

SGC Building Diversity

Break-Out Session Notes, Annual Business Meeting, February 17, 2022

The questions:

- 1) What does the Value & Purpose Statement mean to you? How do you feel about this direction for SGC?
- 2) What would SGC be like if it were more diverse and inclusive?
- 3) What would we gain by being more diverse and inclusive?

Table #1

- They mentioned, as did others, about being enriched by different ideas, mentioned how they've seen children grow and become wiser after being part of a larger community.
- They suggested partnering with some of the groups SGC has given money to, and felt it should be us searching out their program as much as inviting others to our program.
- The issue of meeting times was brought up regarding younger working people who could not meet during the day.
- Also, the cost of membership might be an inhibitor.
- The advantage of virtual meeting allows people from afar to join.
- Connecting through food and what edibles are grown in gardens was thought to be great.
- Changing our name which sounds exclusive was an interesting idea brought up.

Table #2

- We are the club as stated in the Purpose Statement, but we could be more.
- The statements are a reflection of where we've moved as a society; it helps us to be relevant.
- It is important to reach out to others and to educate others as to who we are.
- The Value Statement needs to be more about engaging new people and defining our work more clearly.
- We do want to be diverse in a variety of ways and should start with a more thorough knowledge of our existing membership and what they bring as far as diversity goes to our organization.
- The floral analogy of the Value Statement is limiting and emphasizes the fluffy concept that many have about our Club.
- Our membership is very representative of our membership neighborhoods and friendships. The challenge is to reach out beyond. Can this be done or should this be done without the traditional guidelines we use for proposing new members?
- We need to do a better job of educating the public whenever possible of what we do and who we are...how do we do that without encouraging interest in membership, when we don't allow anyone to apply?

- At present, Community Projects and Programs are the best sources to emphasize our interest in people and projects outside of our own friends and surroundings.
- Taking a look at the fact that we call the one public educational recurring event a Flower Show is misleading. Public attendees are always surprised to see the broad spectrum of subjects presented. Any other public function as a Pam Green or Iris Wagner event should afford us the opportunity to help educate the public, as well.
- Being more diverse would improve our reputation regarding our exclusivity and broaden all our lives while increasing empathy for those who do not share the same opportunities.

Table #3

--We began our panel discussion by considering various definitions of the word "Diversity." What came to mind are the concepts of thought, place, ethnic background, groups, neighborhoods, experience, and disabilities. We all agreed that we support the "Value and Purpose" statement as a future direction for SGC.

--From there we discussed how positive we felt about the direction of the grants that will be awarded to the Community Projects proposals for 2022. We are interested in supporting diverse projects in the future such as Rainier Beach Urban Farm, the vertical garden wall which could lead to more interaction with diverse groups.

--In answer to question #2, we all agreed we would like to see the membership try to engage younger people by taking a look at different ways in which to include them in some of our activities. We could share our knowledge and love of gardening by posting more videos on our public page or offering Zoom lectures online in the evening after publicizing them, etc.

--We could even partner with Miller Library perhaps and explore some collaborative ideas. We spent a lot of time tossing around some thoughts around how to "reach out."

--In response to question #3 – we would gain a lot from being a more diverse club keeping our mission and purpose statement from GCA and SGC at the forefront – to stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening.

--We might get to know and interact with groups in our community that have a similar focus. We could host, for example, meetings with other garden clubs or stage a show with an Ikebana group..... This might stimulate new friendships and new appreciation of their gardening practices.

--We tried not to get into the concepts of "how to go from thoughts to actions."

Table #4

--Comment 1 - Everyone ended up saying they really liked the verbiage for the Purpose Statement and aligning ours with the GCA effort/guidelines. There was a split in the group as two people liked/really liked the last sentence of "These commitments, approached in an intentional way, will enrich our Club and help shape a more successful future" and 3 people thought it should be dropped. The reasons for dropping included, tone comes across as patting ourselves on the back, not strategic verbiage/too short term in nature, less is more is often better for a value/purpose statement.

--Comment 2 - Our club should short term (next few years) focus on continuing to do what

happened with the grants approved this year, as the barriers to diversity are systemically built-in to the existing club internal structures. So going forward - focusing on being more mindful in our Community Programs grant giving so that we have as a criteria diversity. Evaluate and determine how to identify underserved communities that don't know about our grant programs, so they can then request funding - this may need to be a larger club effort than just expecting CP to do all the work.

Table #5

- With the value and purpose statement. End after partnerships. Do not need "to all who have a passion for the world around us"
- Hard not to feel contrived from a membership level. By reaching out in community diversity will happen more organically
- We need to look at diversity of age. Foster love of gardening, conservation, etc.. Also meet at different times to help with working members.
- Would be helpful to have more clarity on what GCA is trying to accomplish.
- Tender subject, it might help to have some anonymity in expressing issues.

Table #6

1) What does the Value & Purpose Statement mean to you? How do you feel about this direction for SGC?

It's long overdue and I hope we move fast

100% believe in diversity and appreciate the GCA and SGC efforts to increase it, but we will hit bumps in the road

We need to change our membership process (requiring 6 members to know an applicant is too many)

Didn't join SGC to increase diversity, rather to learn about plants and visit gardens, and don't want SGC to get too political

2) What would SGC be like if it were more diverse and inclusive?

