hiring committees
 - Work with Chautauqua County community organizations to enhance diversity of applicants for seasonal work
 - Create mechanisms for IDEA-related onboarding for all new employees
 - Institute ongoing IDEA trainings for all full-time, year-round staff
 - Institute introductory IDEA training for all part-time and seasonal staff
 - Build IDEA work, along with other 150 Forward strategic goals, into annual performance reviews for all exempt staff
- Raise \$2.5 million in philanthropic support for IDEA-related projects



Objective No. 2

Engage patrons and Chautauqua Institution community partners to enhance their ability to welcome diverse populations to the grounds and beyond

Focus Areas:

- a. Create more year-round structured opportunities for engaged, deeper and courageous dialogues that transcend divisions and seek greater understanding of opposing or different viewpoints
- b. Create structured and unstructured opportunities for patrons to engage with their peers on IDEA issues
- c. Create educational opportunities for our patrons to understand and value how historically marginalized populations have historically experienced (and currently experience) the grounds
- d. Work with Chautauqua community partners and “friends of” groups to create a more welcoming environment for diverse populations, especially during the summer assembly

By 2024, we will:

- Create a post-lecture “Daily Dialogue Prompts” program to encourage peer-to-peer engaged dialogues among Chautauquans
- Enhance our support for community groups that facilitate engaged dialogues (e.g., “Chautauqua Dialogues” program)
- Make our institutional values more visible in public places and via our programs
- Create an “IDEA Ambassadors” program to train patrons on how to have engaged dialogues with their peers about the importance of IDEA and how we can all support these efforts
- Train and invite community leaders (e.g., denominational houses, community groups) to
 - have IDEA-related conversations in their spaces and programs
 - brainstorm ways to invite diverse populations to the grounds and to create inclusive experiences for these groups
 - welcome diverse participants in our arts programs, and our teachers, speakers, preachers and performers who grace our stages, spaces and galleries
- Design and deliver a “Diverse Communities at Chautauqua” series during 2022 Summer Assembly to highlight the history and presence of diverse communities on the grounds; Archive and make this series available via CHQ Assembly
- Create mechanisms to highlight ongoing IDEA efforts during the Summer Assembly (e.g., weekly IDEA column in *The Chautauquan Daily*, use of institutional social media accounts, etc.)

Objective No. 3

Build relationships, experimental pipelines and collaborations to welcome more diverse populations to our grounds and programs

Focus Areas:

- a. Build experimental partnerships with mission-aligned regional community organizations and professional organizations that serve diverse populations to engage with our grounds and programs
- b. Enhance support for our artists, students, interns and performers in the Performing and Visual Arts and other departments
- c. Enhance experience-based offerings, such as ethnic food options, gathering spaces, and “porch chats” that would be meaningful for both new and existing Chautauqua audiences
- d. Lay the foundation to be a national model for engaged dialogue, including creating a “Chautauqua Medal” for exemplary figures engaged in justice and equity work

By 2024, we will:

- Identify and reach out to regional community organizations and professional organizations that serve diverse communities and investigate possibilities to invite them to the grounds or participate in year-round and online activities
- Build multimedia marketing strategies aimed at recruiting diverse populations to the grounds and beyond “Why Chautauqua?”
- Review, revise and enhance orientation, policies and in-season experiences and offerings for our students, artists, interns and performers
- Enhance collaboration between the various arts programs, and enhance intentional and welcoming contact for these groups with our community partner groups
- Expand our food options to include more ethnic foods, including both Institution-owned businesses and other food vendors
- Work with community groups to increase physical gathering spaces and programmatic spaces engaged in IDEA discussions
- Engage in a Land Acknowledgement process with the leadership of the local indigenous communities, including ways in which we can create greater presence and access to our programs and grounds
- Establish a working group to assess feasibility of a “Chautauqua Medal” program including related endowment, administration and structure

Objective No. 4

Review current policies, programs and procedures to identify barriers to IDEA and create short- and long-term plans to address them

Focus Areas:

