



**AAA Final Board Response January 2022  
to the AAA Task Force on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report March 15 2021**

The AAA CEO and President received the Task Force report on March 15, 2021 ([DEI Task Force \(aaahq.org\)](https://aaahq.org)). We thank the Task Force for their very important work. The Board previously distributed an interim response dated April 2021 ([AAA Interim Response to DEI Task Force April 2021.pdf \(aaahq.org\)](https://aaahq.org)). Here, we provide a final response to the Task Force. Subsequent updates will be reviewed by the DEI Committee and communicated to the membership, given that the Task Force has completed its charge.

In the pages below, we summarize each Task Force recommendation (in italics), followed by our current response and future plans. We welcome any further input or suggestions from the Task Force.

- 1. Benchmarks - Summary of benchmarks. Although a number of business-related academic organizations have made statements related to DEI and some have committees or task forces that address DEI issues, there was no indication on the websites of these organizations having a Chief Diversity Officer. Significantly larger professional organizations such as the AICPA and American Psychological Association have designated a leadership position for DEI.*

We have established relationships with the AICPA, AACSB, CAQ, and IMA, and will leverage these relationships as we build our own DEI strategy. The DEI Committee will also reach out to the leadership of the AOM, AMA, and AFA to initiate a conversation about their journey and how we might learn from them or obtain educational resources that could benefit our DEI Resources web page. The Global Gathering has organized a DEI work group to share strategies and plans with our international association counterparts (e.g., CAAA, EAA, BAA).

- 2. Code of Conduct - The Task Force believes that having an organization code of conduct would be a positive step for the organization in signaling expectations around DEI to its membership.*

The AAA CEO developed and instituted an Employee Code of Conduct and an Event Code of Professional Conduct for members as well as any non-member participants engaged in AAA activities. Both include expectations around DEI. The Event Code of Professional Conduct can be found at: <https://aaahq.org/About/AAA-Event-Code-of-Professional-Conduct>. This Event Code of Conduct applies to any event supported by the AAA from virtual and in person meetings to committee and Board/Council meetings, and it applies to any attendee, even individuals who are not AAA members. Our legal counsel also noted that all academics are also covered by their institution's code of conduct when acting in a capacity for the institution off campus.

3. *Professional staff or BOD position*

I. *The AAA should have a full-time Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Responsibilities for this position include:*

- a. *Leading the AAA efforts to assure that decisions are all made with consideration through the DEI lens*
- b. *Assisting AAA leaders in identifying AAA Underrepresented Minority (URM) members to increase engagement on all levels of the AAA*
- c. *Designing and conducting DEI educational programs for AAA members*
- d. *Providing support for the BOD DEI position (see below)*
- e. *Working with sections, such as the Diversity Section members, to understand the issues facing our URM members as well as to gauge the progress on AAA initiatives*
- f. *Collecting data and summarizing the progress of all AAA segments on DEI metrics addressing URM members' involvement in leadership positions, research and publication positions and outcomes, conference organization and presentations*
- g. *Working with other business and accounting organizations to attract more minorities to the accounting profession, including academia*
- h. *Coordinating with the Ph.D. Project to list of Ph.D. Project members on AAA website. Note, the Ph.D. Project should not be responsible for solving problems, but can serve as a thought partner in helping to promote and support the AAA's DEI mission and initiatives*
- i. *Overseeing internal and external AAA communications including emails, newsletters, website materials, etc.*
- j. *Developing a diversity strategic plan which includes goals, benchmarks and key performance indicators (KPIs), as well as consideration of a Code of Conduct and its potential impact(s).*

The CEO is currently conducting a search for a new full-time professional staff Director of DEI. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the position description.

II. *The AAA should have an elected BOD position with the focus on DEI. It is recommended that this be a Vice-President.*

The Board changed the Director Focusing on Intellectual Properties to the Director Focusing on DEI (with the Vice President of Research taking over the Intellectual Property requirements). The Board appointed Dr. Matthew Anderson for an interim board position completing the last year of service of the retired Director Focusing on Intellectual Properties. The Council has nominated two candidates that are on the ballot for the full three-year term beginning August 2022. The Board is proposing making this a Vice-President position, but doing so requires a bylaws change. The Governance Committee is working on a number of bylaws changes and we expect to put something forward for vote of the membership later this calendar year.

