

Dear members of Guelph Arts Council and the Guelph community,

The killing of George Floyd by a police officer has resulted in protests of systemic racism around the world. Guelph Arts Council (GAC) recognizes that systemic racism is not confined by geography. Canada is not an exception. Guelph is not an exception. Systemic racism is a global crisis and the current outcry is crucial to the development of a more inclusive and just world.

In this vital and long overdue spirit of self-improvement GAC has engaged in further discussions about anti-Black racism and the impacts it has on participation within the organization itself as well as representation in the arts.

GAC recognizes that we need to do more to actively cultivate the inclusion of Black People, Indigenous People, and People of Colour (BIPOC) on our Board of Directors, in other volunteer and staff roles, in our membership, programs, and communications in order to identify and remove barriers to participation that are unique to these groups. We understand that it is no longer enough to say inclusivity is an ideal we hold; we must act now to ensure we are inclusive in practice. Here are the steps we have planned at this early stage.

1. We are currently working on educating ourselves on matters of race, representation, diversity, and inclusion.
2. We will identify gaps in representation within our organization and issues of systemic racism through community consultation and research. We commit to finding ways to amplify diverse voices in all aspects of our governance and operations.
3. Within three months, we will create a committee of racially diverse individuals focused on Diversity & Inclusion within GAC. This committee will not be a place where BIPOC people carry the burden of education. To begin, this committee will focus on the following actions:
 - a. Update our Code of Conduct and amend our Strategic Plan to identify inclusion/representation strategies specific to the BIPOC community while developing a separate policy that addresses Diversity, Racism, and Inclusion.
 - b. Implement effective ongoing leadership training for the Board volunteers, staff, and committee volunteers to promote anti-racism, anti-oppression, and inclusion at every level of GAC.
 - c. Work to increase BIPOC participation and representation in our membership, Board, volunteers, and staff, in our programs and projects, and in the stories we tell about Guelph-Wellington's creative community.

GAC recognizes that this is only the beginning. Please email **Patti Broughton** at executivedirector@guelpharts.ca if you have any feedback or are interested in getting involved with GAC as a Board member, committee member, or volunteer. All feedback will be treated as anonymous by default. We especially welcome those who identify as BIPOC to be involved in our D&I Committee to ensure that we are accurately taking into account the lived experience and perspectives that are too often missing.

Guelph Arts Council is a registered charity that has supported the arts in Guelph-Wellington since 1975. GAC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, supported by volunteer Committees. Programs and services are delivered by the Executive Director and two part-time Co-Managers of Programs & Operations. GAC is grateful to its volunteers, community partners, members, donors, the City of Guelph, and the Ontario Arts Council for ongoing support.