- Engage in a broad review of our existing policies, programs and procedures with an eye toward equity and inclusion and make changes as needed
- Enhance the physical, programmatic and technological accessibility of our grounds and programs
- Enhance options for reporting and responsiveness to instances of bias, exclusion or harassment
- Create mechanisms to establish metrics (e.g., patron demographics, analysis of patron experience, etc.) in coordination with technology upgrades

By 2024, we will:

- Engage in a comprehensive review of the employee handbook with an eye toward equity and inclusion
- Engage in an "Accessibility Audit" and create a comprehensive and prioritized accessibility plan to increase the physical, programmatic and technological access for patrons (including youth and adults with disabilities, neurodiverse patrons, etc.)
- Review and revise procedures to report and respond to instances of bias, harassment and discrimination for all our constituents; educate our constituents on how to report incidents; create ongoing educational opportunities based on themes, as needed
- Create educational opportunities for patrons, students, artists and staff to learn how to respond, intervene or engage in educational dialogue if they witness any acts of exclusion, bias or harassment
- Integrate opportunities to collect patron experience and demographics via our technology upgrades so that we can better understand baseline measures and record growth over time (e.g., diversification of patron base over time, NPS scores, etc.)



Objective No. 5

Enhance the Institution's year-round presence and expertise in IDEA convening authority via greater presence in the local/regional community, and via collaborations with businesses, professional organizations and non-profits

Focus Areas:

- Enhance offerings like the Mirror Project by partnering with non-profits and businesses, especially those with diverse "Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)"
- Build/enhance partnerships with the local and regional community groups engaged in IDEA efforts — both on- and off-grounds, during and outside of the Summer Assembly season
- Build coalitions and partnerships with professional organizations with the goal of providing mutually beneficial IDEA strategies and support (i.e., be a national leader by convening these conversations)

By 2024, we will:

- Create experimental and ongoing partnerships with five organizations to enhance engaged dialogue via their staff or ERGs
- Participate and be a key leader in the Chautauqua County IDEA Coalition, a recently formed collective of local organizations committed to IDEA work, to support IDEA efforts in our local community
- Create greater access for mission aligned organizations and Chautauqua County residents to participate in our programs and grounds during the Summer Assembly and year-round; use learnings in this area to establish and enhance partnership with similar regional organizations, including the Washington, D.C., area
- Work with the Institution's departments/companies to identify key professional organizations (e.g., arts, theater, youth programs) and create (or enhance) opportunities for Chautauqua to serve as a convenor of IDEA conversations within these organizations



Implementation & Next Steps



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This plan invites all members of our community to actively participate in its implementation and success. It is a broad roadmap for the Institution to achieve its IDEA-related vision and outcomes, and more specific work will need to be done in each of the focus areas to achieve outcomes described, or yet to be determined. This plan has the support of the Board of Trustees, executive leadership and staff of the Institution, and incorporates feedback and ideas from across our community. We invite all Chautauquans — current and future — to share and take ownership of this plan.

Amit Taneja, Senior Vice President and Chief IDEA Officer, will provide leadership and serve as a facilitator to bring groups of constituents together to ensure the success of this plan. We invite all to consider specific contributions each individual or organization might be willing to make to ensure the plan's success.

Reflection questions for those engaging with this plan

- Does the plan address our most pressing IDEA needs? Does it lay the foundation for more advanced IDEA work to happen in the future?
- What aspects of the plan specifically resonated with you?
- What contributions or commitments, if any, are you positioned to make?
- For those involved in community groups and organizations — are there specific strategies or focus areas within this plan that your organization can further explore or support?

To ensure ongoing communication, we will take the following steps:

- We will share this plan widely within the Chautauqua Institution community in Spring 2022 and host online community engagement sessions to discuss the plan shortly thereafter
- Additional in-person conversations will be held during the 2022 Summer Assembly
- We will engage our local and regional community partners and organizations to discuss feedback and avenues for collaboration
- We will develop a new IDEA-focused section on our website by May 1, 2022
- We commit to providing annual progress reports each February. These updates will include a specific section dedicated to accessibility improvements (including physical, technological and programmatic changes)