III. *The AAA should have a permanent DEI Standing Committee. This Committee should be composed of nine members and chaired by the Board Director Focusing on DEI. The Board implemented a DEI Committee with nine members and the Management Team populated the inaugural committee. See*

<https://aaahq.org/About/Directories/2021-2022-AAA-Committees-Task-Forces/Diversity-Equity-Inclusion-Committee> for the charge and members. To make this a standing committee requires a bylaws change which will be included in the bylaws change discussed above.

IV. *The AAA should have training (likely self-paced) for the Board of Directors and AAA staff, segment leaders (as well as for committee and task force members), journal editors, and council members as an element of their onboarding process. Committee Chairs and President-elects should also be the point person for DEI in their segment, committee or task force and be the liaison to the BOD regarding DEI activities. The training should focus on DEI issues for an academic association. The objective of the training is to enhance all AAA decision makers' ability to use a DEI lens in making decisions. Specifically, the training should be oriented towards prompting members to ask themselves and others whether DEI issues been considered when making and communicating decisions such as selecting committee members, editors, editorial board members, reviewers, panel participants, consortium leaders, meeting chairs, staff positions, etc. This training will enhance decision makers' sensitivity to the diverse backgrounds of AAA members and use the diversity of backgrounds to improve outcomes.*

We identified an expert in DEI training who completed training for current and incoming board members during the May 2021 Strategic Retreat. The professional staff completed initial training in June 2021. A self-paced, online training, certificate program has been designed and is being developed in the first half of 2022, with initial roll-out planned for summer 2022. The DEI Committee will evaluate the program and make recommendation for further training. We will encourage all members, particularly council representatives, segment leaders, and journal editors and reviewers, to complete the certificate program.

4. *Governance - The Task Force did not assess the overall governance of the AAA but recommends that governance assures that policies related to the selection of leaders, committees, journal editors, editorial boards, reviewers, etc. are clearly articulated and communicated via websites, newsletters and other internal communication methods. The process for selecting these positions should be transparent and decision makers should be held accountable for their selection. As previously mentioned, it is expected that DEI will be considered in the selection and recruitment of members for these positions.*

The Governance Committee is charged with reviewing the policies related to selection of leaders and committees. In addition, the CEO has added an easy mechanism to volunteer for committees. Several emails were sent in Spring 21 regarding volunteering for committees. Volunteers were considered by the Management Team when populating committees. This process will continue in the future. A sub-committee of the DEI Committee is beginning work on evaluating policies related to journal editors, editorial boards, reviewers, etc., in coordination with the Publications Committee and the Research Committee.

5. *Support of DEI Research and its dissemination - The Task Force recommends that research related to DEI be encouraged and published in the appropriate AAA journals.*

*AAA journal editors are encouraged to publish all types of research using accepted research methods that relate to DEI issues and advance the understanding and impact of DEI on accounting-related subjects. Cases and instructional materials also will have a significant impact in advancing the teaching of DEI-related accounting curricula. Association-wide journals as well as section journals need to examine their respective editorial policies and determine if DEI-focused research and instructional articles are appropriate and being considered for publication in their journals.*

*AAA journals, both association-wide and section, need to recruit and select a diverse set of interested parties for editorial and reviewer positions. The policies and processes for the selection of editorial and reviewer positions should be clearly articulated, transparent and widely communicated. The AAA should offer workshops or seminars to interested individuals that provide information on the pathway that leads to editorial and reviewer positions. The AAA BOD should collect information regarding the diversity of journal editorial and reviewer positions to determine if they are meeting the Association's mission and goals.*

The Publications and Research Committees, in collaboration with a sub-committee of the DEI Committee (see 4 above) is being charged with this recommendation. The Annual Meeting featured a workshop on the pathway to reviewer/editor positions that could provide an example for sections with journals to also provide workshops in their midyear meetings.