Have more creativity

More perspective

More access to projects in the community that we don't even know about now

Different friendships

3) What would we gain by being more diverse and inclusive? (We had significant overlap in our answers to question 2.)

More relevance

Don't want to embrace the violence of Seattle

Good reasons to keep it about gardens

Table #7

1) What does the Value and Purpose Statement mean to you? How do you feel about this direction for SGC?

MEAN TO US: The obvious think, more like the real world. Put ourselves in their shoes - we don't know how they feel.

2) What would SGC be like if it were more diverse and inclusive?

BE LIKE: We have done a steady job w/this topic w/in our communities and our own families. Recognize that we will have WORK to do. More purposeful training on how we work as a club. Do this via Programs.

3) What would we gain by being more diverse and inclusive?

GAIN: more broad perspective, gardens, leadership styles. Add richness to our lives.

Table #8

--Value and Purpose Statement: Unanimous approval of Values statement.

--Observed that greater diversity in many committee areas such as programs and community projects could potentially lead to new members outside existing circles.

--How do we feel about this direction for the Club? Agreement that it's important to pursue, and a good time to pursue in a direction appropriate to our Club. Group believes more definition and direction will be needed, and we should proceed slowly and thoughtfully to ensure decisions are a good fit for our membership.

--What would SGC be like if it were more diverse and inclusive? Broader diversity would be enriching for all Club members, providing opportunities to learn from other cultures and backgrounds.

--What would we gain by being more diverse and inclusive? SGC would feel less elitist. It would keep the club relevant in the community and could bring new opportunities to the club and to members. It could also bring more opportunities for the Club to share our knowledge in our 4 primary disciplines (Hort, Floral Design, Conservation and Photography) with broader segments of the community.

Table #9

What does our value statement mean to you?

--All strongly support our Value and Purpose statement and agreed it's a start. Would like to see an umbrella statement and DEI training from GCA.

--"No brainer" - a more diverse community enhances/encourages a vibrant club. Life is not sustainable without biodiversity; our club is not sustainable without diversity among members.

What would our club be like if it were more diverse and inclusive?

--SGA would be more vibrant and sustainable with more diversity.

- Our meeting times might need to change (evening meetings to attract younger members, hybrid format (zoom and in person))
- Perhaps we might have different membership levels -mentorships with high school and colleges, more "open" lectures/meetings. Diverse speakers.
- Flexibility in our membership guidelines and policies.

What would we gain by being more diverse and inclusive?

- Relevance to a wider audience and enrich our existing members with fresh ideas.

Table #10

- We were able to discuss diversity in terms of age, economics and ethnicity.
- In order to maintain our level of membership numbers, try recruiting younger members. Perhaps, as we have discussed before, offer alternate meeting times.
- Offer sliding fee scales for fundraising events.
- Continue to introduce members to ethnic cultures through art (floral design), food, and diverse garden presentations and grants.
- Familiarize members of the work that has historically been done through extensive research and grantmaking by SGC: Bloedel Reserve Japanese Garden, Seattle Chinese Garden, Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands Garden, Erma Gunther Garden at Burke Museum, Pete Gross House Healing Garden, Nikkei Manor Vertical Gardens, and Youth Grow at South Seattle. Our investments have included ethnic gardens, healing gardens and youth.
- The newest member joined because of the comradery offered by SGC, opportunity to meet new people and to learn about conservation, horticulture and the greater area around Seattle.
- All praised the creativity and outreach by our club in bringing educational speakers who have had travel experience with Native American cultures.
- One suggestion for a general meeting, to that point, is a boat ride around the Duwamish waterway for historic education and perspective.
- Kudos to you for starting our discussions.

Table #11

My group seemed to think SGC has an interesting and diverse mix of members and that we would all benefit from getting to know each other better.

React To the Value & Purpose Statement:

- diversity of thoughts & experiences exists with our membership
- have gone down a path of equity already, i.e., Cass Turnbull
- diverse in our community project donations
- diversity within members and in community, i.e., a Pea Patch
- any way we can be more diverse is good, i.e., our Grants
- the world is more diverse
- develop and champion diversity
- ground up is good
- join-in where we give grants, i.e., it's not just \$ but time too
- dwelling on color

- we are an interesting group, some members live in a bubble
- diverse backgrounds and life experiences, important to learn from each other
- I appreciated people welcoming me in Japan, always look for new friends -"I've got all my friends", not always necessary to reach out
- get to know everyone in the club
- we do have diversity, you have to look for it

Creativity & Enrichment

- get to know our own members better
- looking for members who like to 'garden'
- we do not know our members
- start at home, how is our group diverse?
- reach out to work with group, i.e., a Pea Patch
- more interesting people, more fun

Membership Share:

- how they do something with bulbs or large leaf
give/share
- Hort Committee: tips-rose pruning
- ways to learn about our members, make a video to show membership
- more ideas and different perspectives "thaw the sea freeze," tough as a member to break into SGC
- do not know a lot of the current members, would like to know them better, how do we go about that?