

*St. Louis Public Radio all-staff communication, sent April 27, 2021*

Since the Time for Action memo from a group of staff was shared last summer, the leadership team, staff, and board have been taking new steps to improve our work culture, including our involvement in the “Public Media For All” coalition of stations. Part of that framework, and others, is a statement of accountability, to acknowledge the past and to accept responsibility to change and grow.

As leaders of this organization, we have a shared responsibility to recognize and take action when staff feel hurt and unheard. We recognize that our positions on the leadership team are ones of privilege and access, giving us more responsibility to address any actual or potential racist behavior. We apologize for our own shortcomings and failures to create a culture that is inclusive, supportive, and representative of the strengths and beauty of our communities. Unfortunately, our failures may have resulted in the departure of talented BIPOC individuals and low morale for current staff of all backgrounds.

There is no more important duty for us than fostering a culture where all staff are empowered to do their best work. We are committed to understanding and believe it starts with leadership. We will become a more diverse team, and recruitment efforts for managerial positions are focused on that goal. We are also addressing the culture of our own team to ensure that it is inclusive and that all voices are heard and valued.

As a team, we have not generally openly discussed conflicts, and that may be part of the problem that got us where we are today. In order to be a high performing organization, we must confront difficult situations head on. That is our role as leaders of departments and is necessary if we are to be accepted as leaders of the whole organization.

As a Leadership Team it is our responsibility for growing and maintaining an internal culture that is diverse, equitable and inclusive.

It is imperative we foster and sustain a culture where all employees feel safe speaking up to a supervisor, a member of the leadership team, the Friends board, and/or university officials whenever any instance of inappropriate behavior occurs. The leadership team will not participate in nor tolerate retaliation of any kind. When someone comes forward with a concern, we must take action and follow through until we reach an appropriate resolution.

Racism and prejudice are so deeply ingrained in American society that fighting against it takes ongoing examination, a willingness to label one’s own thoughts or behaviors as racist, and informed action to counteract those tendencies. We believe that it is the work of leadership and staff to learn about what it means to be anti-racist in order to manifest that ethos in our work culture, practices, and policies.

Following the staff DEI committee’s suggestion, we each have had discussions with our full departments about ways in which our internal and public-facing work could be more equitable and inclusive. Additionally, in March, each supervisor underwent 360 evaluations with contributions from peers and direct reports. During April and May we will be conducting

performance reviews of all supervisors, with a focus on accountability for treatment of staff. We have used our DEI consultant to review and generate metrics focused on this area for each area of review. We will also conduct a climate study, to allow all staff to anonymously report on how we are doing.

The leadership team and general manager are accountable to see that, going forward, the DEI work of the station is articulated in a clear and transparent way. We are tracking our progress on the Public Media For All action items, Time For Action suggested organizational actions, and additional DEI work in the STLPR DEI Accountability workbook, which is available to staff, the Friends Board and through the DEI page on our website, the community.

We will continue to share updates on our work through the General Manager's report in Monday Matters. We are also creating a new page on our website dedicated to DEI reports, action plans, and public input.

As leaders, we can help drive the healing and transformation of this station by affirming our personal commitments to making systemic changes in our culture and how we work together. This work is a process, and it must become part of our shared goals across all departments. We pledge to hold ourselves, our staff/departments, and our board accountable. We will advocate for this work and our journalism with the University.