



# D&I Working Group TAC Update January 21, 2026

# Mission Statement

The goal of the Diversity & Inclusion Working Group at the Academy Software Foundation is to break down barriers to access and increase connection among participants in the Foundation's projects, the larger community, and the VFX & Animation industry. The working group brings together software engineers/developers, marketing/communication professionals, students & educators, and anyone else passionate about Diversity & Inclusion.



# D&I Working Group Focus Areas

## **Guide ASWF Diversity & Representation**

Be a guiding force towards diverse leadership and membership across the Foundation and its projects, working groups, and events.

## **External Outreach & Education**

Encourage and enable/empower high school and college students to pursue a career in or participate in open source projects by educating them on uses in the Media & Entertainment industries.

## **Member Guidance**

Provide guidance and resources for ASWF members to educate their colleagues on open source and D&I topics, especially junior engineers and internal D&I organizations.



# For today's update...

What did  
we do?

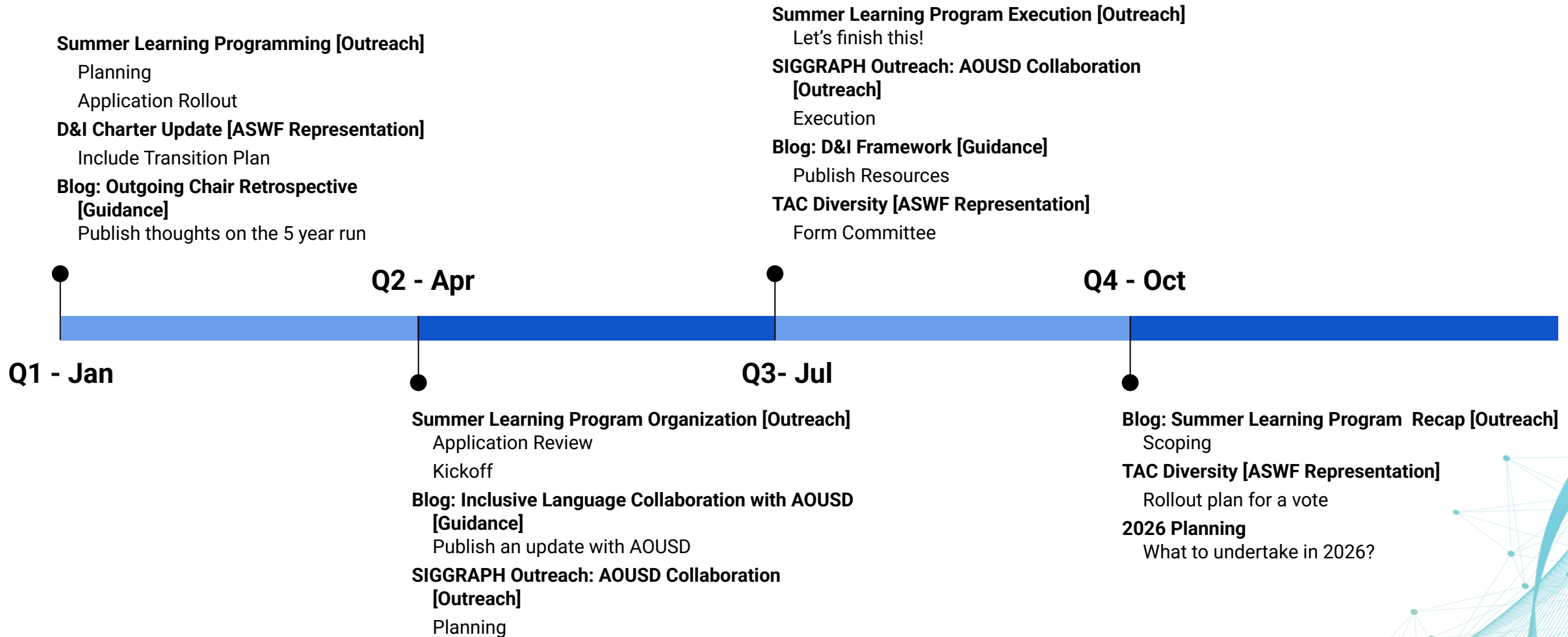
How did  
we do?

What are  
our  
plans?

