



**Summarizing Report for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Initiative  
for  
The Clay Studio**

**Mission**

*To provide a unique learning environment in which to experience the ceramic arts; accordingly gearing programs to all levels of interest, proficiency, and financial means.*

**The Goal of The Clay Studio**

*To make The Clay Studio's new home a welcoming place for people of all races, ethnicities, genders, ages, abilities, and demographics to express themselves through clay.*

Submitted to The Clay Studio  
Heeseung Lee, The Clay Studio Board Member  
Jennifer Martin, Executive Director  
Josie Bockelman, Deputy Director

Prepared by The ROZ Group, Inc.  
Rosalyn McPherson, President & Founder  
Caralyn Spector, Senior Managing Associate  
Monique Kelley, Senior Associate  
Amryl Ward, Senior Associate

June 24th, 2022

MARKETING  
COMMUNICATIONS  
PROJECT MANAGEMENT  
STRATEGIC PLANNING

267.909.9340 OFFICE      1700 Sansom Street  
215.575.5192 FAX        3rd Floor  
www.therozgroup.com    Philadelphia, PA 19103

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
Scope of Work .....	3
Key Findings .....	4
Overarching Findings .....	6
Recommendations from The ROZ Group.....	7
Summary of Detailed Findings.....	9
Staff Findings .....	9
Staff Perceptions .....	10
Staff Examples of Microaggressions.....	10
Space & Culture .....	11
Board & Stakeholder Findings .....	12
Recommendations from Staff, Board, and Stakeholders.....	14
Appendix:	
Discussion Guides.....	15
Survey Instrument.....	18
Intro PowerPoint.....	19



## Executive Summary

The Clay Studio has had a positive history of serving ceramicists, adults and kids, professionals, and novices for almost 50 years. As the organization prepares to move into a new space and a new neighborhood – the time is right to reflect and ask questions about how The Clay Studio can attract a wider audience to participate in the art it offers and how the people working with the Studio can have an environment that understands and implements DEAI practices. Part of this consideration is embarking upon the ongoing journey of becoming more culturally competent by adopting practices that ensure diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive environment. Creating new, mutually beneficial relationships with individuals and organizations as The Clay Studio becomes a part of a new neighborhood is a critical aspect of this strategy.

The Clay Studio is an arts organization that is on the precipice of change like many of its arts and cultural peers. This means that implicit bias, supremacy, privilege, and discrimination have been commonplace for years. This situation does not bode well in contemporary times and the social justice movement of 2020 has served as a catalyst as it underscored dehumanizing treatment by the police against Black people, the blatant mistreatment of immigrants, and the call for gender justice. In order for DEAI to be effective, the mandate has to be “top-down”. The Clay Studio team, led by Jennifer Martin, is ready to deal with authentic and sometimes brutal truths. The Board is poised to engage in both collective and individual self-reflection as well as the learnings that will result in change.

### Scope of Work

The ROZ Group was contracted to assess the organization, conduct discussions, and provide training to launch the DEAI journey. Additional meetings and sessions were added in order to listen to additional and related concerns, important to the development of strategies and recommendations for moving forward.

The goals were accomplished through a methodology that included:

- An environmental scan
- Work sessions with senior team
- One-on-one interviews with several categories of The Clay Studio’s people including board, staff, and artists.
- Advising on public statements related to social unrest
- Edits to newsletter and review of marketing materials for tone and sensitivity
- Group discussions
- Training sessions
- Debrief sessions
- Surveys
- Curated resource lists



- Leveraging The ROZ Group’s network of people provided a vehicle to discover perceptions of The Clay Studio experience and familiarize the TRG team with depths of the organization.

Most of the initial work with The Clay Studio was conducted virtually due to the pandemic. By the Fall of 2021, face-to-face meetings occurred resulting in a more enriched interaction.

**NOTE:** We thank the Museum of the American Revolution as well as the Community College of Philadelphia for welcoming The Clay Studio to their spaces for in-person sessions.