6. *Communications - The Task Force recommends that the AAA regularly (semi-annually or quarterly) send out communications on its DEI initiatives. This should be in addition to regular updates to the AAA's DEI webpage. These communications may include information toward the progress on goals, relevant citations to articles, DEI-related instructional materials, information on DEI workshops, seminars, conferences, DEI best practices found in universities, etc. We emphasize that the communications be regular and consistent. The AAA should make sure that prior to dissemination all association-wide and section DEI communications are appropriately vetted and meet association policies. Responsibility for these communications may be that of the BOD member focusing on DEI and/or with designated AAA staff.*

Starting in 2021, we provide regular updates on DEI initiatives in both the Fall and Spring Newsletters as well as in selected multi-topic biweekly emails. Responsibility will be placed with the CEO and the professional staff Director of DEI (when filled) with review by the Director focusing on DEI. Our DEI webpage also contains regularly updated information. A subcommittee of the DEI Committee maintains and approves DEI webpage content and multi-topic emails.

7. *Other--strategic plan, change management, partnerships - The Task Force recommends that an overall DEI strategy be articulated in the Association's strategic plan. The strategic plan should articulate goals of the AAA toward DEI issues, as well as the policies and processes that will enable the AAA to meet the DEI goals. The Task Force believes for the AAA's DEI strategy to succeed it needs to be supported and be a high priority commitment by the staff, BOD and other members in leadership positions. It will require ongoing DEI-related education of staff and members. In addition, the AAA*

*should develop a toolkit for allowing staff and members to accomplish AAA DEI goals. In order to determine success, it requires that the appropriate staff and member leadership positions be held accountable for DEI goals, including well-defined metrics that are communicated to the membership. Change management is a constant process, and the AAA will need to regularly assess its successes as well as any lack of progress toward its DEI goals.*

In July 2021, the Board began a strategic planning process that is continuing. In October, the Board met for a day and a half prior to the Diversity Section Midyear Meeting to work on our DEI vision, goals, and strategic priorities. One of our priority goals is to make a thorough assessment of our own policies and processes to identify and remove systemic barriers to success across our association. It was decided to add a B to DEI for belonging (DEIB) and to integrate our DEIB strategies into our overall strategies. A new model was developed to show that the vision foundation of the AAA should lie within an inclusive community built on pillars to support this community. See Appendix 2 for a graphic of our new model. The Board will continue to work on the strategic plan in 2022.

*Since the segments of the AAA are somewhat autonomous, the Task Force recommends that each segment also incorporate DEI goals and processes and policies to accomplish these DEI goals in their own strategic plans.*

Based on Council feedback, many of the segments are interested in DEI and would welcome Board leadership in this area. An initial focus of the Director focusing on DEI will be to communicate with leadership of each segment to determine what they are doing and where they need assistance.

*The Task Force recommends that the AAA institute a program of regular climate check of its members. Regular, brief surveys are a possible method for gaining insights into the progress on DEI goals.*

The Board completed a larger, initial survey with focus groups and presented initial results in a town hall format at the 2021 Annual Meeting. Summary results will be posted to the DEI resource page. The Board plans to conduct brief surveys biannually and is in communication with the Diversity Movement to conduct the surveys.

*The Task Force recommends that the AAA work in conjunction with professional accounting organizations (such as the AICPA, IMA, Center for Audit Quality, etc.) that also have an agenda to advance DEI in order to have a broader and more comprehensive societal impact.*

The CEO is in communication with other professional organizations. We are sharing information and are beginning to work on developing a diverse pipeline into the profession together. AAA signed on as a diversity research partner on the Global Diversity Survey by the IMA.

Appendix 1  
Director of DEI and Special Programs Position Announcement



**American  
Accounting  
Association**

**Thought Leaders in  
Accounting**

The American Accounting Association is the largest community of accountants in academia. Founded in 1916, we have a rich and reputable history built on leading-edge research and publications. The diversity of our membership creates a fertile environment for collaboration and innovation. Collectively, we shape the future of accounting through teaching, research, and a powerful network, ensuring our position as thought leaders in accounting.

The American Accounting Association (AAA) is seeking a full-time, exempt Director, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) and Special Programs to join our team at the Lakewood Ranch Office located in Manatee County, Florida. This is a new position for the American Accounting Association. The majority of AAA professional staff are currently working remotely because of COVID-19, but a small, safe number of staff are working in the office and remotely as needed. This position will commence with some initial in-office training and then a combination of remote and in-office work as determined by the CEO. Our office currently has in place the following COVID-19 precautions for in-office staff: masks required for unvaccinated employees, maintain social distancing as comfortable, sanitizing, disinfecting, and cleaning procedures in place.

