External Diversity Audit

CIR

Spring 2022
By the numbers, CIR outpaces the journalism industry as a whole in terms of gender, racial, and ethnic diversity.

While there are more women and gender non-conforming outnumber the men on staff, and the outlet can boast that it has more employees of color than the industry average among editorial workers, representation does not readily translate into positions of influence within the organization.

The quantitative data reported by employees, including figures on disability, caregiving, and educational background, provide context about the overall composition of the staff and may be useful in the development of future hiring and retention plans. For instance, the survey results suggest that career longevity throughout CIR’s many iterations is strongly tied to a worker’s familial and educational connections to California.

The key theme that emerged from our interviews with staff members is that while there’s a general understanding that CIR prioritizes diversity, equity and inclusion/belonging (DEI/B), instability among the leadership ranks and inconsistency in the implementation of the organization’s DEI strategies has damaged morale and a sense of interconnectedness, and created a low sense of expectation among employees.

Conversations with staffers indicates a shared sentiment that the rationale and procedures related to a series of changes at the leadership level were not well communicated, leaving staff at every level with questions about discrepancies between the organization’s professed values and its actions.

In spite of the difficulties in shifting away from a central newsroom and into a series of distributed teams, there’s solid potential for CIR to build on its demographic diversity by prioritizing the organization’s development as a series of distributed teams.

The outlet’s major challenge is also its greatest opportunity: By addressing historical wounds and honoring the development of a durable yet responsive strategic plan for growth and inclusion, CIR has the potential to create a workplace culture that truly honors the diversity represented among its staff.
OUTPERFORMING THE INDUSTRY
CIR LEADS ON DIVERSITY METRICS

2021 SURVEY INDICATES GREATER PARITY AMONG THE SEXES AND RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS THAN MOST ORGANIZATIONS

POWERED BY WOMEN
Cisgender women make up 53 percent of CIR’s workforce; genderqueer and gender non-conforming folks make up 14 percent. That figure outpaces other digital-only news organizations (50 percent) and the industry at large (43 percent).

LEADING ON REPRESENTATION
47 percent of respondents indicated they are racially or ethnically non-white. Journalists of color made up 25.6 percent of the industry in 2019.

RECOGNIZING DISABILITY
23 percent of respondents at CIR said they identify as having a disability. By comparison, the CDC estimates that 26 percent of Americans are living with a disability.

COPING WITH CAREGIVING
Nearly half of the CIR staff, 49.1 percent, said they have full- or part-time caregiving responsibilities.
CIR's staff is more racially and ethnically diverse than most news organizations throughout the United States.

We asked two questions to address racial and ethnic identity among staffers. Data in Graph 1 reflect answers to the question: "Which of these best describes your \textbf{ethnic identity}?"

Data in Graph 2 are indicative of how pre-constructed categories of race collapse nuance, and may effectively erase some respondents' self-identification. The data in Graph 2 reflect answers to the question:

"To organize its research on health, the NIH established the following limited categories of race, which we have used to further categorize your \textbf{racial identity}. Which of these best applies to you?"
CIR’s gender representation is on par with most digital-only newsrooms. Cis women make up 53.5 percent of the staff who responded to the survey, followed by cis men at 30.2 percent.

For this question, respondents could choose more than one designation, which is reflected in a total greater than 100.
This report reflects survey data submitted by CIR employees between Nov. 16, 2021 and Jan. 1, 2022, and interview data collected in January and February 2022. In total, 59 employees participated in the survey; 53 submitted all relevant requested data. We conducted interviews with 30 of the organization’s employees.

Due to an issue with the survey design, responses from 12 participants in the survey were omitted. To address this issue, contacted those participants via email and asked them to complete the remaining questions in a separate instrument. Out of the 12, five completed the remaining items. Their responses are reflected in the data.

Survey participants opted-in for interviews via a question on the instrument. Interviews were conducted via video call, and were recorded with participant permission. The interviews covered questions about internal affairs at CIR, as well as the individual participants’ responses to open-ended questions.

Data from the interviews and open-ended survey questions were coded and analyzed to identify key themes, which are reflected in the narrative of this report.

An edition of the narrative was submitted to the leadership team for review.
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