### **Key Findings**

The Clay Studio is known for its strong instruction and prominent gallery space. It was clear from the beginning of the project that The Clay Studio truly wants to embed a DEAI strategy in all that it does. Leadership recognizes that there is significant internal conflict that must be addressed in order to create an atmosphere where people feel valued and respected. The broader community has not fully embraced all that The Clay Studio has to offer and the perception is that the organization pretty much serves an all-white audience. There is distrust related to certain staff and faculty and there is a lack of diversity in the organization.

A number of challenges surfaced that are best dealt with by Human Resources. It is important to not conflate the DEAI development with HR challenges. Leadership at The Clay Studio recognizes the need to develop policies and a handbook to address Human Resources issues.

The good news is that the team is prepared to do the hard work to build relationships with one another and ultimately the outside world. As a result of confidential interviews and roundtable discussions the following points were expressed consistently:

- The Clay Studio staff consists of people who after several engagements with TRG began to open up in earnest, allowing us to have a deeper understanding of the varied traumas that many have suffered personally and within the organization.
- Outside facilitation made it possible for people to share without fear of retribution. Establishing this trust set the stage for ongoing work and increased communication.
- The staff is truly committed to the DEAI journey and appreciates management for its commitment.
- There have been numerous DEAI conflicts at The Clay Studio between staff, artists, and participants.
- Senior leadership has sometimes been at a loss when it comes to effectively addressing these issues and their desire is to become adept with these challenges
- Diversity, especially with gender, is evident at The Clay Studio, yet there is a need for more engagement with Blacks/African Americans and LatinX at all levels.



- The Clay Studio board was very open and engaged with the work. Board engagement is critical to the ongoing journey.
- It is important for the staff to become fully aware of how engaged the board is about DEAI so that they can fully appreciate the support and understanding of the Board.
- The perception of The Clay Studio as a welcoming work environment varies amongst the staff. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that everything is fine.
- The terms “white privilege” and “white fragility” cause significant angst since whites do not want people to think of them in these negative terms (typically connoting images of white hoods). “Words matter” and the journey will require ongoing exposure to and consensus about terms. New DEAI-related terms arise frequently as society delves deeper into root causes and the centuries of impact.
- The need to discuss the immigrant experience was pointed out in one of the sessions, especially during these turbulent times. The suggestion was critically important and TRG now addresses the immigrant experience in some of its trainings. This was a great example of learning from one another.
- In one session, it became clear that the LGBTQ+ community is fraught with internal bias. It is important to acknowledge that simply because one is gay does not mean that that the person is accepting of all lifestyles and aspects of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Communication is a multi-tiered complex mechanism requiring a comprehensive plan. Ensuring two-way communication with staff, board, and communities is critical to the development of collegial and respectful relationships.



## *The Clay Studio SWOT Analysis*

### **Strengths**

- Support from Leadership and Staff to engage in the hard work
- Board is very committed to DEAI work
- Staff have become much more open about communicating their experiences
- Staff feel supported by the organization's willingness to engage in DEAI work
- Excellent programming
- Strong exhibitions
- Strong strategic plan
- In general, the staff enjoys the environment

### **Weaknesses**

- Need to strengthen HR aspects of the operation
- There is need for much greater diversity among staff and volunteers
- Staff and volunteer need to reflect the community where The Clay Studio is housed
- Internal communications need to be strengthened
- Need for staff and volunteer orientation so that people can be welcomed and engaged
- Staff are not aware of how supportive the board is

### **Opportunities**

- Move to new neighborhood can support expanded outreach
- Move to new neighborhood allows for participation as neighbors
- Broader outreach to varied socio-economic levels of BIPOC for participation on board, as volunteers, and in programs
- Shift to DEAI culture will support more diverse hiring and volunteers
- Continuing with next phase of DEAI work

### **Threats**

- Some staff believe that their concerns about micro-aggressions are not being addressed
- Some staff believe that certain artists are allowed to engage in bad behavior without repercussion
- Perception that only white artists are showcased in the gallery
- Perception that there are variances in attitude and "welcoming" based on the floor levels in the building
- Need for more artist diversity in materials on display in the building
- Perception that teaching of ceramics is mostly white and English