### **Job Summary**

The **Director, DEI & Special Programs** is responsible for working with the AAA Headquarters team, the AAA Board of Directors, and the AAA DEI Committee to guide the organization's overall diversity, equity and inclusion strategy at the programmatic and administrative levels to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging practices that will be evidenced through programs, structure, practices, policies, and leadership. The Director, DEI and Special Programs will lead activities, conversations, and dialogue, as well as drive decisions that move the organization from not only acknowledging differences, but affirming and honoring differences.

The new Director role will have a meaningful and continuous impact on organizational objectives. This leader will engage in a process of creating and maintaining an inclusive environment by adopting a proactive view of diversity, which is designed to promote valuing diversity and driving inclusive and belonging behaviors throughout the organization, including membership and strategic partners.

### **Primary Responsibilities**

- Lead and execute the overall DEI strategy across the membership and staff of the organization and beyond by partnering with volunteer leaders and key stakeholders.
- Facilitate sharing of best practices and identify opportunities for greater alignment and more unified efforts across the AAA, the AAA Segments and Regions and Partner organizations.
- Engage in analysis, reporting, and understanding of DEI metrics where appropriate.
- Lead through influence to drive cultural and behavior change across the membership of the organization.
- Provide guidance to headquarters and volunteer leadership and other identified work groups regarding cross-cultural communications, education, and collaborations.
- Advise on, create, and move our DEI education strategy forward, including outreach events and campaigns to build support and increase diversity across our stakeholder groups.

- Design and run student programming that supports an increasingly diverse pipeline of accounting students.
- Establish new, and cultivate existing, strategic partnerships to support the DEI strategy.
- Guide and mentor team members to encourage professional development and goal achievement.
- Serve as an internal diversity subject matter expert to leadership, providing expertise and support in the development, implementation, and monitoring of diversity programs.
- Lead in the development of an operational plan, participate in the strategic planning process and performance metrics development under the direction of the CEO and Board.

### **General**

- Maintains files and documentation thoroughly and accurately, in accordance with association policy and accepted accounting practices
- Communicates effectively through writing, listening, and speaking
- Ensures continuous improvement through effective process analysis, documentation and ongoing application
- Protects the organization's value by keeping information confidential
- Updates job knowledge by participating in industry-wide educational opportunities

These statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed. They are not intended to be construed as an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required. Duties, responsibilities, and skills may change at any time with or without notice based on the needs of the Association.

### **Education and Experience Requirements**

1. BA/BS or equivalent combination of verifiable education, training, and/or experience.
2. A solid background in diversity initiatives with increasingly responsible roles.
3. Documented work with students and career choices a plus.
4. Strong computer and software skills in Microsoft Office Suite, Zoom Meeting/Webinar, and content management systems.
5. Ability to organize, prioritize and coordinate multiple concurrent tasks and activities with excellent attention to detail.
6. Ability to monitor the progress of tasks and projects and provide follow-up in order to meet targeted deadlines.
7. Ability to interact with professional staff, members, and volunteers in a professional manner
8. Strong skills in the following areas:
  - a. accuracy
  - b. collaboration
  - c. problem solving
  - d. documentation
  - e. research and resolution
  - f. communication through writing, listening, and speaking

**Salary** - Salary is competitive and commensurate with education and experience.

**Benefits Package** – Generous benefits package with Café Plan. Relocation package if more than one hour outside the Sarasota area.

### **Physical Requirements**

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to see, speak and hear to exchange information. The employee is frequently required to sit, stand, and walk; reach with hands and arms, and use finger dexterity. The employee is occasionally required to bend at the waist, stoop, kneel, and crouch; and perform work which involves occasionally lifting, pushing and or pulling of objects which may approximate 50 pounds.

**Company Website – <https://aaahq.org>**

The American Accounting Association fully complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and will make reasonable accommodations to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential job functions.

We are an equal opportunity, at-will employer and do not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of age, race, religion, color, disability, sex, sexual orientation or national origin.

Appendix 2  
New AAA Vision Graphic:

