

ARTSBOSTON NAACBOSTON

THE NETWORK FOR ARTS ADMINISTRATORS OF COLOR

BIPOC BUSINESS AND CULTURAL LEADERS MENTOR ARTS ADMINISTRATORS OF COLOR IN LATEST ROUND OF MATCHES DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN ARTS SECTOR

BOSTON -- December 14, 2021 -- The Network for Arts Administrators of Color (NAAC Boston), a program of ArtsBoston, announced today its new slate of ten regional BIPOC business and cultural leaders who will serve as sponsors and mentors to the group's 2021 class of rising regional arts administrators.

NAAC Boston's Sponsorship Program pairs mid-level arts administrators (4+ years of experience in the field) with executive-level business leaders who can guide the next stages of their careers. Its Mentorship Program provides professional development programs for junior- and entry-level arts administrators (1-3 years of experience) to accelerate their learning with support from mid-level BIPOC arts administrators.

Group leaders say NAAC Boston and its programs work to widen the leadership pipeline in Greater Boston's arts and culture sector by highlighting opportunities for professional and personal growth in the field, and enhancing the visibility of professionals of color.

Sponsors in this year's program are: **Yvonne Cain**, Senior Vice President and Group Media Director of the global media firm MediaHub Worldwide; **George "Chip" Greenidge**, a Harvard Kennedy School Visiting Fellow and director of the networking organization Greatest Minds; **Andrés Holder**, Executive Director of Boston Children's Chorus; **José Nieto**, Chief Strategy Officer for branding and marketing company ThinkArgus; and **Ruth Mercado-Zizzo**, Vice President of Programs and Equity for the education philanthropy nonprofit EdVestors.

Mentors for 2021 are: Central Square Theater Education Manager **Kortney Adams**; StageSource Program Manager **Jazzmin Bonner**; New England Conservatory Program Director **Rodrigo Guerrero**; New England Foundation for the Arts Senior Program Manager **Meena Malik**; and Broadway in Boston Marketing Manager **Adriana Zuñiga**.

The program's sponsees are **Maria Servellon** (Northeastern University), **Cameron Lane** (Artists for Humanity), **Leslie Condon** (Pao Arts Center), **Lani Asuncion** (Digital Soup) and **Kat Nakaji** (Artlab at Harvard University). Program mentees are **Jamison Cloud** (MassArt), **Noelle Villa** (Harvard Museums of Science and Culture), **Amy Chu** (Massachusetts Cultural Council), **Holly Dyer** (Community Music Center of Boston) and **Merlo Philiossaint** (artist).

The Sponsorship and Mentorship Programs foster interaction between the executives and their paired administrators through one-on-one meetings and career counseling, professional development workshops and panel discussions, and networking events held by the NAAC organization. Administrator participants also receive access to learning resources and services in a program toolkit.

NAAC was founded in 2016 to bring together administrators of color for a networking event. In addition to providing BIPOC administrators with a way to identify other colleagues of color in their fields and create a sense of solidarity within the arts sector, the group's momentum resulted in a move to formalize its work. An online directory was created which was quickly sought by grantmakers looking for new diverse voices to serve on review panels. A peer-supported listserv was created to share job listings and funding opportunities. In its first five years, the group grew to 425 members.



NAAC Boston 2021 Sponsor **Yvonne Cain** (l.), who also serves as a Vice Chair of ArtsBoston's Board of Directors, says she is familiar with the need to actively seek out BIPOC colleagues in an industry where few exist. She is widely known for her work in the advertising and branding industry, where she has increased representation in that sector.

"It is true in the arts, as in all other industries, that inclusion, representation and the raising of diverse voices makes the work better, deeper and more resonant," Cain says. "I understand and support the need for projects like NAAC

Boston and I'm personally committed to guiding young professionals on their path to leadership. ArtsBoston's commitment to making real change toward racial equity in the arts is the reason I joined the board and why I became a sponsor in this program."

Jazzmin Bonner (r.), Program Manager for StageSource and a Co-Producer for Plays in Place who has twice served as a mentor, says the arts sector needs programs like NAAC.

"Being an arts administrator of color can be an isolating and challenging experience," Bonner says. "We face particular challenges around culture, interpersonal communication and promotion that require a specific set of skills and awareness. This Mentor/Sponsor program is a great way to address those challenges with smart matches and deep sharing of knowledge and networks."



ArtsBoston Executive Director **Catherine Peterson** says supporting NAAC Boston and giving it a home base was a natural outgrowth of its work. "The credit for making this program a vibrant resource to hundreds of workers in our industry goes to its founding members, its steering committee and ArtsBoston's Deputy Director - Programs **Ola Okinwumi**. This is a

group of people dedicated to making the arts more representative of the community where we all work and live,” Peterson says.

Support for NAAC Boston comes from Bank of America, which was an early funder of the program. Ongoing funding comes from the Mass Cultural Council. Additional funders include the Boston Cultural Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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MEDIA CONTACT: Current sponsors and mentors are available to talk about their work with NAAC Mentorship and Sponsorship Program. Previously mentored participants can speak to the impact the program has had on their work and connections to the Greater Boston arts community. Contact John Michael Kennedy at jmk@jmkpr.com or 781-620-1761 for details.