## **Recommendations from The ROZ Group**

Based on The ROZ Group's recent interactions with leadership, staff, and board, The Clay Studio has already made strides in becoming more inclusive. We view this as a good beginning to a long journey that requires a great deal of empathy, patience, vulnerability, transparency, and self-reflection from both an individual and organizational perspective. This is an abbreviated list of The ROZ Group's recommendations for developing a strong baseline of inclusive policies, programs, and personnel. It is also means by which the social circles of influencers can be broadened in hopes of developing sustainable relationships.

### ***Staff and Board Ongoing DEAI***

1. ***Create more opportunities for the staff and board to get to know each other.***  
Unbeknownst to the staff, the board is very thoughtful about DEAI and their role in the work as TCS board members. It is important for the staff to know how much the board supports and respects them. Varied members of the board share concerns, questions, and ideas that are similar to their own in terms of DEAI.
2. ***Develop ongoing opportunities for the board and staff interaction*** and for facilitating discussions on difficult topics.
3. ***Establish ongoing internal initiatives that ensure the sustainability of DEAI.*** For example, one person at each staff meeting can be asked to describe and recommend a new article, book, or podcast about DEAI with the team. This is a way to encourage ongoing self-education and self-reflection.
4. ***Develop Phase II of DEAI Training*** including an action plan and structure for a Task Force that is appropriate in which staff can engage. Establish an understanding of what staff can do to support such an effort and underscore the need for outside specialists like TRG to conduct the ongoing work. The plan will ensure the delineation of well-intentioned versus formal strategic DEAI activity.
5. ***Establish diversity standards that are reflected throughout the strategic plan.*** This ensures that DEAI is part of the business model for The Clay Studio.
6. ***Develop a system of metrics and measurable objectives from artists in the TCS roster*** as well as program participants, staff and volunteers. Ensure that demographic assumptions are accurate.
7. ***Hiring practices must be based on the casting of a much wider net*** and a shift in mindset to leverage strategies to make the search more inclusive. The search should be ongoing even when there is not an open position.

### ***Relationship Building***

8. ***Work with TRG to engage with influencers of color in the Philadelphia area to cultivate new participants, supporters, and board members.*** The Clay Studio needs partners that will support its DEAI goals. Relationships are key to expanding the numbers and varied people who will come to The Clay Studio and take advantage of its programs.



9. **Develop a list of strategic recommendation of diverse, potential board members.**  
Engage in cultivation actions with selected member.
10. **Attend major events in the region that are known for attendance by “movers and shakers of color.”**

### **Marketing**

11. **Conduct a marketing audit** of the TCS’s website, collateral materials, and the retail store to ensure that the tone and images reflect the varied demographic make-up of the people that TCS wants to see on the staff, among artists, in its physical space and participating in outreach programs.
12. **Develop a strategic marketing and engagement plan for the new The Clay Studio** to ensure that TCS students, family, city-wide participants, teaching staff, staff artists and board are representative of Philadelphia’s population. Revisit the plan every six months to assess what’s working and to address strategies that require adjustment to ensure maximum effectiveness. Understand that new programs and marketing plans often take a significant amount of time to take root and that constant monitoring is essential. Metrics will be critically important to measuring successful outcomes. Share those outcomes internally and externally.
13. **Develop a plan for site visits in The Clay Studio’s new home** and continue interactions with neighborhoods and communities that is intentional about forging relationships and partnerships.
14. **Develop a multi-month plan for The Clay Studio’s opening that invites a broad cross-section of stakeholders**, including Philadelphia Association of Black OR Hispanic journalists, University administrators, the African American, Hispanic, and Asian Chambers of Commerce, etc.

#### **Note: Exploration of Human Resources Action Items**

TRG was asked to consider developing and executing a plan to address HR-related needs. This initiative was borne out of the need to sort through differences between HR and DEAI. It is anticipated that The Clay Studio will address this need in the coming year.

**END OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