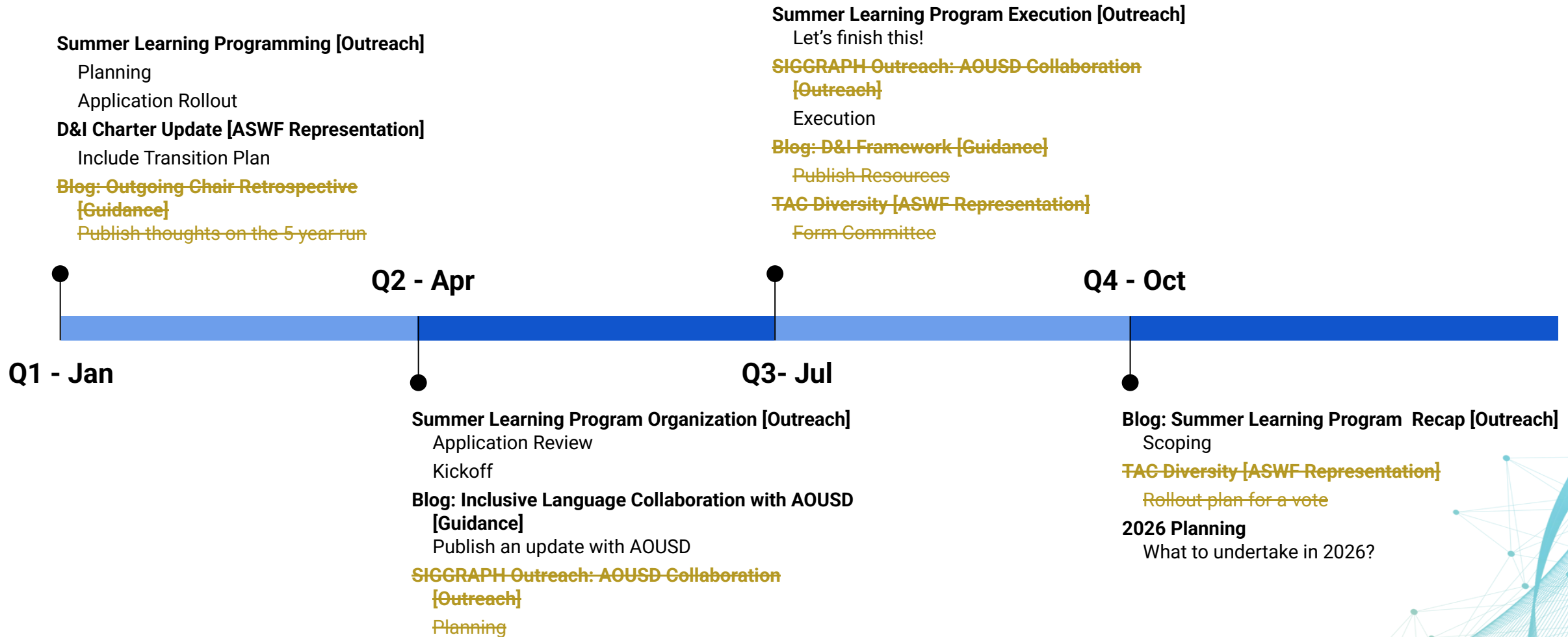
What  
input do  
you  
have?



# ASWF D&I Working Group 2025 Plans



# ASWF D&I Working Group 2025 Actuals



# D&I Working Group Charter Update

Action: Guidance for Members

What did  
we do?

Our charter had not been updated since the WG formation. We needed an update due to time passed, but also to formalize process for leadership transition. We added:

- Thorough update to existing wording
- New section for Initiative Leads
- New Section defining Co-Chair roles



# Leadership Change

What did  
we do?

**Karen Ruggles**

ASWF Diversity & Inclusion  
Working Group Co-Chair

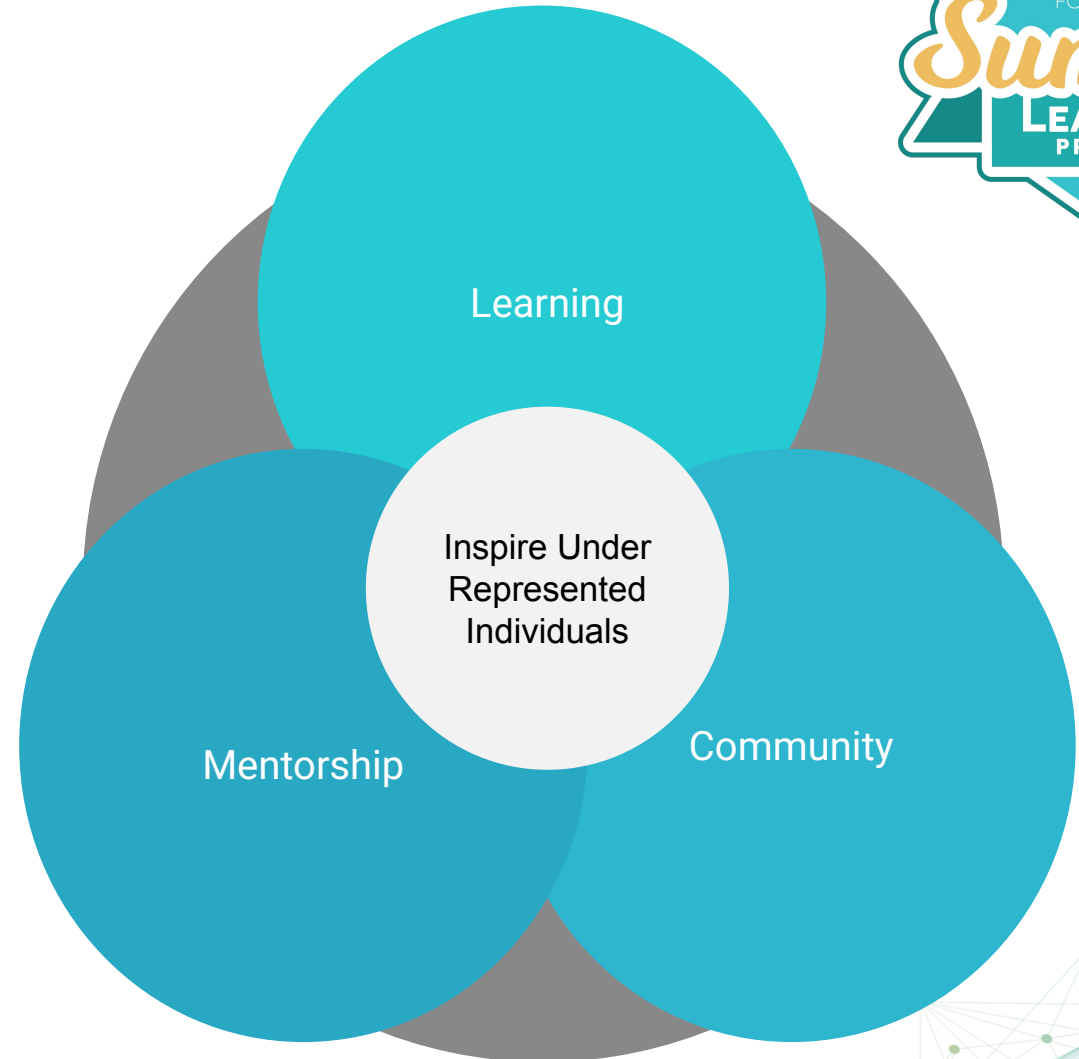


# Summer Learning Program

Action: Student Education

Summer 2025

- Underrepresented gender identities
- 18 Learners
- Industry Talks
  - ILM
  - DreamWorks
  - Walt Disney Studios
  - Netflix
- Structured Group Learning Time
  - Soft skills and networking
  - SLP Alumni Panel
  - ASWF projects
- Combo of FxPHD & Udemy



# Summer Learning Program

Action: Student Education



## Big Wins:

- Continue success from organizational transition of 2023
- Prioritized Speaker Series
- Great, active cohort including their desire to be involved after SLP

## Improvement Opportunities:

- Need to grow mentor pool to facilitate better matching
- Need to standardize long-term, operational support from greater ASWF



# Summer Learning Program

Action: Student Education

- The program is **working**
- Internship placements at Pixar, Disney Animation, Bolt Graphics
- Job placements at Dreamworks, Google, Epic Games, Jellyfish Animation, Sony Interactive Entertainment, and more
- Many learners continuing higher education in technical / entertainment focused areas of study

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ABOUT COMMUNITY PROJECTS NEWS &



Some Summer Learning Program participants attending SIGGRAPH 2024

We recently wrapped up the Academy Software Foundation's fourth annual [Summer Learning Program](#), with 20 student participants from around the world joining us to learn more about coding and potential technical career paths within visual effects and animation. This year's Program ran from June 16 through August 9, 2024.

Organized annually by the Foundation's Diversity & Inclusion Working Group, the Summer Learning Program aims to give practical skills, coding experience, and professional mentorship to students and early career learners from traditionally underrepresented communities. Summer Learning Program cohorts are typically comprised of participants that identify as BIPOC, Latinx, female, non-binary, LGBTQIA+, and neurodivergent, among others. Past graduates of the Program have gone on to successfully pursue technical careers through roles at DreamWorks Animation, Sony Interactive Entertainment, Epic Games, Jellyfish Animation, Microsoft, Amazon Web Services (AWS), and Technicolor Creative Studios.

# Organizational Opportunities

How did  
we do?

- Leadership transition
- Strengthen SLP
- Form bridge between D&I / Outreach group
- Partner with OpenUSD DEI Group



# Organizational Opportunities

How did  
we do?

- Leadership transition ✓
- Strengthen SLP ✓
- ~~Form bridge between D&I / Outreach group~~
- Partner with OpenUSD DEI Group ✓



# Up Next: Initiatives

What are  
our  
plans?

- SLP 2026
- Contributor Connection Initiative
- International Science Fair Discovery
- TAC Diversity



# ASWF TAC Diversity

Action: Increase ASWF Diversity & Representation

What are  
our  
plans?

The ASWF is pushing to affect the issue of diversity and inclusion within vfx, animation, open source, and the ASWF.

*We made a push to influence the makeup of the Governing Board. Is it important to do the same for the TAC over time to also reflect this important focus?*



# ASWF TAC Diversity

Action: Increase ASWF Diversity & Representation

What are  
our  
plans?

Pipeline

Our communities could be more diverse. *For TAC, TSC reps?*

Appointees

Need ways to encourage diversity in appointees.

Making Space

How can we make space for more great leaders?



# TAC Feedback

What  
input do  
you  
have?

## Things We Need:

- Participation

## Questions for the TAC:

- Are we focused in the correct areas?
- Where could we help your projects succeed?



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Thank you!

