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Great Public Schools for Every Student

SPECIAL FOCUS

Equity, Diversity & Social Justice



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THOUGHT & ACTION



Great Public Schools for Every Student

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SPECIAL FOCUS

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Overview

By Mary Ellen Flannery

In this issue of NEA's *Thought & Action*, authors explore the issues of equity, diversity, and social justice. These are topics that have gained new urgency in recent months, as our colleagues and students across the country have walked out, sat in, or otherwise insisted on our collective attention to racism and inequity.

At the University of Missouri, where a hunger-striking grad student grew weak in his protest and Black football players stood strong in their refusal to play, their efforts toppled the university president. Bianca Zachary, NEA-Student chapter president at Mizzou, told a colleague of mine, I expect I will be an activist for the rest of my life. I also believe being an activist will make me a better teacher.”

Can you be a good teacher—or instructor, or professor, or assistant dean, or deliverer of grants or IT services—if you avert your eyes now?

There is a children's story that I remember with a crumpling in my belly, about a village where everybody lives in happiness, eating good food in brightly lit kitchens—all except a withered, wordless child who lives alone in a dark, dank basement. It's a Faustian agreement: To keep their diabolical favors, their warm soups and flute concerts, the people of this village must overlook the child in the cellar.

I surely hope higher education in America is not like that village. But maybe it is. In his recent book, Ta-Nehisi Coates writes of “The Dream,” the collective delusion of “perfect houses with nice lawns. ... The Dream smells like peppermint but tastes like strawberry shortcake. For so long I have wanted to escape into the Dream, to fold my country over my head like a blanket. But this has never been an option because the Dream rests on our backs, the bedding made from our bodies.”

What it will take to change the sheets—and I'm talking about the institutional racism and many other -isms in the academy—is a lot of honest, hard work. In this issue, author Dana Stachowiak offers a solution, and it's not just “raising awareness...” She writes, “We must also raise

critical consciousness, not only to diversity, but to issues of equity, power, and privilege and oppression, and move faculty from passive observers of diversity initiatives to active participants in social justice education.”

This year’s authors urge action in a variety of ways. Author Diane Zeeuw’s powerful story of her son, Alex, who has schizophrenia, should move us to consider how we isolate students with psychiatric illnesses and deny them higher education. If a person is unlikely to hold a “productive” job, must he also be unworthy of the pursuit of ideas?

Others, such as authors Phu Phan and his colleagues, dive more deeply into the work that you do with students to teach them cultural competence. “Why do we have to talk about race? Why can’t we just all get along?” Phan’s students ask. But the talking, and the labor of self-reflection that follows, will free the child in the cellar.

NEA has never shirked from confronting racism: from its historic mid-20th century work around school desegregation to its newest work, charged by the 2015 NEA Representative Assembly in July, to spotlight the institutional racism and injustice that affects students.

“On a nearly daily basis, we hear disturbing stories: a student viciously beaten then arrested by campus police for underage drinking; racial slurs hurled at a student body president; a noose found hanging on a statue of a university’s first black student...These experiences aren’t new. But we are witnessing students speaking out, demanding justice, recognition, and an end to these purposeful and inherent prejudices,” wrote NEA President Lily Eskelsen García in a recent blog post. “These beautiful, brave rabble rousers will not be silenced. And neither will we,” she promised.

Finally, I must alert you to changes in the manner of production of *Thought & Action*. More than likely, you are not reading these words on the printed page, but on an iPad, Kindle, or other glowing screen. We no longer deliver a copy to every NEA Higher Ed household. If you want to request a print copy, visit www.subscribenea.com. Delivery is free to members. I also ask you to check nea.org/thoughtandaction frequently for newly published articles and calls for papers.

Mary Ellen Flannery is Thought & Action’s editor. She has worked for the National Education Association as a senior writer and editor since 2004. Previously, she reported on education for The Miami Herald.

Schizophrenia: A Journey through Higher Education

By Diane Zeeuw

From an early age, my son Alex exhibited small signs of neurological disorder: odd hand gestures, an awkward gait, extreme sensitivity to physical sensation or touch. Alex struggled during the K–12 years with minor conceptual deficits, odd social disconnections, and a strange kind of physical dislocation in space. As a child, Alex was first diagnosed with attention deficit, and then later with autistic spectrum disorder. But life progressed and, as we expect all young people to do, Alex eventually made friends, graduated from high school, began attending a respected private college, held down a job, and moved into his own house. But, things were never quite right. Unbeknownst to us, Alex was slipping piecemeal into a secret place. Picture the onset of the symptoms of schizophrenia as a kind of mental equivalent to the fluorescent snow of an off-channel cathode ray tube, the suggestive whispering hiss of constant visual and audial white noise, muffling and veiling the world in ghostly semblances. In this nightmarish realm, one's fears may be unwittingly broadcast via thought insertion, physical objects often manifest anthropomorphic qualities, boundaries become permeable, and malevolent beings battle for dominance.

Professor Diane Zeeuw possesses over twenty years of experience teaching graduate courses on aesthetics, ethics, critical theory, and visual culture at Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University. Her research has been presented at numerous national and international conferences including the Mediations Biennale, Poznan, Poland, and the Conference on the Image, Freie Universität, Berlin.

Today, schizophrenia controls my son's life: every decision we make must be weighed against carefully monitored symptoms, medications, and daily routines. However, the initial onset was insidious, only measurable in hindsight by an accumulation of small incidents over time.

Often forgotten in our rush to a metrics-driven analysis of education is this effectively invisible population of neurologically disabled students.

DISORDERS MOST OFTEN STRIKE THE YOUNG

My son was committed to Forest View Psychiatric Hospital for the first time just after his 21st birthday. Accordingly, most serious psychiatric disorders are first diagnosed between the ages of 18 and 28, making this a condition that almost exclusively manifests during the period of time we expect our young people to be attending col-

lege.¹ In other words, this is a condition directly affecting our students. While difficult to accept, statistically my son's experience is not all that unique. "One-fifth of college students experience a mental illness, and more and more students arrive on campus these days having received mental health services before starting their college careers," reports the Suicide Prevention Resource Center.² Additionally, more effective anti-psychotic and mood-stabilizing medications now make it possible for students coping with even the most serious psychiatric conditions to attend college. Studies published by the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) indicate that "26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 and older—about one in four adults—suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year."³

Often forgotten in our rush to a metrics-driven analysis of education is this effectively invisible population of neurologically disabled students. Without the proverbial "wheelchair" signifiers that provide material proof of their existence among us, many institutions overlook our students with psychiatric disorders. Is this lack of awareness based upon the presupposition that this subclass of the student population function merely as outliers? (Effecting, even in ignorance, a reinforcement of a sense of "otherness" and exclusion?)

Advocates of critical disability theory have been somewhat successful in broadening ideas of what might constitute a disability. However, we are only now as a society beginning to grapple with the complex and problematic notions of psychiatric and neurological disabilities. Some disabilities of cognition are clearly established as having a genetic or biological etiology or etiological component (e.g., autism, schizophrenia). Other mental conditions are classified as “disorders,” or “maladaptive” behaviors, further fueling confusion regarding individual accountability and volition.⁴

Those coping with a mental illness also face an added stigma: despite all of the evidence to the contrary, our society tends to associate, and even conflate, mental illness with violence. For example, a

Is it really all that difficult for us to grasp why someone coping with this condition might elect to remain invisible?

survey conducted by the Harvard Health Medical School in 2011 found that “60 percent of the general public [...] thought that people with schizophrenia were likely to act violently toward someone else, while 32 percent thought that people with major depression were likely to do so.”⁵ This widespread perception is exacerbated by sensationalized coverage of a few, albeit tragic, cases. Nonetheless, the NIMH reports that:

Mental Illness contributes very little to the overall rate of violence in the community. Most people with SMI (severe mental illness) are not violent, and most violent acts are not committed by people with SMI. In fact, people with SMI are actually *at higher risk of being victims of violence than perpetrators* (emphasis added). Teplin et al. found that those with SMI are 11 times more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general population.⁶

Given the widespread association between mental illness and violence, however, is it really all that difficult for us to grasp why someone coping with this condition might elect to remain *invisible*?

MY SON, THE STUDENT

“Alex” is not a pseudonym. My son requested his real name be used within this paper. He is not ashamed of having schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is not the sum of his worth; rather it is a condition that befell him in life. Alex, in some respects, is both the same person he was

While Alex may never hold a job, or raise a family, or even be able to live fully independently, he still has a deep and abiding love of learning.

before becoming ill (loving and kind), and also radically changed. I have witnessed first-hand his shrinking world and increasingly opaque future. Small everyday decisions have become difficult for him to navigate. To hear his own thoughts over a competing internal third-person dialogue, he must read out loud, like a monk chanting evening prayers. He has good days and very bad days. But he also creatively constructs hybridized com-

puters from bits and pieces, and immerses himself in books on algebra, geometry, and calculus. While he may never hold a job, or raise a family, or even be able to live fully independently, he still has a deep and abiding love of learning.

As educators, in the few cases where we have taken notice of students like Alex, our focus historically has been negative and exclusionary. We have spent far more time and effort discussing ways to protect ourselves from this population than in ways to engage them as students and citizens.

CITIZENSHIP AND EDUCATION

So, what does it mean to enjoy our citizenship? How does citizenship relate to our place within the broader community? Researchers Devlin and Pothier offer us a substantive notion of what it means to hold citizenship, defining it as, “the capacity to participate fully in all the institutions of society—not just those that fit the conventional definitions of the political, but also the social and cultural.”⁷

There is yet another obstacle dampening our conversation surrounding this topic. Pothier and Devlin note the many uncomfortable (and pejorative) terms used in our attempts to categorize or even discuss disability. They ruminate upon some of the definitions offered by the *Oxford*

English Dictionary, including “want of ability, [...] inability, incapacity, impotence and ‘disable’ as, among other things, ‘to pronounce incapable; hence to disparage, depreciate, detract from, belittle.’”⁸ Even when we would like to be able to speak about this subject with, at the very least, neutral terms, the very category disallows this. It’s difficult for us to adjust our notions regarding the capabilities of those coping with psychiatric or neurological conditions, without inadvertently equating such persons with deficits. Many disability researchers and advocates have suggested that we shift our framework from viewing limitation as internal to the subject, to viewing limitation as an aspect of the environment. This shift in focus has the advantage of making us all responsible as a society, rather than presuming

Why is it that we cannot find language and tools that will help us with our funding and assessment issues without falling into the divisive metrics of normalcy?

that this is someone else’s *individual problem*. This view also provides a site for positive action. Rather than think of the educational institution as providing *accommodations*, we can re-conceive of our mission as providing an inclusive and welcoming environment to all students.

To effect this change, we need to be cognizant of the assumptions that underlay our policies and adjust our language accordingly. On the one hand, as a society and as an institution, we clearly aspire to be inclusive; on the other, we rely upon narrow definitions of *normalcy* to formulate funding, assessment, and outcomes models. We are most certainly in conflict with our own ethical standards and stated objectives, even hypocritical in our denial of how such models may, and most likely will, affect our admission standards, funding at the institutional and programmatic levels, and the “tracking” (even red-lining?) of students. Why is it that we cannot find language and tools that will help us with our funding and assessment issues without falling into the divisive and shortsighted metrics of normalcy?

Devlin and Pothier note that “full citizenship” includes, at some level, the notion of a “capacity for productivity.” They go on to ask, “What is productivity? What are the criteria? Who gets to make the assessment? And most importantly, why should productivity (regardless of how we

define it) be a legitimate criterion? Embedded in the discourse of productivity is an unavoidable cost-benefit analysis.⁹ It doesn't take a political scientist to see that our current performance-based funding models favor a corporate standard of productivity, de-emphasizing other important outcomes of quality education such as social membership, social awareness, innovation, imagination, and individual growth.

If we really desire to be an inclusive society, we will need to adjust our notions of what it means to be productive.

If we really desire to be an inclusive society, we will need to adjust our notions of what it means to be *productive*. If a person may never be able to hold a job, should this also prevent him or her from engaging in higher educational opportunities? Is this a “waste” of taxpayer dollars? What does it mean to “waste” money? What does this say about how we

actually value others, irrespective of our official mission statements to the contrary? Those coping from schizophrenia in particular will most likely suffer additional bias. With an ever shrinking funding base, what program, department, or institution will want to risk missing performance benchmarks by admitting this population? Furthermore, while it is indeed the case that this disorder involves key deficits, this should never be equated with an inability to engage in complex student learning or the potential for a meaningful life.

Rather than merely adjusting our values, perhaps we need to reexamine our basic presuppositions regarding what constitutes education. We have fallen into the habit of late of discussing education in the terms of *outcomes* and *productivity*—without ever really questioning what it is we are ultimately saying about what constitutes (as Plato would have said) *a good society*. Many researchers (e.g., Piaget, Vygotsky, Engestrom) have suggested we shift our conceptualization of education from thinking in terms of product or performance outcomes to conceiving of it as an *activity*. Given this model, students and teachers may be thought of as engaging in the activity of learning together.¹⁰ Learning is thus to be understood as open-ended, provisional, culturally embedded, hermeneutically dialectical, and ongoing. Furthermore, I would argue that from an ethical rather

than a financial standpoint, full access to education, irrespective of each individual's potential capacity to contribute to the future economy, should be intrinsic to our notion of citizenship.

RECONCILIATION?

I offer four suggestions as possible avenues for action. First, I have always been open about my son's schizophrenia, allowing such information to filter into classroom seminar discussions regarding ethics, identity, and personhood. As educators, we must be willing to openly and in an informed manner, discuss the many fears, myths, and misconceptions historically shrouding this topic. Second, we must critically reassess our self-comfort-

We need to expand institutional and professional notions of success, and be more cognizant of the message our graduation-rate benchmarks send.

ing institutional discourse of *accommodation*. Third, we need to expand institutional and professional notions of success, and be more cognizant of the message our graduation-rate benchmarks send to our student population. Finally, it is absolutely critical that we expand our discourse on issues of diversity. As educators, it is imperative that we stop retreating into more easily negotiated definitions limited by sexual orientation, socio-economics, ethnicity or race.

To open a conversation addressing this issue, we might start by asking, "As educators, what do we think we know about schizophrenia?" Have we simply lumped all mental illness into one homogenous category so large as to be effectively meaningless? (This, of course, is something we would not dream of doing when considering race or ethnicity.) Or perhaps we have dismissed the subject altogether telling ourselves that this is really the school counselor's area of expertise. To even begin to understand the parameters Alex and others sharing this illness must negotiate, it would be helpful if educators had at least a basic working knowledge of the effects of even well-managed schizophrenia, including an awareness of sensory gating issues, the intense sedating and body-transforming effects of potent antipsychotic medications, the necessity of adhering to strict routines for maintaining stability, ongoing





"Indexing Schizophrenia #2," mixed media, by Diane Zeeuw.

problems coping with breakthrough symptoms, and were accepting of the odd, insuppressible, compulsive body tics commonly manifested in those suffering from this illness.¹¹

To end this article, I'll ask, "To whom are the current funding and assessment models accountable, and more importantly, who does *not count*? How can we foster an educational milieu where all students feel safe and welcomed?" My son Alex is still waiting to be fully included in an environment where his illness does not constitute a taboo subject, a world where he is accepted, not feared nor ridiculed so he may partake of learning on his terms, and for the pure joy of it. [nea](#)

ENDNOTES

1. Schizophrenia Information. *Facts and Statistics*.
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Building Bridges. Mental Health on Campus: Student Mental Health Leaders and College Administrators, Counselors, and Faculty in Dialogue*, p. 11.
3. National Institute of Mental Health. *Diagnosis-Schizophrenia and Schizoaffective Disorder*.
4. American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: Text Revision*.
5. Harvard Health Publications. Harvard Mental Health Letter, *Mental Illness and Violence*. This article summarizes the work of Fazel et al., "Bipolar Disorder and Violent Crime: New Evidence from Population-Based Longitudinal Studies and Systematic Review," pp. 931-38.
6. Insel, *Diagnosis-Schizophrenia and Schizoaffective Disorder*.
7. Devlin and Pothier, "Toward a Critical Theory of dis-Citizenship," p. 1.
8. *Ibid*, p. 4.
9. *Ibid*, p. 18
10. Martin Ryder School of Education, *Activity Theory*. See also Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh, The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*.
11. Freedman et al., *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, "Neurobiological Studies of Sensory Gating in Schizophrenia."

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Who Benefits?: A Critical Race Analysis of the (D)Evolving Language Of Inclusion in Higher Education

*By Jessica C. Harris, Ryan P. Barone,
and Lori Patton Davis*

The primary purpose of this paper is to expand the ways in which educators and scholars employ the concepts of diversity, social justice, and inclusive excellence in relation to racial inclusivity. Our goals are to help educators identify and acknowledge the intentional and unintentional consequences of maintaining white supremacy within higher education, despite espoused efforts to dismantle racism.¹ For the sake of clarity and consistency, we refer to all three of these concepts—diversity, social justice, and inclusive excellence—in terms of race-based inclusion initiatives. Our focus on race is rooted in the ever-present role of race and racism in the academy, and in the sustained attempts to either avoid or dilute them.² Given

Dr. Jessica C. Harris is a lecturer in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Kansas. Her research focuses on critical approaches to sexual assault on the college campus, multiraciality in higher education, and utilizing critical race theory to critique systemic inequities in educational contexts.

Ryan P. Barone, Ph.D., is the director of Student Leadership and Development at Aims Community College in Greeley, Colorado. His research interests include realizing socially just policies and practices in student affairs in higher education.

Dr. Lori D. Patton is associate professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs in the Indiana University School of Education. Her research interests broadly focus on the following areas related to postsecondary contexts: race and racism, critical race theory, college student development, and equity and diversity initiatives.

the emphasis on race and racism, we employ critical race theory (CRT) to demonstrate how diversity, social justice, and inclusive excellence, as well as the efforts that stem from them, are often co-opted to promote agendas that maintain the status quo and uphold white privilege, rather than serve racially minoritized people.³

White leaders typically tolerate advances toward racial inclusion as long as those advances are not too severe and do not disrupt the status quo.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY AS A TOOL OF ANALYSIS

CRT traces its origins to critical legal studies, and serves as a race-based epistemology uniquely suited for examining the evolution of the language framing inclusion in the U.S.⁴ Increasingly, CRT has been used to facilitate critical examinations of systemic racism throughout U.S. education; therefore, it also

provides a unique lens for analyzing higher education's language of inclusion.⁵ One tenet of CRT that explicitly relates to this analysis is interest convergence, a concept that explores how advances for people of color are tolerated only when these advances benefit white society at similar or greater rates.⁶ Viewing the rhetoric of educational inclusion through a CRT and interest-convergence perspective exposes how this rhetoric may provide more gains for the white academy than it does for those they claim to serve (i.e., students, faculty, and administrators of color).

Interest Convergence

Derrick Bell asserted that gains in racial equity are advanced only when it benefits white society.⁷ White leaders typically tolerate advances toward racial inclusion as long as those advances are not too severe and do not disrupt the status quo. (For example, see the 1993 case of Lani Guinier, whose nomination to head the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division was abandoned by President Bill Clinton when her ideas for empowering black Americans were seen as "too radical.")⁸ In other words, advancement toward racial equity may occur, but only in an incremental fashion. This desire for incrementalism stifles the more drastic systemic changes needed to make higher education and society more equitable.

Interest convergence is used as the primary lens of analysis throughout the remainder of this discussion because it captures the process whereby inclusion initiatives emerge with great intentions and expectations, but do not end with the actualization of equity. Crenshaw noted, “Critical race projects have occupied both deconstructionist and interventionist spaces... Critical Race Theory, both in its traditional interactions and in an expanded articulation, can and should disrupt racial settlement and push for conceptual tools.”⁹ Diversity, social justice, and more recently inclusive excellence, have been touted as conceptual tools that, by definition, are used to disrupt racial settlement. However, examining these conceptual tools within a CRT framework, and more specifically with interest convergence, reveals how these inclusion initiatives afford procedural rights but not substantive outcomes. Students of color may be given access to higher education, but they are not set up for success once they arrive on campus. Racial inclusion initiatives also focus on equality as a process rather than an outcome—and, in doing so, ignore inequities of the past to focus on future, individual, and isolated offenses against people of color.¹⁰ In this analysis we use interest convergence to examine the (de)volving language of inclusion in U.S. higher education.

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RACE-BASED INCLUSIVITY IN U.S. EDUCATION

Diversity

The concept of campus diversity emerged in the 1970s, and typically was framed as a numbers game focused almost exclusively on increasing the totals and, to a lesser extent, the percentages, of racially minoritized students on college campuses.¹¹ In the 1980s, a resurgence occurred around race-based inclusivity with a focus on “diversity” and its associated benefits for society, broadly, and higher education, specifically.¹² This relatively new concept focused primarily on the benefits for white students of “experiencing” racial diversity and having visible representation of people

of color in higher education. Seen in institutional mission statements, policies, and other campus artifacts, the term “diversity” is used in multiple contexts serving myriad functions.¹³

The contemporary concept of diversity in higher education may be best known for its appearance in the discourse surrounding the ruling of the 1978 Supreme Court case *Regents of the University of California v Bakke* and then again in 2003 in *Grutter v Bollinger*. In 1978, Justice Powell ruled that the essentials for student learning would only be tangible amongst a diverse student body and that the training of tomorrow’s leaders rests on exposure to diverse peoples.¹⁴ This reasoning soon became known as the diversity rationale for affirmative action.¹⁵ Recently, and

While an increase in student diversity likely generated more cross-cultural learning, interest convergence informs the question “learning for whom?”

possibly due to the over-use of the term, scholars have suggested that “diversity” has become a buzzword in higher education” without significant progressive utility.¹⁶

CRT Analysis of Diversity

While an increase in student diversity likely generated more cross-race cultural learning on college campuses, interest convergence informs the question “learning for whom?” Despite diversity efforts in higher education, racially minoritized students often are treated like “native informants” in the classroom, and the benefit of racial diversity at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) becomes unidirectional, with racially minoritized students carrying the burden of educating their white peers.¹⁷ Interest convergence also critiques the groups that sometimes gain access to higher education through diversity-rationalized affirmative action admissions programs. Scholars have found that people with multiple marginalized identities, such as women of color, have not benefited from affirmative action at the same rate as white women and men of color.¹⁸ Moreover, students (the vast majority of whom are white) are much more likely to benefit from legacy admissions preferences than are people of color to be assisted by affirmative action.¹⁹

When colleges employ diversity principles to enact access, they typically are not required to interrogate the institutional whiteness prevalent in the structure, practices, and assumptions of PWIs.²⁰ This means that colleges facilitate access on a procedural level, not on a substantive level. For example, granting access to higher education for students of color is a procedural right. Unfortunately, this access is not substantive; it does not guarantee students' success within higher education. Furthermore, procedural rights provide "proof that society is indeed just" to individuals of color and their allies, quelling their fight for equal access to education, and more importantly, disruption of the status quo.²¹

Interest convergence also offers a critique of the commodification of diversity for institutional benefit, or the practice of marketing structural/visual diversity to attract students-as-consumers. It also complicates the manner in which the socially constructed concept of race is manipulated to uphold power structures. Institutional leaders, who are overwhelmingly white, may manipulate and construct a diverse student body to serve institutional needs.²² A striking example of this manipulation was the University of Wisconsin–Madison's 2000 decision to Photoshop a picture of a black student into promotional materials.²³ Subsequently, 100,000 admissions booklets were distributed with a fabricated illusion of racial diversity.²⁴ Similar allegations recently have arisen at Scripps College, where, according to current students, racially minoritized students were "duped" into attendance by a misrepresentation of racial inclusion on the institutional website and recruitment materials.²⁵

Using the concept of diversity to racially integrate campuses is largely palatable to administrators in power because token incrementalism in terms of racial heterogeneity does not substantially threaten generations of institutionalized racial privilege. Bell and Hartman explained that this perspective of diversity, "starts from the dominance of white worldviews, and sees the culture, experiences, and indeed lives, of people of color only as they relate to or interact with the white world."²⁶ This definition of

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diversity centers whiteness as normative, or an ideal way of being, forcing racially minoritized students to assimilate to white culture to succeed. Unfortunately, traversing and learning the norms of white culture may be detrimental to racially minoritized students, as they are forced to consign their own culture to the margins.

Different from diversity, social justice necessitates an analysis of power and privilege on individual and institutional levels.

With the broadening of diversity as an umbrella concept to encompass many social identities beyond race, the political impact of diversity as a means for facilitating systemic change is somewhat limited. Actions justified through stated goals of diversity without acknowledgement of the longstanding effects of privilege, power, and oppression equate to an inability to facilitate meaningful change toward inclusion on college

campuses. In part due to the failure of diversity efforts to make any real change, the concept of social justice gained prominence in U.S. higher education during the latter half of the 20th century.

The Fluidity of Social Justice

The concept of social justice has changed and adapted since John Rawls first introduced it in 1971.²⁷ Rawls likened social justice to distributive justice, or the equal distribution of goods and services to all. However, 20 years after Rawl's conceptualization, distributive justice fell short in addressing the systemic and institutional structures that determined distribution of resources, including those in higher education.²⁸ From this realization came a re-envisioning of social justice, one "where assimilation to majority or dominant cultural norms is no longer the price of equal respect."²⁹ Different from diversity, social justice necessitates an analysis of power and privilege on individual and institutional levels.³⁰ While diversity still has social relevance on its own, when used in tandem with social justice it conveys a broader conceptualization beyond numerical representation toward quality of interactions and cross-cultural engagement.

Social justice education draws much of its pedagogy, epistemology,

and instructional practices from Women's Studies, Queer Studies, and Ethnic Studies. A frequently used definition is:

Social justice is both a process and a goal. The goal of social justice is full and equal participation for all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure.³¹

Social justice education has gained tremendous momentum as a component of student learning in U.S. colleges and universities.³²

CRT Analysis of Social Justice

A key distinction between diversity efforts and social justice initiatives is that the former often

focus on equal distribution and numbers, while the latter are more concerned with systems of power and inequity. "It does not necessarily follow that a diverse institution will either address all the concerns faced by students of color or work toward greater equity and social justice," Castagno and Lee explained.³³ By focusing more on privilege, power, and oppression, social justice has a more activist trajectory than previous concepts. Nonetheless, its potency for transformation and its comprehensive goals of inclusivity, contextualized by the history of racial oppression in the U.S., still can be mitigated or appropriated by dominant educational narratives.³⁴

An interest-convergence analysis of social justice in higher education reveals policies and practices that are not always in the best interest of racially minoritized students. For instance, initiatives contained within the umbrella of social justice in higher education have become so expansive that they often function to limit critical discussions about race and racism. One such initiative is the hiring of diversity officers or the implementation of offices that focus on campus diversity. While seemingly helpful, these offices and positions often allow institutions to compartmentalize their efforts toward combating racism. The results, such as diversity mission statements or climate assessment data that is minimally

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(or never) used, tend to be token gestures that place the burden of this systemic work on a few. Functional areas charged with focusing on diversity or social justice are caught in a double bind. “The concern is rooted in the institution’s self-interest of being a ‘better and more competitive’ institution rather than in a social justice rationale.”³⁵ The individuals and

Well-intentioned social justice programming may also reinforce essentialism—the notion that a group of people share or can be defined by one experience.

campus offices charged with implementing a social justice change are often undermined, serving to perpetuate a racial status quo rooted in a numerical diversity agenda.³⁶

The well-intentioned social justice programming in higher education may also reinforce essentialism—the notion that a group of people share or can be defined by one experience—through cultural awareness events that promote “celebration” of cultural and racial

diversity on campus without analysis of privilege, power, and oppression.³⁷ The critique of systems of oppression with a focus on intersecting identities is essential in social justice engagement.³⁸ Therefore, popular awareness-raising cultural events, often labeled as social justice programming, such as the serving of ethnic food, cultural dance performances, and events such as Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations, are in fact diversity events, and not social justice programming.

Many popular social justice experiences facilitated on college campuses, when analyzed from an interest-convergence perspective, teach white students at the cost or expense of racially minoritized students. Programs such as “privilege walks,” where students take actual steps across a room to mark their personal and group privileges, typically result in white people in the front of a room and racially minoritized students in the back. This social positioning is likely not surprising for racially minoritized students, and facilitators often devote substantial time to helping white students process through the associated guilt for being at the front of the group. Similar patterns can manifest in other co-curricular social justice programs such as one-time activities and simulations with students (e.g., Tunnel of Oppression).³⁹ Often these programs perpetuate a deficit-based narrative of communities of color.⁴⁰ Moreover, programming under the social jus-

tice umbrella focused on simply presenting stereotypical cultural artifacts (e.g., “Food, Festivals, and Fetish”) make institutions appear committed to social justice, while undermining its very ideas.⁴¹

While the definition of social justice by Adams, Bell, and Griffin ideally represents systemic institutional transformation, the implementation of social justice on many college campuses has followed a trajectory similar to diversity in that its radical aspirations remain unrealized.⁴² Definitional uncertainty, mainstream cooptation, and the allure of a sexy buzzword all limit the impact of the social justice concept. In part to remedy the deficit-based nature of diversity efforts and to build on social justice principles, inclusive excellence was introduced.

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Inclusive Excellence

In 2005, the Association for American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) commissioned three separate reports that pointed out structural barriers within inclusion initiatives that continue to deter student success. First, institutions create multiple diversity initiatives in isolation, rather than in collaboration with one another.⁴³ Second, campus constituents do not recognize the connection between diversity and educational excellence. The AAC&U argued that racially minoritized students would succeed in college when an inclusion framework that incorporates diversity at its core is actualized. Third, the ever-widening achievement and opportunity gap for racially minoritized students “signals failure, not only for the individual students affected but also for the colleges and universities they attend and the educational system as a whole.”⁴⁴ Last, the affirmation for the value of diversity in higher education was seen in the rulings in the University of Michigan Supreme Court cases and largely upheld in the more recent *Fisher v. Texas* case.⁴⁵

The concept of inclusive excellence pulls together the initiatives and rhetoric surrounding inclusion of the last 45 years. It encompasses diversity, but seemingly moves past its initial conceptualizations. With inclusive excellence, diversity extends beyond student body composition

and examines “engagement across racial and ethnic lines comprised of a broad set of activities and initiatives.”⁴⁶ While the word “diversity” can be easily found throughout AAC&U’s publications, “social justice” is not often mentioned. Instead, equity is linked to social justice. According to AAC&U, equity is “a matter of social justice” that addresses the quality,

not the quantity, of resources.⁴⁷ The history of language and the framing of race-based inclusivity concepts in higher education are extensive and ever expanding. It is for this reason that we argue for applying a critical inspection of the meaning and value of diversity, social justice, and inclusive excellence in the academy. This work is necessary to better comprehend how these concepts have been positioned.

This cooptation of racial-justice organizations is not limited to Ford; collectively, major U.S. philanthropies, “act in the long-range interests of the corporate world.”

CRT Analysis of Inclusive Excellence

One of the most interesting aspects of the AAC&U’s papers is how and through whom these documents, and therefore inclusive excellence, came to fruition. The Ford Foundation funded the inclusive excellence literature.⁴⁸ Their support is extremely relevant because the Ford Foundation, which many may categorize as a liberal foundation, has a history of involvement in counterinsurgency programs in the U.S. and other countries.⁴⁹ In the 1960s, the Foundation began investing large amounts of money in the Congress of Racial Equality and other civil rights organizations, such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the National Urban League, in hopes of calming growing racial unrest in U.S. cities.⁵⁰ Interest convergence was exposed when the Ford Foundation gave “massive help” to urban black communities so that racial tension would not ignite the dissolution of U.S. cities, the rebuilding of which would fall to whites, not blacks.⁵¹ In essence, the Ford Foundation invested time and money in race-based organizations to conquer, divide, and “channel and control the black liberation movement and forestall future urban revolts.”⁵²

This cooptation of racial-justice organizations is not limited to Ford; collectively, major U.S. philanthropies, “act in the long-range interests of

the corporate world. Their trustees and staff are typically members of the power elite, but they have added blacks, women, Hispanics, and others to broaden support and deflect criticism.”⁵³ Higher education is not immune to this cooptation and interest convergence may be present in the funding and implementation of inclusive excellence on college campuses.

While this paper focuses on concepts related to inclusion, it is noteworthy that inclusive excellence does not often mention the intersections of race with other identities. The AAC&U’s almost exclusive focus on race and racism is new to the rhetoric of inclusion, but its focus on this social identity and system of oppression does not account for the complexity of intersecting identities and oppressions, resulting in inclusive excellence’s

The creation of an award to recognize inclusive achievements quantifies and commodifies inclusive excellence, making it seem measurable and achievable.

inability to fully address and break down all barriers to realize inclusive education.⁵⁴ Additionally, the three AAC&U documents do not aim to address the systemic oppression deeply embedded in the majority of higher education institutions today. For example, in *Making Diversity Work on Campus*, Milem and colleagues stressed the importance of hiring faculty of color because it diversifies the professoriate and because these individuals “are also more likely than other faculty to include content related to diversity in their curricula and to utilize active learning and student-centered teaching techniques.”⁵⁵ Meanwhile, as faculty of color enact inclusive pedagogy in their classrooms and carry the onus of inclusion, the authors of the documents would allow “other faculty” (i.e., white) to continue their exclusive educational practices.

Several U.S. institutions of higher education have adopted the inclusive excellence concept on their campuses. For example, the University of Missouri has begun awarding faculty and staff for their work with inclusive excellence. However, these types of awards may obscure true racial progress. The creation of an award to recognize inclusive achievements quantifies and commodifies inclusive excellence, making it seem measurable and achievable. In other words, these awards purport that one only needs to do so much to achieve inclusivity. The commodification of



"Nobody will hurt you," rubber floor mat, by Terri Lindbloom, professor of sculpture at Florida State University. For more of Lindbloom's work, see www.unfold.space.

inclusive excellence and its economic benefit conferred on the dominant culture is also apparent in the AAC&U and the American Council on Education's consulting and training fees. Additionally, the proceeds from these fees benefit individuals and organizations, the majority of whom are white. As Bell noted, "once again, the rhetoric obscures the issues" allowing for the subtle maintenance of structures that uphold white privilege and supremacy to remain as the building blocks of higher education.⁵⁶

CHALLENGING ENTRENCHED SYSTEMS

Within the last 45 years, activist-scholars have envisioned radical reform in higher education to meaningfully restructure the antiquated views on curricula, policies and procedures, and pedagogies originally constructed for and by white men. However, these radical calls for new educational efforts often have been co-opted and systematized by institutions and people in power, resulting in limited progressive aims.⁵⁷ An incremental approach to inclusion without simultaneously challenging institutional hegemony will have, at best, a null or, at worst, a negative impact toward a vision for equity in higher education.

We assert that the devolving language of racial inclusions has supported this incremental approach to change. "Well-intentioned policies committed to creating a more inclusive campus climate may unwittingly reinforce practices that support exclusion and inequity."⁵⁸ Jargon-laden diversity statements, policies, and commitments, which are not explicitly critical of systems of institutionalized privilege, are destined to fail. "Higher education as a whole...may well be performing contradictory functions—for example, bolstering and reproducing privilege and inequality at the same time as they are creating new knowledge of benefit to all."⁵⁹ As explored above, these contradictory functions often are found in the rhetoric of diversity, social justice, and inclusive excellence.

Understanding the trajectory of inclusivity rhetoric in higher education can help educators become aware of the need to challenge entrenched belief systems while also moving them toward acknowledging their own complicity. Critical race theory can help this cause and "develop a broader project, one that interrogates the limitations of contemporary race discourse both in terms of its popular embodiment and its epistemic foundations."⁶⁰ One way to meet this challenge is through identifying and naming the hegemony in the academy that privileges the status quo and, by extension, those individuals with generational privilege in U.S. society.

“Identifying dominant discourses that reflect and shape contemporary images of diversity can provide another lens for understanding diversity in higher education.”⁶¹ The goals of diversity and social justice in higher education have not been realized: Do we need newly articulated movements such as inclusive excellence? Who benefits from this evolution? Educators should view the (de)volving language and policies of inclusion with skepticism, while critically examining its potential and utility in higher education. [nea](#)

END NOTES

1. Brennan and Naidoo, “Higher Education and the Achievement (and/or prevention) of Equity and Social Justice,” pp. 287-302; and North, “More than Words? Delving into the Substantive Meaning(s) of ‘Social Justice’ in Education,” pp. 507-35.
2. Harper, “Race without Racism: How Higher Education Researchers Minimize Racist Institutionalized Norms,” pp. 9-29.
3. We use the term racially minoritized and not racial minority, “to signify the social construction of underrepresentation and subordination in U.S. social institutions, including colleges and universities. Persons are not born into a minority status nor are they minoritized in every social context...Instead, they are rendered minorities in particular situations and institutional environments that sustain an overrepresentation of whiteness.” See Harper, “Race without Racism: How Higher Education Researchers Minimize Racist Institutionalized Norms,” p. 9.
4. See Bell, *And We Are Not Saved: The Elusive Quest for Racial Justice*; and Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*.
5. Ladson-Billings and Tate, “Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education,” pp. 47-68.
6. Bell, “Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-convergence Dilemma,” pp. 518-33.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *The New York Times*, “The Lani Guinier Mess.”
9. Crenshaw, “Twenty Years of Critical Race Theory: Looking Back to Move Forward,” p. 1351.
10. Crenshaw, “Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law,” pp. 247-84.
11. See Patton and Hannon, “Collaboration for Cultural Programming: Engaging Culture Centers, Multicultural Affairs, and Student Activities Offices as Partners,” pp. 139-154; and Smith, *Diversity’s Promise for Higher Education: Making it Work*.
12. See Berrey, “Why Diversity became Orthodox in Higher Education, and How it Changed the Meaning of Race on Campus,” pp. 573-96; and Perlmutter, “Power and Privilege: Why Justice Demands more than Diversity,” pp. 245-55.
13. Wilson, et al., “Mission and Diversity Statements: What they do and do not say,” pp. 125-39.
14. *Regents of University of California v. Bakke*, 438 U.S. 265 (1978).
15. Chang, “Reconsidering the Diversity Rationale,” pp. 6-13.
16. Patton, et al., “Introduction to the Emergent Approaches to Diversity and Social Justice in Higher Education Special Issue,” p. 271.
17. Hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, p. 3.
18. See Guerrero, “Affirmative Action: Race, Class, Gender, and Now,” pp. 246-55; and Herring and Henderson, “From Affirmative Action to Diversity: Toward a Critical Diversity Perspective,” pp. 629-43.

19. Wise, *Affirmative Action: Racial Preference in Black and White*.
20. Taylor, "Critical Race Theory and Interest Convergence in the Backlash Against Affirmative Action: Washington State and the Initiative 200," pp. 539-60.
21. Bell, *Silent Covenants: Brown V. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform*, p. 56.
22. Owen, "Privileged Social Identities and Diversity Leadership in Higher Education," pp. 185-207.
23. Wade, "Doctoring Diversity: Race and Photoshop."
24. *Ibid.* The cut-and-pasted student, Diallo Shabazz, sued and won \$10 million, which he pledged to direct toward recruiting racially minoritized students throughout the University of Wisconsin system, though ultimately much of the money never went to diversity initiatives.
25. Park, "Microaggressive Scripps: An Open Letter to the Scripps Community."
26. Bell and Hartmann, "Diversity in Everyday Discourse: The Cultural Ambiguities and Consequences of 'Happy Talk,'" p. 907.
27. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*.
28. Fraser, "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation, 1996."
29. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
30. Adams, et al., eds. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
32. See Adams, et al., *op cit*; and Reason and Davis, "Antecedents, Precursors, and Concurrent Concepts in the Development of Social Justice Attitudes and Actions."
33. Castagno and Lee, "Native Mascots and Ethnic Fraud in Higher Education: Using Tribal Critical Race Theory and the Interest Convergence Principle as an Analytic Tool," p. 4.
34. Pasque, *American Higher Education, Leadership, and Policy: Critical Issues and the Public Good*.
35. Castagno and Lee, *op cit*, p. 5.
36. Pasque, *op cit*.
37. Grillo, "Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality: Tools to Dismantle the Master's House," pp. 16-30.
38. See Adams, et al., *op cit*; Reason and Davis, *op cit*.
39. This is an interactive experience in which participants walk through a "tunnel" of oppression, which are depicted through acting, pictures, monologues, and such.
40. Gorski, "Complicity with Conservatism: The De-politicizing of Multicultural Education," pp. 163-77
41. *Ibid.*
42. Adams, et al., *op cit*.
43. Williams, et al., *Toward a Model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Postsecondary Institutions*.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. vii-viii.
45. *Fisher v. University of Texas*, 570 U.S. 11-345 (2013).
46. Milem, et al., *Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-based Perspective*, p. 4.
47. Association of American Colleges and Universities, "From the Editor: A Liberal and Liberating Education for All.
48. Association of American Colleges and Universities, "Resources for Making Excellence Inclusive."
49. Roelofs, *Foundations and Public Policy: The Mask of Pluralism*.
50. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America, an Analytic History*.

51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
53. Roelfs, *op cit*, p. 25.
54. Zion and Blanchett, "[Re]conceptualizing Inclusion: Can Critical Race Theory and Interest Convergence be Utilized to Achieve Inclusion and Equity for African American Students?" pp. 2186-205.
55. Milem, et al., *op cit*.
56. Bell, *op cit*, p. 138.
57. See Ladson-Billings and Tate, *op cit*; and Pasque, *op cit*.
58. Iverson, *op cit*, p. 152.
59. Brennan and Naidoo, *op cit*, p. 291.
60. Crenshaw, *op cit*, p. 1351.
61. Iverson, *op cit*, p. 149.

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Unionization and Shared Governance at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

By Elizabeth Davenport

Given their history of socio-economic peripheralization and continued struggles for success, one would expect African Americans—especially highly educated ones—to be adept at the various forms of mobilization and advocacy, especially that of labor unions, which have not only provided them access to opportunities but also given them a voice in the governance of organizations. But they are not, and this is especially true of faculty members in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). In fact, on some HBCU campuses faculty members have no mechanism to participate in the governance of their own universities.

In this article, after briefly summarizing the history of HBCUs, I will examine the role of unions as an agent of faculty representation and a conduit of shared governance between faculty and administrators. Specifically, my aim is to examine unionization as a form of advocacy for meaningful participation and representation by HBCU faculty in decision making at HBCUs, whether in the form of dispute resolution, collective bargaining, or the promulgation of operational policies.¹

Elizabeth K. Davenport, *Ph. D., J. D.*, is president of the United Faculty of Florida—Florida A&M University and vice-president of the statewide United Faculty of Florida. Dr. Davenport is a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling in the College of Education at Florida A&M University. She is a graduate of Michigan State University's College of Education, where she received a doctorate in Teaching, Curriculum, and Educational Policy. Dr. Davenport is the author of more than 50 articles, chapters, and proceedings papers, and the successful chair of over 20 dissertations. Her research interests are K–12 teaching and learning, African-centered education, the integration of technology in K–12 classrooms, educational and constitutional law, and educational policy.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

One of the greatest struggles faced by African Americans has been the prolonged fight to be educated. The first higher education institution for African Americans, the Institute for Colored Youth, was founded

in Cheney, Pennsylvania, in 1837. About 20 years later, Lincoln University, also in Pennsylvania, and Wilberforce University in Ohio followed. Initially, institutions were called “universities” or “institutes,” but their primary mission was to provide elementary and secondary schooling to the educationally disenfranchised African American population. Traditionally white institutions (TWIs) had similar missions during this time.

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Following the Civil War, the situation changed. Public support for higher education for African American students came from the enactment of the Second Morrill Act in 1890. The First Morrill Act (also known as the National Land-Grant Colleges Act of 1862) made post-secondary education accessible to broader state populations, but did not recognize the needs of African American students. The Second Morrill Act made provisions for land grant institutions for African American students in states with racially segregated institutions of higher education. As a result of the passage of the new act, public land-grant institutions for African American institutions were founded, as well as a number of formerly private African Americans that were started in mostly southern states. In addition, former private African American institutions came under public control, and 16 African American institutions were designated land-grant colleges.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* established the “separate but equal” doctrine. This doctrine validated racially dual public elementary and secondary school systems, and provided segregated teacher training programs aimed at educating African American students in segregated public school systems. The court’s decision stipulated that states must offer schooling for African American students, as soon as it provided

it for whites; that African American students must receive the same treatment as white students; and that states must provide facilities of comparable quality for African American and white students.² To eradicate the vestiges of discrimination, many states resorted to policies of social equality readily accepting the separate but equal construct. These policies were this nation's first attempt at affirmative action, providing minorities (and white women) certain preferences in employment and college admissions.

By 1953, more than 32,000 students were enrolled in *private* African American institutions and other small African American colleges, such as Fisk University, Hampton Institute, Howard University, Meharry Medical College, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Tuskegee

Institute. In addition, over 40,000 students were enrolled in *public* African American colleges, and HBCUs enrolled 3,200 students in graduate programs.³ In a racially segregated society, these private and public institutions provided an education for African American teachers, scientists, ministers, lawyers, and doctors.

The “separate but equal” doctrine was rejected in 1954 when the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* ruled that racially segregated public schools deprived African American students of equal protection guaranteed by the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Despite the court ruling in the *Brown* decision, most HBCUs remained predominately African American institutions. With the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, more African American students began exercising their rights and enrolling in TWIs. These new opportunities, coupled with the erosion of support for affirmative action since the 1970s, led to additional stresses on HBCUs. Over the past 40 years, almost 20 HBCUs have closed—primarily due to money problems and so-called “diversity initiatives” at TWIs that have siphoned away enrollments and endowments.⁴ The closures of these schools represent a significant loss of opportunity for many African American students. However, others (e.g., state regulators) see this loss of enrollment differently. Norman Tripp,

Over the past 40 years, almost 20 HBCUs have closed—primarily due to money problems and so-called “diversity initiatives” at TWIs.

a member of the Florida Board of Governors recently said that Florida A&M University was experiencing dwindling enrollment because other state universities are making gains in attracting more minority students. “The reality is you are competing in a very hot market and that makes it difficult. You need to be diverse,” Tripp said.

African American students at HBCUs are more likely to be involved in student government, spend more time using campus facilities, and to participate in campus clubs.

THE CONTINUED RELEVANCE OF HBCUs

Despite the decline noted above, HBCUs continue to produce African American graduates in great numbers. These alumni enter the professional world in occupations as varied as education, medicine, law, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines, public service, government, and business.

Specifically, over half of all African American professionals are graduates of HBCUs. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the nation’s HBCUs accounted for more than 10 percent of all African American doctoral graduates in 2004 and 2006.⁵ Additionally, more than 50 percent of the nation’s African American public school teachers and 70 percent of African American dentists earned degrees at HBCUs, while Spelman College and Bennett College produce over half of the nation’s African American female doctorates in all science fields.⁶

Student engagement is one of the most influential factors in student success. According to the National Study for Student Engagement, on some measures, students at HBCUs report higher levels of engagement than do their white counterparts at non-HBCUs.⁷ For example, African American students at HBCUs are more likely to be involved in student government, spend more time using campus facilities, and participate in clubs and organizations.⁸ Students attending HBCUs appear to demonstrate increased charitable giving, political participation, religious participation, and a greater propensity to major in the physical sciences compared with those who went to TWIs.⁹ Yet, despite the key role HBCUs have played and continue in the lives of African Americans and this nation, the worth of a HBCU degree is on the decline. Economists Fryer

and Greenstone note that, during the 1970s, African American students attending HBCUs had greater likelihood of graduating than African American attendees at TWIs, and consequently HBCUs provided a substantial wage premium to their students. But by the 1990s, HBCU attendance yielded a wage penalty of approximately 20 percent to African American graduates in comparison with African American students attending a TWI.¹⁰ The authors believe that their study offers “modest support for the possibility that the relative decline in wages associated with HBCU matriculation is partially due to improvements in TWIs’ effectiveness at educating.”¹¹ Today, as the racial makeup of flagship and Research I institutions across the nation becomes more Asian and white, African

Even though HBCU enrollment numbers are relatively small compared to TWIs, these institutions produce 16 percent of all bachelor’s degrees earned by African Americans.

American, Hispanic and the socioeconomically disadvantaged are being displaced.¹² HBCUs serve a high proportion of minority students, as well as a high percentage of low-income students, with over 70 percent of students attending HBCUs receiving Pell Grants. However, even though HBCU enrollment and graduation numbers are relatively small compared to TWIs, these institutions produce 16 percent of all bachelor’s degrees earned by African Americans, 25 percent of all bachelor’s degrees in education earned by African Americans and 22 percent of all bachelor’s degrees in STEM fields earned by African American students.¹³ In 2015, despite the challenges they face, HBCUs continue to play an important role in our society through the education of African American graduates prepared and ready to compete in the global market.

FACULTY, LEADERSHIP, AND GOVERNANCE

Shared governance is a foundational concept in American higher education and describes how institutions of higher education are formally organized and managed when the participation of all parties is included. The principle of shared governance mandates that all college and university employees—including tenured faculty, junior faculty, temporary and part-time/adjunct faculty, graduate assistants, and professional and

support staff—have a guaranteed voice in decision making, a role in shaping policy in the areas of their expertise. In fact, shared governance is not a simple matter of committee consensus, or the faculty engaging administrators to take on additional work. Shared governance is a multi-dimensional concept that balances essentially two academic tasks: admin-

istrative accountability, and faculty and staff participation in planning and decision making.

Effective faculty governance requires a focus on professional academic priorities and full administrative disclosure of all facets of governance. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) supports the idea of interdependency and mutual support between the administration and faculty, and states that they share primary

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responsibility for “curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process.”¹⁴ It also speaks of the college or university as being a joint enterprise.

According to AAUP, joint effort in an academic institution can take a variety of forms. “In some instances, an initial exploration or recommendation will be made by the president with consideration by the faculty at a later stage; in other instances, a first and essentially definitive recommendation will be made by the faculty, subject to the endorsement of the president and the governing board. In still others, a substantive contribution can be made when student leaders are responsibly involved in the process.”¹⁵

However, it is in the area of shared governance that HBCUs have been most criticized by those concerned with the state of the profession. The AAUP has censored several HBCUs for violations of academic freedom and shared governance: Clark Atlanta University (2010), Stillman College (2009), Benedict College (2005), Virginia State University (2005), Meharry Medical College (2004), Philander Smith College (2004), the University of the District of Columbia (1998), and Talladega College (1986).¹⁶ It is troubling to imagine that faculty members at

HBCUs, although responsible for student learning at HBCUs, are not active in the leadership of these schools. In fact, lack of shared governance is one of the biggest barriers to faculty advancement and development at primarily African American institutions.¹⁷

Faculty Senates

At most universities, the faculty senate is the supreme legislative body on internal policy, and is the highest legislative body within the university to advise the president on academic matters and other concerns. It acts in an advisory capacity for major policy changes, such as restructuring, layoffs, economic policy changes, and tenure and promotion, with the senate's recommendations reflecting the

consensus of the faculty. Depending on their constitution and by-laws, faculty senates are forums where the elected senators and other faculty members discuss and debate curriculum issues and university concerns. At most universities, the senate decides routine items. For the most part, faculty senate deliberations focus on the welfare of the faculty and most university operations, where senate members are able to offer their professional expertise. The faculty senate also serves as a forum for collegial faculty participation in decision-making relating to the institution-wide academic standards and policies. A collegial academic environment:

...can best be accomplished through Senates selected by representatives of the appropriate campus constituencies in accordance with the institution's constitution and tradition. Appropriate matters of concern should be brought before the Senate by its members or steering committee, or by the President of the university or representatives. Among matters which may be of concern to the Senate include: (a) curriculum policy and curricular structure; (b) requirements for degrees and granting of degrees; (c) policies for recruitment, admission, and retention of students; (d) the development, curtailment, discontinuance, or reorganization of academic programs; (e) grading policies; and (f) other matters of traditional concern."¹⁸

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But when the stakes are high, campus administrations and boards of trustees are fully prepared to overrule a faculty senate, especially on HBCU campuses. At Harris-Stowe University in St. Louis, for example, where their faculty affiliated with NEA and negotiated their first collective bargaining contract in 2013, the faculty senate was reinstated only

very recently, at the recommendation of the institution's accrediting body, after being abolished by Henry Givens, Harris-Stowe's former president, who headed the university for 32 years.

The habits and behaviors of collective bargaining often are contrary to the established attitudes and behaviors of HBCU administrators.

Collective Bargaining

Collective bargaining is the ultimate shared governance tool. Collective bargaining is “a bilateral process that, with the weight of law, conveys equal power to unions

and administrations to negotiate terms of employment, including salary, benefits, and workload.”¹⁹ The contracts negotiated through the collective bargaining process acknowledge and legitimize shared governance, and convey power to faculty unions. Often, the collective bargaining system coexists with a faculty or academic senate that provides faculty with structured involvement in the governance of the institution.

However the habits and behaviors of collective bargaining often are contrary to the established attitudes and behaviors of HBCU administrators. Collective bargaining requires faculty and boards/administrators to interact as equals in an effort to produce a legally binding agreement. That agreement cannot be unilateral changed, but may be changed in whole or part if the parties mutually agree to renegotiate the agreement. HBCU administrators and boards of trustees have traditionally made unilateral decisions, they are not used to working toward mutual agreement with faculty, and they often discourage full participation by faculty in the collective bargaining process.

Although unionization maybe on an upward trend, the collective bargaining process is still difficult at HBCUs. In Florida, state universities have collective bargaining rights, including Florida A&M University (FAMU), where I work; however, the collective bargaining process at

FAMU is unlike any of the other 12 institutions in the State University System of Florida. At our peer universities, administrators approach the process differently by setting aside additional monies for faculty and by participating in the process. Through outside counsel, the FAMU administrative team has refused to accept changes to the current collective bargaining agreement, nor provide additional remunerations for faculty, aside from a \$1,000 State of Florida disbursement received in October 2013, and a \$600 increase that 35 percent of FAMU faculty received earlier this year. In their February 2014 newsletter, shortly after declaring impasse in negotiations, the United Faculty of Florida-FAMU described the problems in dealing with their administration, stating:

At FAMU, “the administration was totally indifferent to the concept of collective bargaining. In fact, [their] team failed to even show up...”

The administration was also totally indifferent to the concept of collective bargaining. In fact, the administrative collective bargaining team failed to even show up at many of the regularly scheduled sessions. The problem was so prevalent that at the January 21, 2014 Faculty Senate meeting we sought the support of the Senate.²⁰

Even after faculty senate intervention, FAMU faculty still did not have a contract in 2014. The last collective bargaining agreement had expired at the end of 2013. However, the president of FAMU, when she hit rough waters in her relationship with the board of trustees, decided to settle the contract in the summer of 2015 for a minimal amount.

A quick view of recent events would indicate that collective bargaining is on the move at HBCUs. In April 2014, Howard University adjuncts voted overwhelmingly to form a union with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) becoming the first part-time faculty members at a HBCU to have a faculty union. In August 2014, adjunct faculty members at the University of the District of Columbia also voted 82 to 25 in favor of affiliating with SEIU.²¹

Nonetheless, while the faculty at Harris-Stowe State University did negotiate a contract in 2014, collective bargaining activities on

HBCU campuses is not an increasing trend, and these instances are exceptions to the rule. The faculty and staff at Harris-Stowe decided to form unions after years of oppressive labor practices, (e.g., erratic tenure and promotion policies, autocratic leadership, and salary inequities). Meanwhile, faculty at UDC and Howard may have been encouraged by

The perception that administrators, particularly presidents, are dictators is a key source of strain between HBCU faculty and administrative leadership.

labor conditions in Washington, D.C., which, according to *Adjunct Action*, has become ground zero of a high speed adjunct union movement. That movement seeks to address higher education's increased reliance on contingent faculty, a development that has turned what was once a good middle class profession—college teaching—“into a low-wage, no-benefits job without any job security.” Often increased trends in

unionization are responses to autocratic leadership behaviors or, in the case of adjuncts, economic security.

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND CHARACTERISTICS

HBCUs are governed differently than TWIs, and some believe that this difference rests on the cultural differences between TWIs and HBCUs. Others believe the difference rests with leadership. Minor suggests researchers should not make false comparisons of the institutional structure of HBCUs and predominantly white colleges and universities.²²

Social science researchers readily note numerous cultural differences between African Americans and whites. Many HBCU presidents, for example, are said to emulate the charismatic, paternal approach found in African American churches.²³ Meanwhile Herrin, who studied leadership characteristics of HBCU presidents, characterized their overall leadership style as autocratic. This perception that administrators, particularly presidents, are dictators is a key source of strain between HBCU faculty and administrative leadership.²⁴ More often than not, HBCU presidents have been accused of imposing unilateral decisions on faculty and staff. However, some HBCU proponents also suggest that strong presidential

leadership is partly responsible for the survival and progress of these institutions, and suggest that scholars and practitioners need to know what contextual differences might explain the use of distinct practices.²⁵ Meanwhile, many other HBCU proponents are growing to appreciate that faculty's professional development and its voice in curriculum and other matters of learning are necessary for student success and with that understanding, they are coming to realize that shared governance is critical to achieving the educational goals of HBCUs. All faculty, staff, and administration must be educated on these matters.

Examining the trends for representation and advocacy through unionization at HBCUs, we also must take into consideration the role unions play in African

American lives in general.²⁶ While labor unions have become the vanguards for mobilizing, advancing, and championing the rights of many American workers, such has never been the case for faculty at HBCUs. For a prolonged period in U.S. history, African Americans were excluded from permanent labor force participation. Reasons for that exclusion ranged from their lack of education and skills to overt prejudices and discriminatory labor practices, including outright threats and intimidation. These various forms of exclusion should have motivated HBCU faculty to develop their own strategies to earn the right to participate in the governance of their institutions. Their history also should have taught African American faculty members to realize that their discriminators, who were mainly located outside of their racial and ethnic groups, also exist within. But when faced with forces of oppression and exploitation on HBCU campuses, faculty members mostly have failed to mobilize or organize against the forces of domination.

In a recent informal phone survey, conducted by graduate students at FAMU during March 2014, the labor management practices of 103 HBCUs were measured. Students found that just 21 percent of those institutions reported having an employment contract or collective bargaining agreement with faculty—the kind of document that could

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codify shared governance and make clear faculty's role around curriculum development, faculty hiring and training, and more. Moreover, just 15 percent of institutions, or five of the 103, reported that their faculty were represented by a union or professional association.²⁷ And, while the survey results are informal and limited by timing and occasional difficulty

in locating a contact person to complete the survey, these results are supportive of research on the limited participation of HBCU faculty in unions and unionization efforts.

Not only does it appear that organized labor has been unsuccessful in mobilizing faculty into action against unfavorable conditions of employment, unions seem to be viewed with suspicion at HBCUs. The cultural affinity that flourished among African Americans when

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the enemy was external seems to insulate HBCU administrators from being viewed as an oppressive force. In addition, even when the affinity between faculty and administration is not evidenced, the perception is that a relationship nonetheless does exist. This is likely due to the struggle of HBCU administrators' to keep open their institutions in these financially trying times, often worsened by harmful state legislation or cuts in public funds. As a result, the negative forces continue to be viewed as coming from the outside. If faculty were to mobilize and advocate through union representation, it may be perceived as if they are allying with external forces to weaken or erode the survival of HBCUs.

Another possible reason that HBCU unionization (and faculty representation and advocacy through unions) has suffered is that unions do not have deep roots in the history and struggles of African Americans. When coupled with the perception of affinity relationships on HBCU campuses, the overall perception is that discontent or unfair employment practices can be effectively resolved through individual pleas or appeals.

But given the many challenges facing HBCUs, and the increasing trend to link any state or federal funds for those campuses to metrics like graduation rates or salaries earned by recent graduates, it is imperative that HBCU faculty mobilize and advocate for, and gain, an expanded

role in the decision-making process. For the sake of institutional survival, faculty, staff and administration must work together to promote shared governance and find ways to increase opportunities for professional development, teaching innovation, and student learning. These efforts likely start with HBCU presidents, who must reduce their adversarial stance towards faculty and staff, and HBCU boards of trustees, who must oversee presidential searches with an eye toward attaining an effective and collaborative leader. But it also depends upon faculty and staff calling for a seat at the table where decisions that affect their ability to teach, and students' opportunity to learn, are made. For many faculty, unions and collective bargaining are critical keys to that seat at the table. Collectively, unionized faculty and administrators, working together through shared governance, can help HBCUs continue to survive and their students to thrive well into the 21st century. [nea](#)

Unionized faculty and administrators, working together through shared governance, can help HBCUs continue to survive.

END NOTES

1. This article is based on a presentation made at *Achieving Successful Results in Higher Education through Collective Bargaining*, the 41st Annual National Conference a Joint Labor/Management Meeting held at the CUNY Graduate Center, New York, April 6–8, 2014.
2. Court cases related to *Plessy v. Ferguson* include: *Simuel v. Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma* (1948); *MacLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (1950); and *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950).
3. National Center for Educational Statistics, "The Educational Effectiveness of Historically Black Colleges and Universities."
4. Turner, "Affirmative Action Hurts Historically Black Colleges and Universities."
5. National Association of Historically Black Colleges and Universities Title III Administrators, "HBCUs Engaging the World."
6. *Ibid.*
7. National Study for Student Engagement, *Engaging African American Students Compare Student Engagement and Student Satisfaction Survey*.
8. See Sutton and Kimbrough, "Trends in Black Student Involvement," pp. 30–40; and Watson and Kuh, "The Influence of Dominant Race Environments on Students' Involvement, Perceptions, and Educational Gains: A Look at Historically Black and Predominantly White Liberal Arts Institutions," pp. 415–24.
9. NSSE, *op cit.*
10. Fryer and Greenstone, "The Changing Consequences of Attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities," pp. 116–48.

11. *Ibid*, p.116.
12. Ajinkya, "Asian Americans Benefit from Diversity in Higher Education Center for American Progress."
13. Commission on Civil Rights, "The Educational Effectiveness of Historically Black Colleges and Universities."
14. American Association of University Professors, "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities."
15. *Ibid*.
16. *Ibid*.
17. While it is outside the scope of this paper, it should be noted that HBCU faculty tend to teach more courses and are paid less than their counterparts at TWIs. Typically, HBCU faculty teach four or more courses a semester. Full professors at HBCUs earn a little more than half of what their counterparts earn at the national level. Salary disparities between HBCUs and the national average range between \$18,000 and \$53,000. Additionally, the majority of HBCU students are first-generation college students from low-income families.
18. AAUP, *op cit*.
19. Bucklew et. al., "Shared Governance and Academic Collective Bargaining in American Higher Education: A Potential Model for U.S. Participation in the Global Experience of Works Councils and Codetermination."
20. Rattler Nation, "Maupin, Suber Too Arrogant and Disrespectful Toward Faculty to Provide Quality Leadership."
21. Oguntoyinbo, "More HBCU Faculty Lean toward Raising Collective Voices, Diverse Issues in Education."
22. Minor, "Faculty Governance at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, pp. 34-7.
23. *Ibid*.
24. Herrin, "Historically Black College and University Presidents: Personal and Professional Challenges, Career Paths, and Leadership Characteristics."
25. Minor, *op cit*.
26. When Martin Luther King Jr. died in Memphis, he was there to protest the condition of city sanitation workers who were severely underpaid. The workers had gone on strike in February and King arrived in April, intending to lead a massive nonviolent march to support these workers when he was assassinated. It is interesting to note that a critical event in African American history occurred due to unionism because blacks and union have a conflicted, as well as troubled history. Given that the fundamental message of today's labor unions is solidarity and unity, the early unions ended up on both sides of the America's racial divide. The Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor (AFL), both established in the late 1880s, adopted different racial policies. The Knights of Labor were racially inclusive, while the AFL and its leader, Samuel Gompers, despite having an antidiscrimination policy, kept African Americans out of its union believing that they would take jobs from their membership. In the early history of American unions, many employers exploited this divisive policy and enlisted black workers as strikebreakers. Eventually the AFL and other unions realized that discriminatory policies were thwarting their own objectives and through the efforts of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, unions were desegregated prior to any other sector of American society. See Wilson, et al., *Race and Labor Matters in the New U.S Economy*.
27. The five institutions where contact people answered yes to the phone survey question about unions or other associations on campus were; Delaware State University, the University of the District of Columbia, Florida A&M University, Jackson State University, and Virginia Union University, where faculty do not have a union but do participate in a faculty senate.

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The Disabled Academy: The Experiences of Deaf Faculty at Predominantly Hearing Institutions

By Lissa Stapleton

I approach the topic of Deaf faculty as a critical scholar-practitioner who possesses both dominant and subordinate identities that have influenced my journey through the academy and my understanding of what it means to be a faculty member. It is not my race, gender, or sexual orientation that brings me to this topic, but my ability to hear. Because of personal and professional experiences with Deaf communities, my mistakes as a hearing person, the mistakes of others that I have witnessed, and empathizing with the frustrated feelings of Deaf colleagues, this paper was given life.¹ Issues of oppression are experienced on individual, institutional, and systemic levels. Because of my vantage point and experience, I choose here to interrogate the academy as a space that is guilty of perpetuating systemic oppression on an institutional level against faculty who are Deaf.

Scholars have begun to see space as more than just an empty vessel that is randomly filled, but as an intentional environment affected by past and present people, thoughts, values, and cultures.² “There is an important relationship between identity and space,” Razack notes, and he challenges us to examine how space is racialized.³ Similarly, I ask us to also see how space is disabling, particularly in the academy. “Stories are just data with a soul,” Brené Brown stated during a TED Talk, and so my narrative, along with the voices of Deaf faculty, will be weaved together with theory in this paper.⁴ My purpose is not only to shine light on an

Dr. Lissa Stapleton is an assistant professor in Deaf Studies at California State University, Northridge. Her research focuses on the intersection of gender, race, and Deaf experiences, as well as critical disability research within higher education.

often invisible population within the academy, but to ignite a dialogue about issues of hearing privilege. I start the conversation with three questions: What experiences are Deaf faculty having at predominantly hearing institutions? How can spatial theory help us understand the experiences of Deaf faculty? What does this mean for higher education?

There is a common history of oppression and discrimination against all who have or are experiencing hearing loss, particularly within education.

THE DEAF COMMUNITY

Deaf communities are diverse, complex, and have various cultural nuances. This diversity includes range of hearing loss, cultural connections, methods used to interact with the dominant hearing world, and how Deaf community members identify in regard to their hearing loss. Yet there also is a common history of oppression and discrimi-

nation against all who have or are experiencing hearing loss, particularly within education.⁵ Although oppressive behaviors and systems have not been fully eradicated, through protest, grassroots efforts, and laws, there has been an increasing number of Deaf students navigating the educational pipeline and attending our colleges and universities.⁶ In 1993, the National Center on Education Statistics reported 25,000 Deaf and hard-of-hearing students attending U.S. colleges and universities, mostly public institutions.⁷ A decade later, Schroedel, Watson, and Ashmore estimated the number had reached 468,000, a nearly 20-fold increase.⁸ At the same time, however, there has not been an increase in Deaf and hard-of-hearing faculty.⁹

Because of a minoritized status in our society, historically and currently, hearing people have held power over Deaf and hard-of-hearing people's lives on an individual, group, and systemic level. Oppression against Deaf people is called audism and is "a complex weave of micro, meso, and macro-aggressions that leads to a system of overprivilege for those that can hear and speak and underprivilege for those who are deaf [sic]."¹⁰ Deaf people can experience audism within their families (where the vast majority of Deaf children are born to two hearing parents), throughout the educational pipeline, including within Deaf institutions,

and in everyday life.¹¹ While many Deaf people do not identify as having a disability, instead seeing themselves as part of a linguistic minority, some hearing people believe that being Deaf is a human deficiency that needs to be fixed.¹² Unaware of hearing privilege, or "...advantages or entitlements that are enjoyed by people who can hear which are denied to those who are Deaf," hearing people often create and perpetuate negative and exclusive behavior within our society and institutions, and in this case the academy.¹³ *Deaf Echo*, a blog written by and for Deaf people, featured an article titled "Exploring Hearing Privilege," in which several examples of hearing privilege were listed, including:

- Hearing privilege means colleges and employers don't wonder if you are capable because of your hearing status.
- Hearing privilege is always having teachers who are also hearing and who speak your first language fluently.
- Hearing privilege is being able to make mistakes in written English without people assuming you are not capable of proper English.
- Hearing privilege is representing yourself. Knowing your exact choice of words are used. You do not have to wait for an interpreter. You do not have to wonder if the interpreter will be skilled or qualified.¹⁴

These examples and other forms of hearing privilege have created many hearing-dominant spaces, including the academy that not only affect Deaf faculty, but also faculty who become deaf or hard of hearing later in their career.

INSIDE THE ACADEMY: DEAF FACULTY

Deaf graduate students face many obstacles as they make it to the professoriate: finding a committee without negative attitudes toward deafness, negotiating communication within their research process, finding a mentor willing to socialize them into the profession, and more.¹⁵ Then, once these obstacles are conquered, graduates must find jobs, and

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navigate the daily climate of the academy as a professional. Most of their hearing colleagues will be unaware of the many challenges faced by Deaf faculty, specifically accommodations issues, the need for cultural recovery, and barriers with colleagues.

During my colleague's presentation, the interpreter stumbled, used a lot of "ums," missed important details and big concepts.

Accommodations

Higher education should be a diverse and accessible place for people with a wide variety of abilities, particularly those who hold the knowledge to educate the next generation — that is faculty. When it comes to accommodating faculty's individual needs, there can be financial factors such as the cost of hiring interpreters or real time captionists. Many Deaf faculty must convince future employers that they can do

the job and have the ability to work their way up the tenure ladder.¹⁶ With budgetary issues constraining many institutions, even the most open-minded departments have a hard time advocating for a faculty member who comes with extra expenses and needs.¹⁷ Then, even if a department agrees that providing an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter is a reasonable accommodation, many Deaf faculty have a hard time finding appropriate interpreters, especially the more highly skilled interpreters needed by individuals in specialized fields.¹⁸ For example, I once designed and co-taught a course with a Deaf faculty member, an experience that went so well we were asked to present our innovative ideas at a campus-wide program. We had two interpreters who both received background information about our presentation. Unfortunately, during my colleague's presentation, the interpreter stumbled, used a lot of "ums," missed important details and big concepts, and relied on a very limited vocabulary. Because of the interpreter's lack of skill, my highly intelligent colleague came across as a nervous, unclear, and unskilled presenter who could not accurately articulate ideas. It was quite frustrating, and my Deaf colleague did not realize what had happened. After the presentation, I debriefed with different interpreters, and they said this problem occurs often because interpreters' skills are not always at a level that matches a faculty member.

Cultural Recovery

Navigating hearing spaces, including departments or academic programs, can take a tremendous amount of energy, time, and patience. There are occasions when there is only one Deaf faculty member in a department and there is a need to culturally “recover” from the hearing world.¹⁹ Sometimes, Deaf faculty members will travel or try to fill their lives with other Deaf people to reconnect and have less restricted communication.²⁰ In a study about Deaf academics in a hybrid (Deaf and hearing) Deaf Studies department, one Deaf faculty said this about her desire to culturally recover from the hearing world, “I needed to go out and be involved and meet Deaf people and share our experiences...Then I’d go

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home on Sunday night and back to work on Monday morning. When I go back to work I feel good [and] I know that when it’s Friday then I’ll be off again. It’s like recharging a battery. It’s very very important for Deaf people to share, to help each other to mix socially.”²¹ As members of a linguistic minoritized group and similar to other minoritized people (e.g., people of color, women, gays and lesbians), Deaf people must advocate and educate dominant (i.e., hearing) populations about their cultural differences and needs.

Within the academy, Deaf faculty often spend time educating their chair, colleagues, and students about Deaf culture.²² Yet, despite their efforts, even educated people do not always advocate for or change the various barriers Deaf people encounter on a daily basis.²³ For example, as a person who worked with Deaf faculty and interpreters on a regular basis, I still sometimes would forget to reserve interpreters for an event or would stand in front of the interpreters during group meetings. Because of my hearing privilege and lack of awareness as a hearing person, I was not always conscious of how my actions affected my Deaf colleagues. In addition, Deaf faculty may feel a need to defend their intelligence. Brueggemann, a hard-of-hearing faculty member, wrote about the discomfort and fear that she has felt, believing at times “that students per-

ceived [her] as incompetent, the echo of ‘deaf and dumb’ ringing in their heads.”²⁴ In a space where faculty members are expected to hold authority and expert knowledge, it can be exhausting and psychologically challenging to continuously defend yourself.

Spontaneous and informal meetings, last minute oral instructions for tasks, and a lack of appropriate ASL interpreter support can hinder Deaf faculty...

Barriers to Collegiality

Breivik discussed the “sense of being ‘at home among strangers,’” or the ability to connect both formally and informally with coworkers.²⁵ However, spontaneous and informal meetings, last minute oral instructions for tasks, and a lack of appropriate ASL interpreter support can hinder Deaf faculty members in connecting with colleagues.²⁶ Another Deaf faculty member from the Trowler and Turner study of a

hybrid Deaf Studies department said, “I don’t feel that Deaf colleagues are actually involved in this university culture. We don’t have that network... [hearing people] have an advantage because [they] can actually listen to what people are saying, background information, bits of new information just through informal discussions.”²⁷ Setting up an environment that is not accessible to all faculty’s communication needs is discriminatory. But sometimes colleagues may resent a Deaf faculty member who is getting “special” treatment or more funds than others in the department. Woodcock, Rohan, and Campbell stated, “Receptivity towards the Deaf person may be more related to cost and perceptions of cost than attitude or prejudice.”²⁸ Negative attitudes, lack of understanding of diverse communication needs, and the perception of favoritism must be addressed in departments for Deaf faculty to be successful. Depending on the openness of a Deaf faculty member’s department and university, a faculty member can spend more time managing their “disability” than actually doing academic work. Some Deaf faculty have noted that the extra time it takes to manage their “disability” (e.g., lining up interpreters, explaining Deaf culture, making others comfortable, organizing lectures for interpreters) should be counted as service to the university in their tenure package.²⁹

SO WHAT'S INFLUENCING THESE EXPERIENCES?

Until recently, there has been little understanding of disability as a category of analysis and knowledge.³⁰ Gender and race are more typically the identities of difference that are recognized as dynamic, complex, and multi-dimensional.³¹ The Deaf community may not collectively identify as disabled, but within the context of higher education — a very hearing-dominated space — this label has been placed on them. However, we cannot make faculty with hearing loss the central problem. As Deaf faculty members engage the academic environment, they must grow, change, and adapt; but the environment also should adapt, change, and accommodate

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faculty members. Unfortunately, this adaptation often does not happen or it happens very slowly, making the academy a “static structure that makes no allowance for the evolving processes of interaction.”³² It is no longer the individual who is disabled, but the environment itself that is stuck and needs help adjusting to more diverse users. One-way to understand what happens to that environment is through spatial theory.

Spatial theory suggests that space or an environment does not evolve or exist prior to or separate from the people who create and use it.³³ For example, one way an institution can be labeled successful is through the reputation and work of its faculty.³⁴ Historically, the academy defined faculty as hearing white men.³⁵ Therefore, hearing white men entered the academy and began “creating, reproducing, and reinforcing one set of values and practices and excluding others. This type of power shapes what is important;” thus, hearing spaces and privileges are unspoken and seem natural.³⁶ There is a myth that space is empty of culture or value; consequently, creating an illusion of innocence.³⁷ However, the academy cannot say it is blameless in the continuing challenges experienced by faculty with hearing loss. The academy is a breeding ground for phonocentrism, the inherent belief that hearing and listening are central features of being human, a phenomenon that puts Deaf faculty

in a vulnerable position.³⁸ Spatial theory is particularly salient within Deaf culture because Deaf people have a visual and spatial language, are visually centered, and their identity is intertwined with place.³⁹ Within spatial theory, there are three different types of social spaces: (1) perceived, (2) conceived, and (3) lived space.⁴⁰

Having an environment where hearing privilege can be discussed, where accommodations are the responsibility of everyone... is important.

Perceived Space

Perceived space focuses on the daily routines and experiences that create a specific space.⁴¹ In the life of a faculty member those experiences might include informal and spontaneous faculty meetings, teaching classes, student advising, people randomly stopping by your office, or working on a research project. Although this space seems neutral, Bahan and Bauman observe,

“Language and culture influence how we perceive and imagine space.”⁴² Thus, in an academic world where the verbal or “heard” language is privileged over visual language, hearing people have an advantage. For example, spontaneous and informal meetings do not allow a Deaf faculty member to schedule an interpreter, and nor are informal hallway conversations and interactions necessarily accessible. Teaching classes requires more planning for Deaf faculty members to make the environment accessible for all, including themselves.⁴³ Those who are not a part of the dominant hearing group can experience this seemingly neutral, inclusive environment very differently.⁴⁴ The point is not that Deaf faculty should or should not have to complete these tasks, as they are a part of the job, but rather that having an environment where hearing privilege can be discussed, where accommodations are the responsibility of everyone, and where the environment can be adjusted (e.g., office practices and department policies) is important to the process of deconstructing perceived space.⁴⁵

Conceived Space

Conceived space is the vision the planner or builder originally had for the space.⁴⁶ For example, the academy was originally a place for white, hearing, male ministers to instill the morals of Christian doctrine to wealthy,

young, hearing, white men.⁴⁷ How this history influences Deaf faculty is that the academy and faculty spaces were never designed with Deaf architecture (e.g., mindfulness around appealing to the senses, openness, natural and artificial lights, building vibrations).⁴⁸ To integrate faculty with hearing loss into our understanding of the academy, we must push beyond those original conceptions of the academy and challenge the hearing norms that are maintained through tradition, power, privilege, and status.⁴⁹

Power dynamics between Deaf and hearing people are almost always unequal. Consider our typical lecture rooms that have extra walls and pillars that often make it difficult for Deaf people to see presenters, interpreters, and each other. Additionally, as student enrollment increases, it becomes more difficult

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to rearrange small classrooms into configurations that allow students to see others (e.g., seats in horse-shaped or full circle arrangements). Old buildings with dim lighting also can be a challenge for people who rely on nonverbal cues and lip reading for communication. Hearing people do not think about how space in the academy has been designed to make communication and life easier for them, thus giving them the privilege to exist in that space with ease while others struggle to adapt.⁵⁰ The concept of educational spaces being accessible to all is not a new idea. Universal Design (UD), a term coined in the 1970s by Ron Mace, has been used within educational settings to help create accessible instructional settings, including classrooms and campus environments. Through technology and developing diverse teaching and programming methods all students and faculty should benefit. However, structural changes can be expensive and understanding UD and consciously putting UD into daily practice are not the same things.⁵¹

Lived Space

Lived space refers to the ways in which people interpret the meaning of perceived and conceived space, and how they use the space based on that interpretation.⁵² As it relates to higher education, the

pipeline into an academic career is narrow with only 1.2 percent of the U.S. population holding a doctoral degree.⁵³ Deaf faculty have navigated the academy by working at specific institutions, teaching in Deaf-friendly disciplines, and trying to fit into the majority-hearing world. There is a larger concentration of Deaf faculty at institutions that

serve larger numbers of Deaf students. Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., the primary Deaf-serving institution in the U.S., serves approximately 1,994 Deaf and hard of hearing students, and employs nearly 500 Deaf and hard-of-hearing faculty and staff spread among their university, secondary, and elementary schools.⁵⁴ The National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, New York, serves nearly 1,500 Deaf

and hard-of-hearing students and as of 2012, employed 111 Deaf and hard-of-hearing faculty and staff.⁵⁵ In addition, many Deaf faculty are concentrated within specific disciplines and programs such as Deaf Studies or Deaf Education.⁵⁶ These behaviors and career decisions allow Deaf faculty to stay within an academic space that more broadly was not perceived or conceived with them in mind. However, this is problematic because Deaf college students are going to school for a variety of disciplines, and they should have the opportunity and option to teach, research, and thrive in any discipline of their choosing.

There is a historical legacy of exclusion that makes it challenging to create accessible environments, even in the academy.⁵⁷ When hearing-dominant ways and values have created the traditions, as well as how the space is perceived, conceived, and lived, then barriers are created to Deaf faculty's success. Furthermore, when current faculty and administrators in the academy refuse to examine their own prejudiced attitudes and practices, it is nearly impossible to commit to institutional transformation.⁵⁸ The academy, as space, did not create phonocentrism (the belief that sounds and speech are inherently superior to, or more primary than, written language), but the dominant (i.e., hearing) group who created and continue to interpret that space did.⁵⁹ It will take the support of faculty

It will not be until the disabled academy itself is addressed that the academy will be able to adapt, grow, and accommodate.

and administrators to change the culture and values of a “disabled” academy. It will not be until the disabled academy itself is addressed that the academy will be able to adapt, grow, and accommodate, not only Deaf faculty but all students, staff, and administrators who are differently abled.

THE IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Faculty are the heart and soul of a healthy institution, and providing an inclusive environment for research, teaching, and service is imperative to faculty and to the success of students.⁶⁰ Making the academy a more accessible space is an asset to everyone. The goal is not to privilege a few, but rather to create a space that does not favor one way of seeing and negotiat-

ing the world.⁶¹ Exploring more adaptive methods of communication promotes a community of equity. For example, “conveying important notifications in writing, speaking one at a time during meetings, and expressing one’s views without a mouth full of pens, fingers or food benefits everyone.”⁶² There are professional development opportunities and room for growth when others’ ideas and ways of doing things are considered. For example, Deaf academics usually are aware of communication requirements and limitations, and are therefore quite skilled and creative in teaching various concepts to diverse audiences.⁶³ There is much we can learn from each other.

An institution cannot be excellent without diversity, and with an increasingly diverse student population, diverse faculty are needed to serve as role models.⁶⁴ A more accessible space could also lead to a more academically efficient space. Perhaps there could be fewer meetings or the meetings could be more productive if side conversations, which are not accessible to all faculty, were not happening. Navigating, embracing, and understanding a diverse environment can take considerable time, energy, and work, but it must be done if our institutions are to be successful. Institutions should be in the business of eradicating all the “isms” (e.g., racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism). If higher education is to continue

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to be relevant then the academy and those who perpetuate historically exclusive spaces, both consciously and unconsciously, need to be challenged to think outside themselves.⁶⁵ [nea](#)

END NOTES

1. The word Deaf with a “D” includes individuals that see themselves as a linguistic minority and not disabled. They connect with the culture and cultural practices of the Deaf community and use American Sign Language (ASL) as their main form of communication. See Woodcock et al., “Equitable Representation of Deaf People in Mainstream Academia: Why Not?” pp. 359-79.
2. See Razack, “When Place Becomes Race,” pp. 1-20; and Bahan and Bauman, “The Power of Place: The Evolution of Kendall Green,” pp. 154-61.
3. Razack, *op cit.*, p. 5.
4. Brown, “The Power of Vulnerability.”
5. Scotch, “Nothing About Us Without Us: Disability Rights in America,” pp. 17-22.
6. Gappa, et al., *Rethinking Faculty Work: Higher Education’s Strategic Imperative*; Scotch, *op cit.*; Woodcock, et al., *op cit.*
7. National Center for Education Statistics. “Deaf and hard of hearing students in postsecondary education.”
8. Schroedel, et al., “A National Research Agenda for the Postsecondary Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students: A Road Map for the Future,” pp. 67-73.
9. Woodcock, et al., *op cit.*
10. Garrow, et al., “Uncovering macro- and micro-aggressions against the Deaf community and how the Deaf community uses community cultural wealth,” p. 4.
11. For more about children born to hearing parents, see Holcomb, *Introduction to American Deaf Culture*. Trowler and Turner examine the educational pipeline in “Exploring the Hermeneutic Foundations of University Life: Deaf Academics in a Hybrid Community of Practice,” pp. 227-56.
12. Woodcock and Campbell discuss the idea of linguistic minorities in “Equitable Representation of Deaf people,” p. 362. The idea that deafness is a deficiency requiring a remedy is explored in Breivik, “Vulnerable but Strong: Deaf People Challenge Established Understandings of Deafness,” pp. 18-23.
13. Tuccoli, “Hearing privileges at Gallaudet?” p. 23.
14. Aubrecht and Furda, “Deaf Echo » Writing for and by Deaf People » Exploring Hearing Privilege,” paragraphs 10, 20, 35, and 42.
15. Bieber and Worley, “Conceptualizing the Academic Life: Graduate Students’ Perspectives,” pp. 1009-35; Woodcock, et al., *op cit.*
16. Woodcock et al., *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. Trowler and Turner, *op cit.*
20. *Ibid.*, and Breivik, *op cit.*
21. Trowler and Turner, *op cit.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. Woodcock and Campbell, *op cit.*
24. Brueggemann and Modellmog, “Coming-Out Pedagogy: Risking Identity in Language and Literature Classrooms,” pp. 209-23.

25. Breivik, *op cit.*, p. 22.
26. Woodcock, et al., *op cit.*
27. Trowler and Turner, *op cit.*, p. 251.
28. Woodcock, et al., *op cit.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory," pp. 1-32.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Dey and Hurtado, "College Students in Changing Context," pp. 315-39.
33. Razack, *op cit.*
34. Gappa, et al., *op cit.*
35. Altbach, "Harsh Realities."
36. Trowler and Turner, *op cit.*, p. 250; Maher and Thompson-Tetreault, "Frameworks of Analysis: Histories and Theories of Privilege," pp. 1-29.
37. Razack, *op cit.*
38. Breivik, *op cit.*
39. Bahan and Bauman, *op cit.*, p. 155
40. Razack, *op cit.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. Bahan and Bauman, *op cit.*, p. 155.
43. Woodcock, et al., *op cit.*
44. Dey and Hurtado, *op cit.*
45. Woodcock, et al., *op cit.*, p. 362.
46. Razack, *op cit.*
47. Geiger, "The Ten Generations of American Higher Education," pp. 38-70.
48. Bahan and Bauman, *op cit.*, p. 155.
49. Garland-Thomson, *op cit.*
50. Razack, *op cit.*
51. Steinfeld and Maisel, *Universal Design Creating Inclusive Environments.*
52. Razack, *op cit.*
53. Ryan and Siebens, "Educational Attainment in the United States."
54. Gallaudet University, "Fast Facts."
55. Walter and Dirmyer, "Number of Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing."
56. Trowler and Turner, *op cit.*
57. Dey and Hurtado, *op cit.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. Breivik, *op cit.*; Razack, *op cit.*
60. Gappa, et al., *op cit.*
61. Garland-Thomson, *op cit.*
62. Woodcock, et al., *op cit.*, p. 371.
63. *Ibid.*
64. Maher and Tetreault, *op cit.*
65. *Ibid.*, and Razack, *op cit.*

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Cultural Competence for College Students: How to Teach about Race, Gender and Inequalities

by *Phu Phan, Holly Vugia, and Terry Jones*

For the most part, students entering social work programs want to serve poor and oppressed populations. They see themselves as well-meaning and politically liberal, and view racism, sexism, and heterosexism as intolerable. They are highly offended by assertions that they may suffer from these “isms.” However, to ready social work students to effectively serve diverse and oppressed communities, educators must coach students beyond their individualized world-view and help them gain self-reflexivity in the context of social realities. And yet, despite our commitment to its importance, many social work educators still search for effective strategies to teach about race and oppression.¹

For the past five years, the social work program at a medium-size public, urban California institution has engaged such well-intentioned students to enhance their understanding of race and oppression in a required first-quarter course called *Race, Gender, and Inequality*, in which the objective is to achieve student commitment to multicultural competence and to assisting historically disadvantaged, disenfranchised, and underserved populations. Although delivered in the social work program, we believe our approach, which requires students to explore their own values,

Phu Phan is a program coordinator and associate professor for the Division of Human Development at California State University, Dominguez Hills. Holly Vugia is an associate professor and Terry Jones is professor emeritus in the Department of Social Work at California State University, East Bay. All three have undergraduate and graduate level teaching experience. In 2005, the California chapter of the National Association of Social Workers honored Dr. Jones as State Social Worker of the Year.

beliefs, and behaviors, and makes them aware of their own biases, has merit for other fields that tackle the topic of race, gender, and inequality. This paper presents concrete recommendations, including explorations of student responses, suggestions for equitable presentation of material, and strategies for transformative learning.

Superficially, students respond with questions, such as: Why do we have to talk about race? Aren't we done with this issue yet?

Invariably, when confronted with this course, students experience an intense emotional response to what might be considered a cultural humility “boot camp.” Many falter initially and interpret their reaction to be indicative of an inability to master multicultural competence, rather than understand it as part of the process itself. White students are often especially perplexed when presented with the issue of white privilege and asked to

explore how they have benefited from it. Superficially, students respond with questions, such as: Why do we have to talk about race? Why are we always talking about blacks, what about other groups? All we do in here is bash white people! or Why can't we just all get along? Encouraged by Barack Obama's election as the first African American president, they ask, *Aren't we done with this issue yet?* The specific questions change with the evolution of race-based current events, such as the growth of the “Black Lives Matter” movement since 2012. The poignant affect behind these questions challenges us to develop more effective ways to engage in these difficult dialogues.

RACISM AS AN ILLUSTRATION OF OPPRESSION

While the course aims to sensitize students to all forms of oppression, due to time limitations we focus on racism as a primary injustice. Viewing racism as the bedrock for understanding other forms of oppression is supported by the work of Garcia and VanSoest.² As they quote from Hopps' 1982 *Social Work* editorial, “Although many forms of exclusion and discrimination exist in this country, none is so deeply rooted, persistent, and intractable as that based on color.”³ Pharr and Collins, focusing on homophobia and feminism, respectively, also argue

that all oppressions share a common origin and are interconnected.⁴

Thus, using racism, we teach a framework of analysis that also can be applied to other oppressive phenomena. The framework teaches students to complete: a **H**istorical analysis of the oppressed population; an assessment of each **I**ndividual's self-definition; and an assessment of the **P**erson-in-environment (PIE) with emphasis on factors of oppression.⁵ Faculty reinforce the use of this HIP framework through the remainder of the social work curriculum.

In deconstructing racism, it simply is not enough for students to absorb course content, examine themselves, and understand the impact of racism.⁶ Rather than stop prematurely where students feel most comfortable, studying “those

people” and the effects on “others,” we nudge them to delve into their complicity in the functioning of racism. To avoid an artificial separation that leads to notions of “those poor people” as victims, or subtle beliefs in the inferiority of certain populations, we must help students to connect the behavior of whites and the historical and current privilege of whites to the creation, maintenance, expansion, and refinement of racism.⁷ This fosters a more genuine and useful understanding of ethnic/racial groups and how racism has impacted both whites and people of color.

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CREATING AN ENLIGHTENED HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

A root cause of resistance to difficult dialogues about race and oppression relates to miseducation and socialization. Students do not come to us out of a vacuum. They come from families, educational systems, and communities that have, consciously and subconsciously, overtly and covertly, provided substance for the formation of racial and gender understandings. The lyrics from the musical *South Pacific* capture this process, “You’ve got to be taught to hate and fear. You’ve got to be taught from year to year. It’s got to be drummed into your dear little ear. You’ve got to be carefully taught.”⁸

Early on, children of all races and ethnicities are taught a selective U.S. history.⁹ This, along with familial and media socialization, creates a distorted worldview, fostering biased perceptions of women and people of color. Hence, to facilitate honest discussion, expanded accounts of U.S. history are explored, attending particularly to the exploitation of minorities.¹⁰ The extent of historical misinformation often appalls students. Some experience disbelief and anger, while others embrace this new reality but feel deeply hurt that loved ones, teachers, and role models have participated in this big lie.¹¹

The embedded nature of racism, sexism, and other social inequalities make them undetectable—most notably, the subtleties of white and male privilege.

ACKNOWLEDGING CHALLENGES FOR STUDENTS

Armed with a new historical understanding, we then explore modern expressions of racism and its sometimes subtle manifestation in American lives. The embedded nature of racism, sexism, and other social inequalities often make them undetectable—most notably, the subtleties of white and male privilege. For this reason, moving white students to see racism and oppression as more sinister than the “No Blacks Need Apply” or as marriage defined only as a heterosexual union is critical (often referred to as microaggressions).¹² On this point Trepagnier notes:

The white definition of racism also ignores acts of everyday racism: routine actions that often are not recognized by the actor as racist or that uphold the racial status quo. For example, black women report that whites often seem surprised to find that a black person has a college degree or is a professional. This form of everyday racism—marginalization—is based in the white assumption that blacks are not educated or successful.¹³

Power and privilege enable whites to define, and to include and exclude. This creates a propensity for whites to assume racism, sexism, or other forms of inequality are blatant acts carried out occasionally by aberrant fanatics like Dylann Roof during the 2015 Charleston, South Carolina, church shooting.¹⁴ Such assumptions hide the everyday institu-

tionalized oppressions that systematically exclude so many from full, safe social participation. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) appealed to its members to learn about, face, and combat this threat in a task force report, *Institutional Racism and the Social Work Profession: A Call to Action*.¹⁵ The report provides action steps for individuals and NASW chapters, but education must also attend to this injustice.

Speaking as a white academician, Robert Jensen observes what he calls “the dirty secret” of white privilege.¹⁶ “In a world of white privilege, some of what we have is unearned. I think much of both the fear and anger that comes up around discussions of affirmative action has its roots in that secret.”¹⁷

Having to confront this reality can produce emotional upheaval among students, which, if not managed well by educators, interferes with learning. Garcia and Van Soest point out that fear and anxiety can impede discussions of social power.¹⁸ They also suggest that a lack of a “coherent framework that speaks to basic human experiences and that is truly inclusive of diversity and social justice” inhibits comprehension of the realities of oppression.¹⁹ This socio-historic roadblock helps sustain a false sense of superiority in whites and a false sense of inferiority in students of color/oppression.

Providing an educational forum that acknowledges students’ internal struggles, yet discourages an “us vs. them” climate is the instructor’s challenge. While white students work to integrate their new reality, students of color and oppressed groups often grapple with being in societal institutions that socialize them into accepting the mainstream worldview. Shedding the internalization of the dominant white culture and the accompanying shame, self-hatred, and identification with the oppressor presents another formidable task for already discriminatorily burdened students.²⁰

As educators, we make it clear it is not just white students who have work to do; all of us who live in a society based on inequality must identify how our social position impacts our thinking and behavior. In essence,

Providing an educational forum that acknowledges students’ internal struggles, yet discourages an “us vs. them” climate is the instructor’s challenge.

there is no comfortable bridge from one's social experience to one's understanding of the complexities of diversity and the multicultural experience. These are uncharted waters, filled with uncertainty.

PROVIDING AN EXPERIENTIAL CLASSROOM-BASED EXPERIENCE

Scapegoating or singling out of individuals or groups cannot be tolerated. However, this does not mean the instructor should avoid conflict.

To engage in social change around issues of racism and oppression students need to grasp academic content and the external nature of these “isms,” but they also must dig inward to uncover how these forces shape their lives. Preparing students for this internal search involves four essential components, which include: (1) assuring a safe learning environment; (2) focusing on student-centered

self-discovery; (3) providing opportunities for successful experiences; and (4) securing a commitment to pursue cultural competence. While not an all-encompassing list, these include the core ingredients to effective learning about racism and oppression in a contained classroom—a social microcosm.

A Safe Learning Environment

Because of the sensitivity of the subject matter, it is imperative that students feel safe while exploring race and oppression.²¹ Scapegoating or singling out of individuals or groups cannot be tolerated. However, this does not mean the instructor should avoid conflict. Meaningful learning comes from the skillful modeling of conflict management, finding common ground, and accepting points of disagreement. The underlying teaching philosophy stems from a post-modern view of subjectivity and co-existing “truths.” Thus, we carefully craft classroom behavior guidelines that are presented, discussed, and accordingly modified during the first day of class. The list includes rules such as respecting others’ opinions and boundaries, active listening, and committing to participation. We enhance the process using the following strategies:

- applying the person-in-environment (PIE) framework

- to understand how and why a person might hold certain perspectives, while developing strategies to deal with such views;
- sharing personal experiences in human diversity by class members and the instructor;
 - maintaining a delicate but clear balance between professional and personal views about human diversity, and
 - experimentally donning different “hats” such as “a critical thinking hat” or “devil’s advocate hat” to facilitate and participate in class discussions.

In a class survey, 87 percent of students responded that these specific instructions provided helpful structure for meaningful discussions about these complex issues.²²

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A Focus on Student-Centered Self-Discovery

Toward the objective of cultural competence, the importance of self-awareness, self-reflexivity, and self-discovery are well documented.²³ To achieve student insight, we invite a focus on internal implications rather than merely external empathy. To introduce students to the realities of unfair racial treatment we reference accounts such as the *Kerner Commission Report*, Banfield’s *The Unheavenly City*, and *The State of Black America* series, but we do not stop there.²⁴ We move on to white privilege.²⁵ We ask students to explore the impact of racism and sexism on white people and how, and to what extent, whites are involved in the current expansion and refinement of these twin inequities. We help students discover how they are in the environment and how the nature of their “in-ness” impacts their thinking, attitudes and behavior. We move beyond the notion that a person is either a racist or not, to a view of oppression as ranging from the blatant to the subtle—that we are mutually entangled in this web.

Suggesting that racism and oppression are somewhat like the air we breathe helps students grasp its insidious presence: we take the air for granted, air-quality varies, and we breathe it even when it’s contami-

nated, despite the damage to our well-being. We visit Essed's concept of everyday racism, which privileges one group above another.²⁶ These include the assumed competence afforded white males over people of color and women; or the racially influenced passerby responses to staged thefts or denials of service on the popular ABC show, *What Would You*

*Do?*²⁷ Typically, when participants in oppressive behavior are accused they are surprised, offended, or hurt. Instructors must take great care to ensure that white students do not shut down and students of color, women, or otherwise oppressed do not “pile it on.”

Many useful books help with self-discovery, but our students read Wendell Berry's *The Hidden Wound*, demonstrating the suffering racism has inflicted on all.²⁸

Instructors must take care to ensure that white students do not shut down and students of color, women, or otherwise oppressed do not “pile it on.”

Students break into 30-minute groups to discuss reflective questions about the reading: does it change your overall approach to understanding and dealing with race and racism; how do you believe it will impact your work with women and populations of color; how does the culture, family, and social environment of the author influence his world view; how do your culture, family, and social environment impact your world view; and what overall impact did it have on you? Next, the class reconvenes for a general interchange about the book. Supervised discussions offer a safe environment to self-reflect, take risks in learning, and hone critical thinking skills. These steps compel introspection, preparing students as better practitioners of social change and justice.

Another important, personal and powerful expectation is that students keep a confidential course daily journal.²⁹ They reflect on reactions to readings, class discussions, and assignments, and must provide only proof of journaling. Over time, however, students develop a confidence about their journals and often share their personal discoveries.

Finally, students have the option to participate in a small, three-session self-discovery group coordinated through the campus psychological counseling services—and almost all do. These self-exploration experiences provide a foundation for understanding others' point of views.

Creation of Opportunities for Success

A central task of the course is a three-part assignment in which students research and write about historical and current *oppression* of, (1) black or Latino groups in urban U.S. communities (the student is requested to research a group other than their own membership group, unless he or she is mixed race from both of these groups); (2) a second U.S. group of their choice; and (3) a synergistic analysis of these two selected populations. The initial focus on urban black or Latino groups provides a common discussion topic.

The second part allows students to pursue an oppressed group of their particular interest, whether that is as broad as the aged, or as narrow, say perhaps as transgender

Asian Americans. Students must interview a member of the selected group to inform their papers and present a summary of findings to the class, and more importantly, to staff at their field practicum.

In the third task, the synergistic analysis, we instruct students to pay particular attention to the intersectionality of oppression, racism, sexism and other forms of inequality. Students apply the HIP framework described earlier to compose these papers. In totality, this assignment provides students the opportunity, in a controlled manner, to experience mastery in talking about racially sensitive matters, to synthesize results, and to present findings as part of an advocacy effort.

The Claiming of Cultural Competence

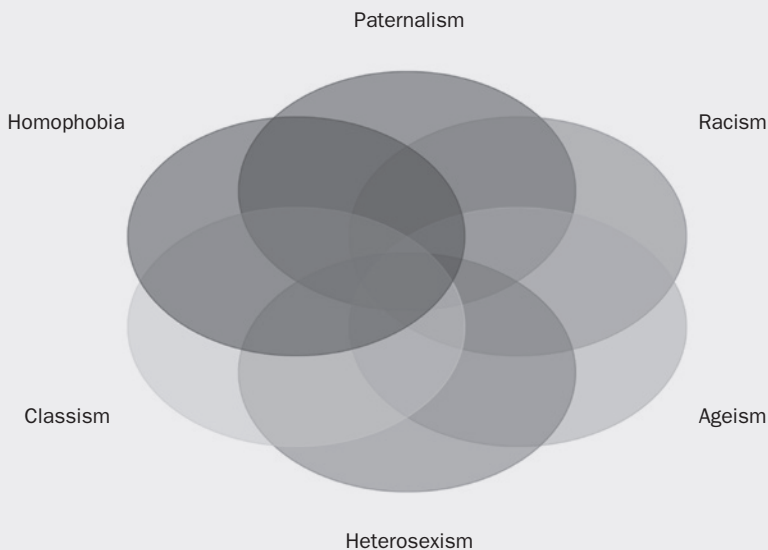
Development of multicultural competence is a lifelong journey and requires critical steps of: self-reflective understanding, appreciation of the intersectional nature of oppression, and a solid grounding in the meaning of social justice. The self-reflective understanding of racism, Berry's *Hidden Wound*, and the role of white privilege, as discussed earlier, lay the ground to apply these insights to the vast realm of oppressions.

To approach multicultural competence, students also need an *intersectional lens* to more clearly see oppressed clients in all their lives' complex-

To approach multicultural competence, students also need an intersectional lens to clearly see oppressed clients in all their lives' complexity.

ity. Though a person's race, gender, ability, religion or any other potential condition of oppression may appear to be central to one's identity, it is never quite that simple. Miller and Garran note that "nobody is defined solely by race. This dimension of social identity interacts with gender, social class, sexual orientation and other axes of identity."³⁰ To fixate on any one characteristic—even one as important as race—borders on stereotyping and produces a one-dimensional view. To prevent such tendencies, students are urged to incorporate an intersectional view of the client. Figure 1 illustrates a model of "Intersecting Dimensions of Oppression." For example, while we may be tempted to view a gay client as though that status determines all he is; at any given time other segments of identity such as race, age, or ability may supersede. Clearly, more dimensions could be added to this layered model, including ableism, religion, cultureism, heightism, sizeism, lookism, or rankism.³¹ Consequently, students come to see the intersection as a dynamic, living model allowing for a combination of issues and conditions of oppression that constantly interact and compete to define an individual's identity and life circumstances. Working with clients holistically requires the examination of this intersectionality.³²

FIGURE 1:

INTERSECTIONALITY: INTERSECTING DIMENSIONS OF OPPRESSION

Last, multiculturally competent social workers must be armed with a sound theory of social justice to facilitate truly cultural competent interventions. The Educational Policies and Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education addresses this in its call to “Advance Human Rights and Economic and Social Justice.”³³ In *The Color of Social Policy*, Davis and Bent-Goodley define social justice as:

a basic value and desired goal in democratic societies and includes equitable and fair access to all societal institutions, laws, resources, opportunities, rights, goods, and services for all groups and individuals without arbitrary limitations or barriers based on observations or interpretations of the value of differences in age, color, culture, physical or mental disability, education, gender, income, language, national origin, race, religion or sexual orientation.³⁴

Though a person’s race, gender, ability, religion, or any other potential condition of oppression may appear to be central to one’s identity, it is never quite that simple.

We introduce this concept of social justice to students and ask them to read chapters of John Rawls’ book, *A Theory of Justice*, and to pay attention to the concept of distributive justice.³⁵ In break-out discussion groups, we challenge them to:

- define social justice;
- articulate a personal theory of social justice;
- discuss how one would advance a theory of social justice;
- anticipate changes in attitude and behavior expected after developing a theory of social justice; and
- identify what allies would be needed to assist in pursuing social justice.

This exercise motivates students to contemplate a strategy of engaged practice in which they could envision effective results. Thus, using a solution-focused approach, we explore with students what successful practice would look like—this is our “miracle question” to students.³⁶

Over time, students discover that the classroom is a safe place and they develop comfort in dealing with difficult dialogues about issues of race, gender and inequality. An overwhelming majority of students surveyed at the exit point reported that their learning in this class was valuable in building their multicultural competence.³⁷ Anecdotally, in a 2014

graduating group, asked to reflect on their university experience, the 24 students overwhelmingly viewed the “Race, Gender and Inequality” course as the pivotal step in their development of a professional social work identity.

Often amazed by the personal stories and meanings held by students, instructors are kept “honest” on their own journey toward cultural competence.

INSTRUCTOR SKILLS ARE KEY TO SUCCESS

Imparting the HIP framework, while establishing safety, success, and self-discovery, in the

service of cultural competence, the teaching of race, gender and inequality must be student-centered and interactive. It requires a uniquely skilled instructor who is comfortable acting as guide, model, enforcer, encourager, and learner.

The instructor-as-guide creates the syllabus, bibliographies, assignments, as well as facilitates discussions. She recommends readings and material, and inquires about student reasoning in selecting certain sources. Helpful questions include: What have you learned in reading these sources, what questions do they raise for you, or if you had to tell your life story again, what would you include?

As a model, instructors demonstrate methods of understanding and dealing with racism, oppression, and conflict. Some do so by telling life stories, others through humor, and still others through patience shown in working with students in difficult dialogues. All demonstrate that it is possible to address calmly and intentionally a very volatile subject. Additionally, we use ourselves as a resource, sharing experiences, books, films, and stories. While this starts in the classroom, some of the most growth-producing interactions occur during office hours, or in the halls, or even in the cafeteria. Students thrive on personal attention from faculty and space to ask questions, experiment with ideas and receive feedback

without the critical eyes of fellow students—these personal encounters are invaluable to embracing difference.

Instructors also act as enforcers, an important responsibility when teaching about race, gender, and inequality. If not managed carefully, discussions can explode and drive some students underground. The professor must balance between allowing an organic flow to discussions, while also making sure students do not dominate, intimidate, or “check out” because of discomfort. Student silence can be a coping mechanism for those who have never before engaged in an in-depth discussion of oppression, especially in a diverse classroom setting. Hence, the professor becomes the encourager, and must look out for reluctant participants and give them physical and verbal clues that it is alright to contribute, that their voices are valued, and that interactions will not get out of hand. The enforcer/encourager serves as a limit setter, protector and advocate. Office hour discussions can also urge cautious students to share valuable thoughts in class.

Finally, as a learner, the instructor gains invaluable experience from taking on this subject and witnessing student growth. Often amazed by the personal stories and meanings held by students, instructors are kept “honest” on their own journey toward cultural competence. Oppressive dimensions possess temporal elements. Students link instructors to social changes in the realm of cultural competence, whether that be through new norms, meanings or creations of words, music, life on the web, YouTube, and evolving communities. Here, the teacher and student roles welcome bidirectional learning; creating a partnership and moving beyond oppression on the path to social justice. [nea](#)

END NOTES

1. Ortiz and Jani, “Critical Race Theory: A Transformational Model for Teaching Diversity.” Oppression, in this context, relates to biases toward various perceived or actual differences associated with dimensions such as race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, immigration status, health or mental health, abilities/disabilities, rank, and so on.
2. Garcia and VanSoest, *Social Work Practice for Social Justice: Cultural Competence In Actions*.
3. Hopps, “Oppression Based On Color,” p. 3.
4. Pharr, *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism; Collins, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*.
5. Germain, “An Ecological Perspective in Casework Practice.” Person-in-environment (PIE) is a fundamental perspective taught in social work that suggests individuals cannot be understood without also considering their surrounding social realities. It embraces the idea that one’s environment impacts the individual and vice versa.
6. Garcia and VanSoest, *op cit*.

7. Abrams and Gibson, "Reframing Multicultural Education: Teaching White Privilege in the Social Work Curriculum," pp. 147-60.
8. Rogers and Hammerstein, *South Pacific*.
9. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*; Steffoff and Zinn, *A Young People's History of the United States: Columbus to the War on Terror*.
10. See Franklin, *Reconstruction After the Civil War*; Franklin and Amos *From Slavery to Freedom*; Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*; Acunu, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*; and Minkoff, *Organizing for Equality: The Evolution of Women's and Racial-Ethnic Organizations in America, 1955-1985*.
11. In the academic quarter following this course, this enlightened historical foundation is further detailed in relation to social welfare using Day's provocative feminist and oppression-exposing text, *A New History of Social Welfare*. (The film "The People Speak" can also complement integration of material from this text.) See Sue, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation*.
12. Trepanier, *Silent Racism: How Well-Meaning White People Perpetuate the Racial Divide*, p. 3.
13. See, for example, Appuzzo, "Dylann Roof, Charleston Shooting Suspect, Is Indicted on Federal Hate Crime Charges."
14. National Association of Social Workers, *Institutional Racism and the Social Work Profession: A Call to Action*.
15. Jensen, "White Privilege Shapes the U.S."
16. *Ibid.*
17. Garcia and VanSoest, *op cit.*
18. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
19. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
20. Valerio, "Creating Safety to Address Controversial Issues: Strategies for the Classroom," pp. 24-28.
21. Phan, *Exit Survey* 2013.
22. Sue, *Overcoming our Racism: Journey to Liberation*.
23. Kerner Commission Report; Banfield, *The Unheavenly City Revisited*; The Urban League, *The State of Black America*.
24. Abrams and Gibson, *op cit.*; Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*; McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"; Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*.
25. Essed, *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*.
26. ABC, *What would you do?*
27. See for example Kovel, *White Racism: A Psychobiography*; Pinderhughes, *Understanding Race, Ethnicity, and Power: The Key To Ethnicity In Clinical Practice*; and Sue, *op cit.*
28. Berry, *The Hidden Wound*; Denevi, "White on White: Exploring White Racial Identity, Privilege, and Racism."; Cochran and Hanley, *Learning Through Field: A Developmental Approach*.
29. Miller and Garran, *Racism in the United States: Implications for the Helping Professions*, p. 135
30. Fuller, *Somebodies and Nobodies: Overcoming the Abuse of Rank*.
31. Hepworth, et al., *Direct Social Work Practice: Theory and Skills*.
32. Council on Social Work Education. *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards*.
33. Davis and Bent-Goodley, *The Color of Social Policy*.
34. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*.
35. See DeJong and Berg, *Solution Focused Interviewing*, where solution-focused work is explained as a short-term, goal-directed intervention strategy to create behavior change. One

specific query presented to clients is often the “miracle question” which asks the person to describe what life would look like without their current problem, envisioning as if a miracle had taken place.

36. Phan, *op cit.* 2013. An exit survey found that 81 percent of the students found the experience valuable in a class of 95.

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A Future Star: Challenging Stereotypes of Diversity

By Paul Hernandez and Karla Loebick

I have yet to enter a race and inequality class without some students giving off signs of concern, if not outright displeasure, with having to take a class on social diversity.¹ Their body language often reveals that they are tense, apprehensive, or uncomfortable. After a general greeting, I always ask, “What do you hope to learn in this class?” Although responses vary, many students share the opinion that despite some overt racism in society, it seems less common today than in past generations, and most of what they have witnessed are specific isolated incidents. Given this interpretation of modern racism, my students say they hope to learn about where and why these acts occur. I often ask students about their own roles in contemporary race relations, and few are willing or able to identify themselves as potential contributors to the racial stereotypes that lead to inequalities. Students often say that others behave in racist ways, including parents and grandparents, but that they do not.

Although these types of ice-breaking discussions around race and personal perspectives can be challenging in any classroom, they also are

Paul Hernandez, Ph.D., is a nationally recognized speaker and leader in college access and success, community outreach, and pedagogy for working with underserved and underprepared students. He was awarded the National Education Association's Reg Weaver Human and Civil Rights Award, and is the author of *The Pedagogy of Real Talk: Engaging, Teaching, and Connecting with Students at Risk*.

Karla Loebick is a doctoral student in the Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education program through Michigan State University's College of Education, where she specializes in teaching and learning, with research interests focusing on underrepresented populations and learning experiences in the context of diversity. For 10 years, she directed a high school equivalency program for migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

crucial to cultivating racial consciousness among those espousing that they know better. This provides the groundwork needed to implement—in a non-threatening manner—the creative, alternative methods that will combine students’ real-life experiences with difficult academic material, and help them to realize how we all may contribute to racial inequality in society.

Race is well documented as being a difficult concept for students to understand. Typical approaches tend to shut them down.

This article presents an approach to race and inequality aimed at engaging students in the classroom while subtly teaching them that stereotypes exist in many forms and are at times unconsciously applied by most individuals and groups.

This lesson was taught in Race and Inequality, a course offered at Central Michigan University where it can be difficult to connect the content to a mostly homogenous

group of students, while also maintaining their receptiveness to new ideas and perspectives. Race is well documented as being a difficult concept for students to understand.² Typical approaches tend to shut down students immediately. One specific challenge is debunking students’ stereotypical notions of the phenotypical appearance of Latinos.³ Latinos are an extremely diverse group, but this information seems lost in many students’ racial ideologies, most likely due to a very narrow window (provided by the mass media) through which they have viewed Latinos.⁴ As a light-skinned Latino, I commonly hear, “You don’t look Latino,” or “I never would’ve guessed you’re Latino.” Rather than becoming frustrated with these comments, I had an idea to create a lesson that would challenge students’ understanding of “what Latinos look like” and teach them about the wide range of aesthetic diversity within the Latino community. I use this lesson to introduce a chapter focusing on Latinos and it serves as a powerful starting point on the topic of race in society.

We have access to a variety of literature helping students understand the social construction of race, but there are few interactive class exercises that incorporate students’ views to understand the complexity of race.⁵ In classes I have used exercises published in *Teaching Sociology* surrounding the social construction of race. For example, Khanna and Harris’s

exercise asks students to sort celebrities into racial categories and then classify photographs as black or white.⁶ These exercises were stimulated by Obach's work on categorizing patterned circles into similar groupings and Townsley's in-class exercise of using racial statistics to reflect on societal trends.⁷ Nonetheless, even after using these exercises I observed many students still stereotyping Latinos based on typified phenotypes, and failing to acknowledge the actual diversity found within Latino communities. I knew I needed to address this issue before introducing the reading focusing on Latinos and race. Rather than share statistics or social facts about Latinos, I wanted to show how people have their own perspectives regarding this population and how stereotypical these perspectives can

Even in the face of strong evidence that race is nothing but an idea put into our heads, the stigmas attached to specific groups have become "truths."

be. Although the above exercises involve enhanced learning about race, I wanted to add to existing bodies of literature by further contributing an exercise specifically focused on Latinos, which can then lead to a more diverse approach to discussions of race and inequality overall. Before I get to the specific lesson I created, it will be useful to review the central ideas about race as a social construct.

LATINOS AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE

The idea that race is socially constructed is well documented within sociology, though it is common for many of us to struggle in helping our students make sense of the underlying concept of social construction.⁸ Race can be defined as, "a *concept that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies*. Although the concept of race appeals to biologically based human characteristics (phenotypes), selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process."⁹ Other scientific fields, such as biology, also have discredited the concept of race as a biological fact.¹⁰ Yet, even in the face of such strong evidence that race is nothing but an idea put into our heads

by ourselves and others, the stigmas attached to specific racial groups have become acceptable “truths” that hold deep sway in many social situations. With racial characteristics and self-identity appearing to be natural, people in our society tend to view race as a meaningful way to define, separate, and predict the actions of other people.¹¹

It is not uncommon to have students who think they know people who stereotype others, but that they do not.

In addition to the social construction of race, the issues around racial stereotypes have proven to be difficult for students to take seriously. It is not uncommon to have students who think they know people who stereotype others, but that they do not. This is often due to lack of understanding of how stereotyping takes place. Stereotypes can be defined as, “a belief about the personal attributes of members of a particular social

category.”¹² More specifically, “a stereotype is a shorthand term for a cognitive process comprising three components: a target social group, an attribute, and an assessment of the distribution of that attribute among the members of the social group.”¹³ Stereotypes can be developed through personal observation of a small number of members of the targeted group who may be behaving in a particular way or displaying a certain attribute that conforms to other images of that group. Such experiences lead the observer to believe this behavior or attribute is prevalent amongst the entire targeted group.

Another manner in which stereotypes of targeted groups are learned is, “... indirectly [or directly] from parents, teachers, peers, and the media.”¹⁴ Racial stereotypes go as far as to determine, “who is wealthy, intelligent, likely to speak English well, welfare-dependent, criminal, sociable, [and what certain groups are ‘supposed to look like.’]”¹⁵ Once stereotypes and the expectations surrounding them are embedded, they often influence a person’s judgment and actions towards targeted groups. This process is not always direct and can be, “... subtle, in some cases operating without the conscious awareness that a racial stereotypes has been invoked.”¹⁶

The anchoring of groups within stereotypes, and therefore the social construction of race, is prevalent in the courses I have taught. It

is for this reason that it is necessary for me to debunk racial stereotypes among my students and the idea that racial categories lead to distinct biological groups. The point is to show students that race is indeed a social construction of society, and that such labels are tied to questions of power. The focus on Latinos in this paper is not to deny that other groups also are stigmatized and feel the same sting of discrimination and marginalization. The diversity found amongst Latinos is not only cultural, but phenotypical as well. In other words, the diversity can be observed physically. Phenotype plays a major role today as one of the major racial and social markers (along with gender) that we use to navigate our interactions with others.¹⁷ Often our guide for mapping race relations depends on predetermined ideas of how each specific racial group physically appears, and what we expect from those groups based on appearances. In reality, these expectations are complex and must be understood through these groups' historical trajectories and contemporary standings.

The point is to show students that race is indeed a social construction of society, and that such labels are tied to questions of power.

For Latinos, the “typical” image is best summarized by Davila in her book *Latinos Inc: The Marketing and Making of a People*.¹⁸ “But who and what constitute the generic [Latino]? A casting director explained, ‘You know what they want when they ask you for models; it’s unspoken. What they want is the long straight hair, olive skin, just enough oliveness to the skin to make them not ambiguous. To make them [Latino].’” This type of stereotyping leads to remarks such as, “Funny, you don’t look Latino,” and contributes to an underlying image of what the aesthetics of a Latino should be, to say nothing of how they should act.¹⁹ These stereotypes reduce all Latinos to a specific fixed type, disregarding the range of variation found within the Latino community.²⁰ Thus, “the content of such stereotypes reveals a series of unsubstantiated beliefs about who [Latinos] are and what ‘they’ are like.”²¹

The exercise outlined below focuses on students’ personal perspectives on how they can contribute and adhere to the idea that phenotypes determine race. It challenges their understanding of what Latinos “look





"Untitled," enamel and oil on canvas, by Manuel Fernando Rios, a lecturer of painting at Sacramento State University. For more of Rios' work, see manuelfernandorios.com.

like” and introduces discussion on Latinos. Furthermore, this lesson helps educators introduce to students the difficult topic of race and how racial stereotyping on a broader scale can lead to inequality in society.

THE INTERACTIVE LESSON: A FUTURE STAR

This lesson starts with a purposeful focus on a non-race oriented topic: boxing.

To encourage comfortable dialogue with students, this interactive lesson starts with a purposeful focus on a non-race oriented topic: boxing. I share that some Americans consider it a sport, nicknamed “the sweet science,” while others consider it a barbaric display of violence.²² I ask the class for insight on the issue and typically find a few students will share short, insightful perspectives. I then comment on the fact that boxing is profitable for some fighters

and others in the professional boxing industry. For example, in 2012 Floyd Mayweather made \$32 million in a fight against Miguel Cotto who made \$8 million — not including the millions more made by the fight’s promoters.²³ The more well known a fighter becomes, the more earning potential s/he has when they fight. I then begin the PowerPoint presentation.

On the first slide, titled “The Next Big Thing,” three bullet points appear, one at a time. The first shows a boxer’s professional record at an impressive 45 wins, including 33 by knockout, and one loss. I share that this man is only 25 years old, and that this is an impressive record for any professional boxer regardless of age or experience. In addition, I tell them that many promoters and people are excited about this young man because they think he is a future super star.

The second bullet point is titled “Pictures of a Future Star.” At this point, I display three pictures of the young boxer, one at a time, so that students can see a variety of pictures and mentally process each one. The first is of a shirtless young man posing in the boxing ring, gloves help up, during training. He is young and in great physical shape. His face is spotted with freckles, the color of his hair and eyebrows are bright red, and he has brown eyes. Once students acknowledge they have considered and absorbed the photo in its entirety, we move on. The second picture

is of the young man in the ring immediately after a fight. He is holding up his silver gloves, shirtless again, and facing directly into the camera lens. The final picture shows the young boxer in non-athletic apparel in a non-boxing setting, wearing a fleece jacket, with his bare fists protruding toward the camera as if punching it. His hair is styled and he is wearing jewelry. Once the class has seen all three pictures of the boxer in various settings, I move to the final bullet point of the slide.

The final bullet point reads, “How can we promote him to maximize his earning potential as a boxing super star?” At this point I turn the discussion over to the students and ask them to come up with different ways to promote the young boxer. Often, after some initial hesitation, students become

Typically the class will gasp, laugh, or make a comment about being confused—why is the red-haired seemingly white boxer speaking fluent Spanish?

eager to share their ideas on promotional tactics. “Call him the ‘Irish Grenade’ because of his knockout power,” or “Call him the ‘White Hope’ because so many champion boxers today are minorities,” they have suggested. Students have also come up with “The ‘Red Machine’ because of his red hair” or “What about ‘Irish Red’ because he looks like a strong Irish guy.” On a broader scale, another response was “Have him appear on a game show or reality TV show so people can get to know him.” After students share various perspectives, I thank them for their participation and direct their attention to the screen to view an awaiting YouTube clip.

The video, which can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/10SWaOe>, consists of an interview of the boxer. I begin the clip at 39 seconds to capture the voice of a man speaking in Spanish. The class views the video, seemingly perplexed, and six seconds later the boxer appears and responds to the interviewer in Spanish. Typically the class will gasp, laugh, or make a comment about being confused—why is the red-haired seemingly white boxer speaking fluent Spanish? At this point, I stop the video clip and display the second and final PowerPoint slide, titled “Boxer Bio and the Social Construction of Race.”

The final slide is made up of three bullet points. The first says, “Saul ‘Canelo’ Alvarez,” (Canelo is Spanish for cinnamon and I explain

this to the class), the name of the boxer. I immediately follow this with the second bullet showing that Saul was born and raised in the city of Guadalajara, in the Mexican state of Jalisco. I also point out that both of his parents were also born and raised in Mexico. Following this statement I show the final bullet point, a statement that I read out loud to

the students in class, “So? What do Latinos look like?” It is at this point that I begin to see some movement in students’ interpretations of at least one racial category, though it is only the beginning of a long and arduous journey towards their better understanding of stereotypes and the depth and strength of our thinking about the other.

Students approach the concept of race as “real” and feel that racial groups are innately different from each other.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Teaching courses about race is a challenge—not only in actual content or theory, but because of the perspectives students carry into the classroom from their social worlds and personal experiences, which often are minimal and mass-media generated. Students approach the concept of race as “real” and feel that racial groups are innately different from each other with predetermined characteristics that become salient in any given situation. The exercise described above was created to draw their attention away from racial themes, allow them to “let their guard down,” and learn about race in a non-threatening and unobtrusive manner.

I agree with Khanna and Harris when they argue, “We find that readings, lecture, and class discussion help students understand that race is a social construct, but we argue that presenting this same information in an interactive and visual format allows for a more enriching experience.”²⁴ Many students come to class with the utmost confidence regarding their knowledge of what racial groups “look like” and how they behave. The idea that specific racial groups fit into phenotypical, or appearance-driven, categories leads them to determine race based on the outward aesthetics of an individual. (Interestingly, students often do not reflect on the idea that maybe others think the same way about them.) By introducing a chapter about Latinos with this exercise around the boxer, faculty can

contribute to the understanding and debunking of phenotypical stereotypes students may have of Latinos, and also challenge the idea of racial groups “looking a specific way.”

To determine the success and influence of this exercise, students are asked two questions. First, “Did you like or dislike the lesson? Please explain.” Responses to this question have shown 99 percent of 102 students like the lesson. One stated, “Yes, I liked the lesson because it drew us in with the idea of boxing and then had more of a twist at the end that really surprised me.” Another wrote, “I really enjoyed the lesson because it had a media component, a real life person, we all got to contribute, and the topic was unique by incorporating boxing into our race class.” A third

Faculty can contribute to the understanding and debunking of phenotypical stereotypes, and also challenge the idea of racial groups “looking a specific way.”

expressed, “I thought the lesson was a good one. Focusing on the boxer as a person and not discussing race really caught me off guard and showed me my own stereotypes. I like that I learned so much about my own views with this lesson.” Students showed excitement throughout the lesson, adding to its success, as I was able to actively engage them.

The second question is, “What did you learn from this lesson?” Surprisingly, 99 percent of the students answered that they learned Latinos are more diverse than they had previously been aware. Importantly, many also said they learned about their own racial stereotyping. For example, “I don’t think that any of us expected him to be Latino and it was eye opening to realize that we really don’t know anything about a person based on how they look or the color of their skin,” said one, while another shared, “I thought the guy was white because he looks like people in my family. I thought Latinos were all tanned or dark skinned with dark hair. Wow, I learned a lot about diversity amongst Latinos.” A third wrote,

I was shocked that the boxer was Latino when I was positive he was white! The thing that surprised me is that I immediately assumed he was a white American, the thought of him being another race didn’t even cross my mind, and I learned I have a specific ‘mold’ of what a Latino looks like.

Unexpectedly, students also made connections beyond the immediate topic of Latinos to their own broader views of race. One student stated, "... It makes you think of your own stereotypes and what you think of other people. It surprised me to think how quickly I made the assumption that he was European American." Another wrote,

*One student stated,
"...It makes you think
of your own stereotypes
and what you think of
other people."*

I was personally convinced that the boxer was an all-American, Midwestern hometown, upstanding patriot. For this reason I was utterly surprised to learn that he was Mexican. This showed me that even though I consider myself an open minded individual I am just as susceptible to racial stereotyping as anyone else. While these assumptions were harmless in class, they could be dangerous in another situation.

The student's realization of his own stereotypes evidences the beyond-superficial impact of this lesson on students. Another student explained,

It was an eye opener because it showed how easy it was to stereotype and racially profile. I assumed the man was white and that because he was white, he would not be able to speak Spanish. I didn't realize the implications of my assumptions. I would hate for someone to jump to conclusions because of how I look; however, I was guilty of doing just that. It reminds me that people are people regardless of race and I need to remember that.

This student made an insightful personal connection about the potential of feeling unfairly judged based on appearance, thus reminding himself about the need to avoid applying racial stereotypes to others.

From both the extant literature and my own experience with students in my classes, I have found many students believe race is a concept with clear categorical distinctions that they believe to be social facts. These stereotypes and biases pose major challenges in the classroom, making it imperative for faculty to develop alternative lessons that will deconstruct their taken-for-granted notions of reality. This specific exercise takes on that challenge and meaningfully influences students, helping them to understand the complexity of race and how easily people racially profile in

many situations. Students' responses attest to the lesson's success, as well as its ability to get them thinking differently about race in a larger context. By the end of the class, further strengthening student responses, the body language that I initially observed of students had changed: Students learning forward in their seats, eager to participate, and showing signs of full engagement. Doing this work—creating lessons that penetrate our students' minds and help them understand and learn about issues of race in a real and powerful manner—will help dismantle harmful stereotypes that still thrive. [nea](#)

ENDNOTES

1. Readers will note that this article is being written in the first-person singular subjective case. This is because, while the classroom examples are based on Dr. Hernandez's experiences, Ms. Loebick undertook much of the research and writing, and, therefore, deserves credit.
2. Khanna and Harris, "Teaching Race as a Social Construction: Two Interactive Class Exercises," pp. 369-78; Townsley, "The Social Construction of Social Facts: Using the U.S. Census to Examine Race as a Scientific and Moral Category," pp. 223-38.
3. Rather than use the term Hispanic/Latino, I differentiate between Hispanic and Latino, and use the latter. Researchers have found that the term Hispanic "highlights Spanish heritage and language but [does] not acknowledg[e] the [diverse roots of these groups in Latin America]... In contrast, Latino stresses the common origins of these groups in Latin America and the fact that each culture is a unique blend of diverse traditions." See Rothenberg, *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*.
4. Feliciano, et al., "Racial Boundaries among Latinos: Evidence from Internet Daters' Racial Preferences," pp. 189-212; Goldsmith, "Learning to Understand Inequality and Diversity: Getting Students Past Ideologies," pp. 63-77.
5. Khanna and Harris, *op cit*.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 370.
7. Obach, "Teaching about Institutional Discrimination and the Controversies of Affirmative Action," pp. 50-55. Townsley, *op cit*.
8. Persell, et al., "What Students Should Understand after Taking Introduction to Sociology," pp. 300-14; Sweet and Baker, "Who Has the Advantages in My Intended Career? Engaging Students in the Identification of Gender and Racial Inequalities," pp. 1-15; Townsley, *op cit*.
9. Winant, "Race and Race Theory," p. 172.
10. Jones, "Race and Revisability," pp. 612-32.
11. Sullivan, *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*.
12. Timberlake and Estes, "Do Racial and Ethnic Stereotypes Depend on the Sex of Target Group Members? Evidence from a Survey-Based Experiment," p. 401.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Nunnally, "Racial Homogenization and Stereotypes: Black American College Students Stereotypes about Racial Groups," p. 254.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Quillian and Pager, "Black Neighbors, Higher Crime? The Role of Racial Stereotypes in Evaluations of Neighborhood Crime," p. 722.
17. Rothenberg, *Race, op cit*.
18. Davila, Latinos, Inc: *The Marketing and Making of a People*, p. 110.

19. Rothenberg, *op cit.*
20. Davila, *op cit.*
21. Rothenberg, *op cit.*, p. 15.
22. Liebling, *The Sweet Science*.
23. Lole, "Minimum Floyd Mayweather Will Make for Fighting Miguel Cotto? 32 Million."
24. Khanna and Harris, "*op cit.*", p. 377.

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Increasing Racial Diversity in the Teacher Workforce: One University's Approach

By *Freeman A. Hrabowski, III and Mavis G. Sanders*

In 2014, for the first time in U.S. public schools, the percentage of Hispanic, African American, Asian, and other students of color exceeded the percentage of white students, creating a majority-minority system that reflects the mosaic of cultures, experiences, languages, and religions that characterize our nation (See Table 1).¹ In stark contrast, an overwhelming number of their teachers—84 percent—are white.² In fact, more than 40 percent of public schools in the U.S. do not have a single teacher of color.³ This student-teacher diversity gap, also referred to as the demographic gap, has drawn increased attention from educators and parents over the past three decades.⁴ Yet it remains pronounced, requiring intentional action from critical stakeholders, including federal and state policymakers, school system officials, and faculty and administrators in schools, colleges, and departments of education in partnership with colleagues throughout the university.

In this article, we describe the extent of the diversity gap nationally and in the state of Maryland, where our campus—the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC)—is located.⁵ We further describe how the framework that emerged from UMBC's Meyerhoff Scholars Program has

Freeman A. Hrabowski, III, *president of UMBC (The University of Maryland, Baltimore County) since 1992, chaired the National Academies' committee that produced the report, Expanding Underrepresented Minority Participation: America's Science and Technology Talent at the Crossroads. He is currently chair of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for African Americans.*

Mavis G. Sanders *is professor and associate chair of education and affiliate professor in the doctoral program in language, literacy, and culture at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC).*

been applied to our Sherman STEM Teacher Scholars Program, designed to increase the diversity of UMBC's teacher candidates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) certification areas. Finally, we discuss plans to expand our use of the framework to increase the diversity of teacher candidates across all certification areas offered at the university. We offer our experiences, not as prescriptive, but as illustrative of the role that institutions of higher education can play to assist states in closing their demographic gaps and creating more equitable public schools.

TABLE 1.

RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF U.S. PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Race	Number (in millions)
White	24.7
Latino	13.1
African American	7.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.5
Two or More Races	1.5

Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, *Fast Facts: Educational Institutions*.

DIVERSITY IN SCHOOLS: A NATIONAL SNAPSHOT

Research to date highlights the symbolic and tangible benefits of a diverse teaching force. For example, quantitative studies have shown positive associations between same-race teachers and diverse students' attendance, academic achievement, and mathematics course selection.⁶ Qualitative research further suggests that students of color perceive teachers that share their cultural backgrounds as more accessible and caring, and their instructional practices as more engaging.⁷ Importantly, teachers of color are more likely to remain in high needs schools longer than white teachers, thereby adding needed stability and professional capital to these schools and their predominantly non-white student populations.⁸ While such studies do not support the simplistic notion that only culturally diverse teachers can be effective in culturally diverse classrooms, they highlight the unique role that teachers of color play in improving educational experiences and outcomes for students of color.

Despite these benefits, the demographic gap between students and teachers is present in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, most notably in large states with heterogeneous populations such as Illinois and California.⁹ While the gap is present across all populations of color (see Figure 1), it differs geographically due to variations in ethnic concentration. According to the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force, the West and Northeast have the highest percentage of Latino teachers; the Southeast has the highest percentage of African American teachers; the West the highest percentage of Asian American teachers; and the central and western states the highest percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native teachers.¹⁰ Of note, ethnically diverse teachers are particularly underrepresented in the STEM fields and are overwhelmingly female.¹¹

Quantitative studies have shown positive associations between same-race teachers and diverse students' attendance and academic achievement.

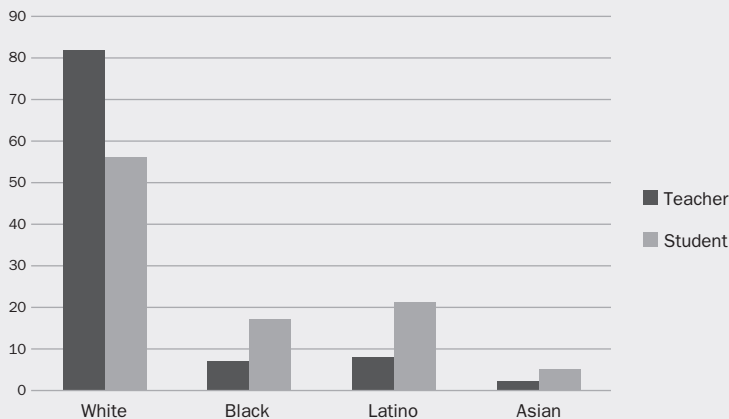
The diversity gap has decreased slightly over the past 25 years. In 1986, teachers of color made up nine percent of the teaching force. By 2011, the proportion had increased to 16 percent. The increase was primarily driven by a growth in the percentage of Latino teachers, whose representation grew from two percent of all teachers in 1986 to six percent in 2011. Teachers characterized racially as “other” also increased from less than one percent in 1986 to four percent in 2011. By contrast, African American teachers remained at between six and seven percent of public school teachers over the same time period.¹²

EXPLANATIONS FOR THE DIVERSITY GAP

Explanations for the diversity gap are complex and overlapping. Some focus on the limited pool of candidates. Boser notes that while the on-time high school graduation rate for white students is 78 percent, it is 57 and 58 percent for African American and Latino students, respectively.¹³ Lower rates of educational attainment reduce the pool of prospective teacher candidates of color. Expanded career options for people of color, resulting from civil rights gains, also have further reduced

teacher diversity. After World War II, for instance, 79 percent of African American female college graduates worked as teachers; however, by the mid-1980s, that figure had fallen to 23 percent.¹⁴ Other career fields were becoming available. Between 1975 and 1982, the number of bachelor's degrees in education awarded to students of color decreased by 50 percent, nearly twice the rate of decline for whites, while the number of bachelor's degrees in business and other fields of study awarded to students of color increased dramatically.¹⁵ Meanwhile, others argue that a lack of sufficient role models and an abundance of negative school experiences that reduce their interest in the profession are the reasons students of color are less likely to select majors and careers in education.¹⁶

FIG. 1
TEACHERS IN THE UNITED STATES BY RACE, 2012 (TEACHER) AND 2008 (STUDENT)



Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, "Number and percentage distribution of teachers in public and private elementary and secondary schools, by selected teacher characteristics," Selected years, 1987-88 through 2011-12.

Additional explanations for the diversity gap focus on barriers to entering the teaching field. Specifically, PRAXIS I and PRAXIS II tests are used in 34 states to gain entrance into education programs, a licensure to teach, or both.¹⁷ PRAXIS I is a reading, math, and writing skills test, while PRAXIS II assessments measure knowledge of specific K-12 subjects, as well as general and subject-specific teaching skills and knowledge. There are ethnic differences in passing rates on both exams. On PRAXIS I, Gitomer and colleagues found that average passing rates were 82 percent for whites, 76 percent for Asians, 69 percent for Latinos,

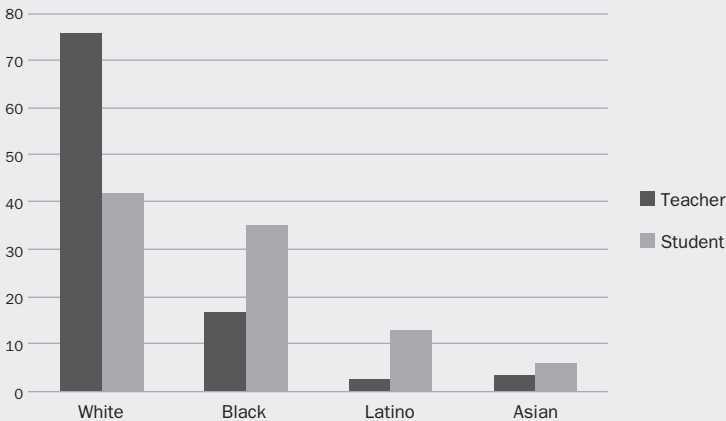
and 46 percent for African Americans; for PRAXIS II, those passing rates were whites (91 percent), African Americans (69 percent), and Latinos (59 percent).¹⁸ Moreover, Pflaum and Abramson suggested that after certification, teachers of color face greater challenges and frustrations on the job market than white teachers.¹⁹ In the following section, we explore how these factors converge to influence the diversity gap in Maryland.

MARYLAND SNAPSHOT

Maryland is a “teacher import” state, meaning it must hire educators from outside the state to fill vacancies in its pre-K–12 classrooms.²⁰ Maryland also has a significant diversity gap between teachers and students (see Figure 2). In 2011, for example, the majority of Maryland’s 58,000 teachers (76.3 percent) were white, while just 16.6 percent were African American, 3.3 percent Asian, and 2.2 percent Latino. The majority of the state’s 854,000 students, however, were children and youth of color (57.5 percent). While white students constituted the largest single group (42.5 percent), more than a third of students (35.4 percent) were African American, 12.1 percent were Latino, and 5.9 percent Asian.²¹

FIG. 2.

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN MARYLAND BY RACE, 2012



Source: Maryland State Department of Education. Maryland Teacher Staffing Report, 2012-14.

Behind these numbers is a very dynamic process of racial and ethnic change in Maryland’s public schools. Over the past decade, the percentage of African American teachers declined more than 4.5 percentage points,

while the percentage of Latino teachers increased by about one percent and Asian teachers by two percent.²² The state also has seen changes in its student population. Since 2000, white student enrollment has declined by 10.5 percentage points and black student enrollment by one point. By contrast, the percentage of Asian students has increased by one point and the percentage of Latino students by 7.3 points.²³

In the past, the state's HBCUs produced the majority of Maryland's African American teachers, but these institutions have seen sharp declines.

Similar to the national picture, factors explaining the diversity gap in Maryland are complex and overlapping. For Asians and Latinos, rapid changes in immigration have resulted in student population increases that have outpaced promising increases in teacher certifications. Consequently, Asian and, in particular, Latino teachers remain significantly underrepresented in

the state's public schools. At the same time, African American teachers also are underrepresented. As many retire, they are not being replaced at a rate to sustain or increase their representation. This is, in part, the result of the relatively small number of African American teacher education graduates from both Traditionally White Institutions (TWIs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).²⁴

In the past, the state's HBCUs produced the majority of Maryland's African American teachers, but these institutions have seen sharp declines in the numbers of students graduating from their teacher education programs (see Table 1). TWIs in the state have not filled the resulting gap (see Table 2). In fact, the percentage of racially and ethnically diverse graduates of education programs in the state has decreased from 29.3 percent in 2008 to approximately 19 percent in 2013.²⁶ The persistent demographic disparities in the state and nation underscore the need for a purposeful and sustained response from institutions of higher education. Our institution's experience with the Meyerhoff Scholars Program not only demonstrates what can be achieved through such action but also provides a framework for strengthening teacher diversity.

TABLE 2.

**NEWLY ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES FROM MARYLAND APPROVED TEACHER
CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS BY INSTITUTION**

Maryland Institutions of Higher Education²⁵

Institution	Maryland Approved Program Graduates, 1999 – 2000	Maryland Approved Program Graduates, 2010 – 2011
Total	2,550	2,555
>Bowie State University*	73	47
>Coppin State University*	61	16
>Frostburg State University	165	172
Goucher College	41	32
Hood College	44	44
Johns Hopkins University	159	137
Loyola University Maryland	99	68
Maryland Institute College of Art	10	30
McDaniel College	107	62
(Western Maryland College)		
Morgan State University*	56	14
Mt. St. Mary's University	43	59
Notre Dame University of Maryland (College of Notre Dame)	276	334
Peabody Institute, Johns Hopkins University	7	7
St. Mary's College of Maryland	40	34
>Salisbury University	254	233
Stevenson University (Villa Julie College)	10	68
>Towson University	503	676
>University of Maryland Baltimore County	101	95
>University of Maryland College Park	386	379
>University of Maryland Eastern Shore*	82	21
>University of Maryland University College	–	7
Washington College	20	13
Washington Adventist University (Columbia Union College)	13	7

> Institutions of higher education that are part of the University System of Maryland.

*Historically Black Colleges and Universities – HBCUs

Sources: Maryland State Department of Education, *Maryland Teacher Staffing Report, 2012-14*; and Keller, *Study of Teacher Capacity Report*.

TABLE 3.

**CANDIDATES FROM MARYLAND APPROVED PROGRAMS
BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2012-13²⁷**

Number and Percentage of Racial/Ethnic Groups per Institution	Institution	Black
>Bowie State University*	28(76%)	2(5%)
>Coppin State University*	6(100%)	0
>Frostburg State University	7(5%)	1(1%)
Goucher College	7(16%)	2(5%)
Hood College	1(2%)	2(4%)
Johns Hopkins University	9(10%)	1(1%)
Loyola University Maryland	0	4(4%)
Maryland Institute College of Art	1(8%)	0
McDaniel College	2(4%)	0
Morgan State University*	25(96%)	01(4%)
Mt. St. Mary's University	4(6%)	2(3%)
Notre Dame University of Maryland	56(22%)	18(7%)
Peabody Institute, JHU	0	0
St. Mary's College of Maryland	0	1(3%)
>Salisbury University	7(30%)	0
Stevenson University	2(4%)	0
>Towson University	25(4%)	31(5%)
>Univ. of Maryland Baltimore County ²⁸	7(6%)	1(.8%)
>Univ. of Maryland College Park	8(3%)	23(7%)
>Univ. of Maryland Eastern Shore*	7(15%)	0
>Univ. of Maryland University College	4(10%)	0
Washington College	0	0
Total Population (2,212)	210(10%)	90(4%)

> Institutions of higher education that are part of the University System of Maryland.

*Historically Black Colleges and Universities – HBCUs; +Hispanic and Native American combined; ++Asian and Hawaiian combined

Source: P12 Longitudinal Data System Dashboard at <https://wcp.k12lds.memsc.org/public>

**INCREASING RACIAL DIVERSITY IN THE TEACHER WORKFORCE:
ONE UNIVERSITY'S APPROACH**

Hispanic+	Asian++	White2+	Unknown
0	6(16%)	1(3%)	0
0	0	0	0
1(1%)	142(91%)	4(3%)	1(1%)
1(2%)	29(67%)	1(2%)	3(7%)
0	54(95%)	0	0
10(11%)	67(72%)	1(1%)	5(5%)
2(2%)	86(90%)	0	4(4%)
2(17%)	6(50%)	1(8%)	2(17%)
1(2%)	54(95%)	0	0
0	0	0	
0	53(83%)	1(2%)	4(6%)
11(4%)	165(66%)	0	0
0	9(100%)	0	0
0	29(97%)	0	0
0	16(70%)	0	0
0	48(94%)	1(2%)	0
17(3%)	532(81%)	0	53(8%)
9(8%)	75(63%)	0	28(23%)
40(13%)	224(71%)	10(3%)	10(3%)
0	16(35%)	0	23(50%)
0	29(71%)	2(5%)	6(15%)
0	12(100%)	0	0
95(4%)	1656(75%)	22(1%)	139(6%)

A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE

The Meyerhoff Scholars Program

UMBC, a public university of approximately 14,000 students, including more than 50 percent who are students of color, is nationally recognized for its commitment to diversity.²⁹ This commitment is embodied in the extensive programming established to ensure the success of its multicultural student body. Perhaps best known is the Meyerhoff Scholars program, which has become a national model for inclusive excellence in the STEM disciplines. The program was developed in 1988 in response to low levels of performance and persistence among students of color

Perhaps best known is the Meyerhoff Scholars program, which has become a national model for inclusive excellence in the STEM disciplines.

in STEM degree programs. Named after philanthropists Robert and Jane Meyerhoff, the program consists of 12 key components:

1. recruitment of highly qualified students;
2. a summer bridge program;
3. comprehensive, merit scholarship support;
4. active faculty involvement;
5. strong programmatic values, including high achievement, and academic and professional preparation;
6. substantive research experiences for students;
7. intensive academic advising;
8. active involvement of the entire campus;
9. linking students with mentors;
10. a strong sense of community among the students;
11. communication with students' families; and
12. continuous evaluation and documentation of program outcomes.³⁰

Nearly 30 years since its inception, the Meyerhoff Scholars program has graduated 939 students from underrepresented groups. Ninety-one percent (854 students) have gone on to graduate and professional degree programs. The Meyerhoff Scholars program is currently being replicated by other universities seeking to increase the numbers of students of color and low-income students graduating in STEM disciplines.³¹ Moreover, its key components have provided a framework for other programs seeking to increase student diversity across UMBC departments. One example is the Sherman STEM Teacher Scholars Program.

The Sherman STEM Teacher Scholars Program

Based on the Meyerhoff Scholars framework, the Sherman STEM Teacher Scholars (Sherman Scholars) program seeks to increase the number of talented UMBC STEM students in the pre-K–12 teacher education pipeline. Developed in 2007, the Sherman Scholars program, named after philanthropists George and Betsy Sherman, builds on UMBC's strengths in STEM and teacher preparation fields to fill critical shortages in Maryland's pre-K–12 classrooms. The program provides comprehensive support and leadership development for pre-service teacher candidates while they are at UMBC, as well as during their career induction period. The Sherman Scholars program also provides opportunities for candidates to engage with culturally diverse students and families, and to develop the skills and dispositions required to be effective in 21st century schools and classrooms. Key components of the Sherman Scholars program are: (1) the development of a community of teachers; (2) a summer bridge program to prepare students to successfully meet programmatic expectations; (3) academic, professional, and personal advising, coaching, and mentoring; and (4) classroom fellowships or summer internships in diverse academic settings under the guidance of teacher-mentors. This multi-faceted support persists after scholars graduate and enter the classroom to assist them in navigating the first few years of teaching.

The Sherman Scholars program also provides opportunities for candidates to engage with culturally diverse students and families.

Through its emphasis on service, support, and especially on community, the Sherman Scholars Program has been instrumental in helping to recruit, graduate, and retain teacher candidates in STEM areas. At its core are people taking care of each other and taking collective ownership of successes, failures, and challenges. Since its inception, nearly 40

At its core are people taking care of each other and taking collective ownership of successes, failures, and challenges.

percent of Sherman Scholars have been students of color, which is substantially higher than the state's current percentage and nearly three times the percentage of non-Sherman teacher candidates of color graduating from UMBC (see Table 3). Thus, through its use of the Meyerhoff Scholars framework, the Sherman Scholars program has simultaneously responded to two critical needs in pre-K–12 education: highly qualified STEM edu-

cators and highly qualified teachers from under-represented populations.

TABLE 4.
**ALL STUDENTS SUPPORTED BY SHERMAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM
 BY RACE AND GENDER**

	Female	Male	Total
Asian	14 (12%)	7 (6%)	21 (18%)
Black/African American	14 (12%)	3 (3%)	17 (15%)
Hispanic/Latino	1 (.8%)	2 (1.7%)	3 (2.5%)
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	01 (.8%)	1 (.9%)
White	47 (41%)	26 (22%)	73 (62.9%)
2+ Races	1 (.8%)	0	01 (.9%)

Note: N=116

Source: Sherman STEM Scholars Program at <http://shermanprogram.umbc.edu/>


STRENGTHENING AND DIVERSIFYING TEACHER CANDIDATES

Building on our experiences with the Sherman Scholars Program, we now seek to strengthen and diversify our teacher candidate pool across all certification areas. Through a series of three steps: (1) data collection and analysis to understand the current situation; (2) focus groups involving faculty, current students, alumni, and potential students to provide feedback on what is going well and to solicit suggestions for future recruitment and retention strategies; and (3) identifying institutional resources and fundraising opportunities that can be leveraged to provide additional supports for students, we will strive to produce highly qualified teacher candidates

*We hope to ensure that
all youth in our state and
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who reflect the diversity of Maryland's pre-K–12 student population.

UMBC, with its large numbers of students of color with strong academic skills, is well positioned to achieve this goal. By recruiting these students to careers in pre-K–12 education and supporting them through teacher preparation and induction, we can contribute to their entry and retention in the public school system. At the same time, through the campus' pre-K–12 outreach programs such as Upward Bound, we will continue to strengthen the academic skills of historically underserved students in elementary, middle, and high schools in and around Baltimore so that they too have the option of becoming teachers in Maryland's public schools.

While we recognize that many white teachers effectively work with students of color, we also believe that all children will benefit from having the opportunity to interact with teachers who embody the nation's racial and cultural diversity. Through our efforts, we hope to ensure that all youth in our state and nation have the teachers they need and deserve. 

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2. Feistritz et al., *Profile of Teachers in the U.S. 2011*.
3. National Collaborative on Diversity in Teacher Education, "Assessment of Diversity in America's Teaching Force."
4. Sleeter and Thao, "Diversifying the Teaching Force," pp. 3-8.
5. The authors would like to thank Anthony Lane for his research assistance, Dr. Antoinette Mitchell for her insightful comments on an early draft of this paper, and the anonymous reviewers and editor for their invaluable feedback that further strengthened the manuscript.
6. Farkas, et al., "Cultural Resources and School Success: Gender, Ethnicity, and Poverty Groups within an Urban School District," pp. 127-42; Dee, *Teachers, Race, and Student Achievement in a Randomized Experiment*, pp. 195-210; also see Egalite, et al., "Representation in the Classroom: The Effect of Own-race Teachers on Student Achievement"; and Klopfenstein, *Beyond Test Scores: The Impact of Black Teacher Role Models on Rigorous Math Taking*, pp. 416-28.
7. Sanders, "The Effects of School, Family, and Community Support on the Academic Achievement of African American Adolescents," pp. 385-409; Wilder, "Increasing African American Teachers' Presence in American Schools," pp. 205-20.
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9. Boser, *Teacher Diversity Matters: A State-by-State Analysis of Teachers of Color*.
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13. Boser, *op cit*.
14. Zumwalt and Craig, "Teachers' Characteristics: Research on the Demographic Profile," pp. 111-56.
15. Cochran-Smith and Fries, "Researching Teacher Education in Changing Times: Politics and Paradigms," pp. 69-109.
16. See for example, Gordon, "Why Students of Color Are Not Entering the Field of Teaching: Reflections from Minority Teachers," and Wilder, *op cit*.
17. At the time of this study, Praxis I was being replaced by Praxis Core.
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20. Maryland State Department of Education. *Maryland Teacher Staffing Report, 2012-14*.
21. 4.1 percent of students were Native American, but no data were available regarding the percentage of Native American teachers.
22. Shah, "Complexion of Maryland Teaching Corps Fails to Reflect Student Body."
23. Maryland State Department of Education. *Report Card*.
24. We refer to Traditionally White Institutions. Other sources use the term "Predominantly White Institutions."
25. Table 1 based on data from the *Maryland Teacher Staffing Report 2012-14 and Keller, the Study of Teacher Capacity Report 2000*.
26. Maryland State Department of Education, *Maryland Teacher Staffing Report, 2012-14*.
27. Data source: P12 Longitudinal Data System Dashboard at <https://wcp.k12lds.memsc.org/public>.

28. The University of Maryland, Baltimore County is described as a Historically Diverse Institution because it was the first University in Maryland that was open to students from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.
29. About 45 percent of UMBC students are white, 18 percent are Asian American, 16 percent are African American, six percent are Hispanic, and eight percent are from other countries.
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Re-envisioning Diversity in Higher Education: From Raising Awareness to Building Critical Consciousness Among Faculty

By Dana M. Stachowiak

As a faculty member in the College of Education at my current university, I am charged with teaching about “diversity issues” in pre-K–12 education. Diversity is a largely nebulous idea in this arena, but I do not find it much better understood in higher education, where it “is generally understood as the body of services and programs offered to students, faculty, and staff that seek to ensure compliance with non-discrimination and related policy and law, and to affirm social membership group differences (broadly considered) in curricular, co-curricular, and workplace contexts.”¹ As such, diversity has become a buzzword; equity is misunderstood as being synonymous with equality; and social justice is often conflated as meaning how we treat people with diverse or multicultural backgrounds (i.e., non-white people) equally.

Most higher education faculty members, and even so-called diversity or multicultural education scholars, have conflicting definitions for diversity, and the transfer of this is evident in our students, who often think diversity has to do with race issues alone—and nothing to do with themselves. There is a dangerous disconnect between knowing *about* diversity and *understanding* diversity. This disconnect threatens faculty’s professional

Dana M. Stachowiak, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of diversity/multicultural education at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Dana has published and presented extensively on social justice (in) education, gender and sexuality, and equity literacy.

obligation to assist students in being reflective and productive citizens who possess self-efficacy and socially just mindsets within a larger global context.

This is not to say that we, as a higher education community, have not come a long way in breaking down disparities between women's salaries, hiring of faculty members of color, and providing services for faculty and students with disabilities, for example.

Raising awareness is not enough; we must also raise critical consciousness, not only to diversity, but to issues of equity, power, and privilege and oppression.

Actually, support for campus diversity and related diversity education continues to be extremely strong, often landing at the top of presidents' strategic plans, in the form of new diversity think tanks or committees; women's and LGBTQ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer] support centers; African American studies, and women's and gender studies coursework; multicultural resource

centers; and even entire diversity offices with a designated diversity officer. Initiatives to recruit and retain faculty and students from marginalized groups, and task forces to create diversity or multicultural curricula are often a part of strategic diversity plans as well. It is important to note here, that most of this programming is centralized in the student affairs arena of higher education.

Don't get me wrong. These supports and means of awareness are incredibly important for our student body, and I am by no means suggesting that existing programs don't excel in supporting diversity in meaningful ways. However, we must admit that no matter how good the intentions of these strategic plans or support centers, we will fail to fully support our students in critical and transformational ways if we do not truly address the deep-seated needs of related faculty development. What the majority of the above-mentioned plans accomplish really well is that they raise awareness to issues of diversity and equity. What I am suggesting is that raising awareness is not enough; we must also raise critical consciousness, not only to diversity, but to issues of equity, power, and privilege and oppression, and move faculty from passive observers of diversity initiatives to active participants in social justice education. For transformative action to take place within a social justice education, critical consciousness is necessary.

WHAT IS CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND HOW DO WE BUILD IT?

The notion of critical consciousness spans many disciplines and, as such, there are varying components to the concept. I use the work of Paulo Freire and bell hooks, who both explain it as having a critical awareness of one's socialization and the structures that work to inform it.² This awareness of our socialization requires us to be thoughtful about our positionalities and how those positionalities are influenced by culture and society.³ Critical consciousness is "an essential tool to help us recognize, understand, and work to change the social forces that shape our societies, ourselves, and the lives of our [students]."⁴ It entails ongoing action and reflection

*We need to encourage
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of the interrelatedness of diversity, social justice, and equity within the system of privilege and oppression of which we are all a part.

The process of building critical consciousness is an organic, ongoing practice that varies from person to person. While there are no concrete steps involved, there are important things to keep in mind as we consider critical consciousness within our faculty. Reed et al., discuss 10 basic principles encountered by individuals working to build critical consciousness, and they largely hinge on personal and structural components that involve differing and interrelated aspects of cognition and emotion.⁵

It is not my intent to summarize those principles. Rather, I intend to pull out some of the most important concepts on which we need to focus as we build critical consciousness among higher education faculty. I first suggest that we move from our current framework of diversity to one of social justice. Within that, we need to be clear in our conversations about equity versus equality, as well as how these two affect and are affected by privilege, power, and oppression. Finally, in all of this vital dialogue, we need to encourage and support our faculty members to be both reflective and reflexive.

FROM A FRAMEWORK OF DIVERSITY TO A
FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

To begin building the critical consciousness of our faculty, one of the simplest things we can do is turn our current discourse from a framework of diversity to a framework of social justice. Diversity is a call to be aware of

This framework of diversity has created a dangerous climate of faculty irresponsibility and indifference.

the differences among students and faculty (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation) and how these differences enhance the campus experience, both curricular and extra-curricular. This framework of diversity too often allows for passivity; simply being able to direct students to the multicultural resource center or viewing a film during the “diversity training” every fall semester can legitimately constitute being *aware* of diversity.

But, after a faculty member signs their name and gets their certificate of completion for campus diversity training, the chances of he or she having to be anything more than mindful of campus diversity resources are slim. This framework has created a dangerous climate of faculty irresponsibility and indifference with regard to personal, social, and institutional dimensions of injustice, and as such, has worked to reify systemic oppression in higher education settings. Diversity is an issue, but diversity, simply put, merely means difference, and “the trouble with that surrounds difference is really about privilege and power.”⁶ A framework of diversity does not often engage people in discussions of privilege and power.

Social justice, on the other hand, is a call to understanding and action, a process with a goal “to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems, and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part.”⁷ In other words, when it comes to issues of diversity and equity, a social justice framework necessarily puts the onus of responsibility onto the individual faculty member rather than the institution alone. In an academic environment, I envision faculty members who promote equity in hiring practices

and the acceptance of students into the university system; who engage in explicit discussions regarding issues of privilege, power, and difference, not only with other faculty members, but with students in the classroom; and who work to encourage university policies that foster equity and social justice. As such, a framework of social justice shifts the focus to ways in which people *respond to* diversity related matters.

In pursuit of critical consciousness, we necessarily need faculty development that provides a social justice lens that “recognizes inequality as deeply embedded in the fabric of society (i.e., as structural), and actively seeks to change this.”⁸ If social justice frameworks, rather than diversity initiatives, are centered in higher education discussions and practices, the prospect

of faculty members being moved to truly transformational action will be greater. Providing faculty development within a social justice framework requires that universities first conduct an assessment of current faculty understanding of and investment in social justice initiatives. The hope here is that, in meeting the faculty where they are, we will see members who are deeply committed to social justice and engage in strategic planning initiatives that encourage the inclusion of social justice into university and departmental missions and visions. The likelihood of graduating students who are reflective and productive citizens with social justice mindsets will, in turn, rise as well, because social justice will not only be an expectation, but it will be embodied.

A social justice framework necessarily puts the onus of responsibility onto the individual faculty member rather than the institution alone.

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EQUITY AND EQUALITY

Working within a framework of social justice requires a critical consciousness of issues of (in)equality and (in)equity in higher education settings. Yet, I have found that these two terms are frequently and incorrectly considered interchangeable. One of the first conversations that I have with the education majors in the diversity course I teach is about the difference between equality and equity. I start with this for

two reasons: (1) it has the possibility of producing a significant fissure in what they *thought* was their strong understanding of diversity; and (2) it (I hope) creates an “a-ha” moment in understanding how educators unknowingly contribute to oppression and injustice in schools. Thus, they automatically start questioning the ways in which they have moved

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through the world as oppressors or oppressed (even though that’s not the terminology they are using just yet). I begin by asking my students to individually define diversity, and almost all of my students typically write something like, “Diversity means to recognize differences and to make sure you treat all of your students equally and/or fairly.” I give the students credit here because they recognize the need for action in working with

diversity in education. But this is where the difference between awareness and critical consciousness begins to emerge. While making sure you “treat all of your students equally” seems like action toward justice, it may be just a masquerade. The action (and social justice framework) comes in when you start considering equity.

Let me explain why, in the same way I do with my students. Because I live in Cajun country, I use a Mardi Gras example. Every spring, it is common to see elaborately decorated ladders along the Mardi Gras parade route. The logic behind this is simple: the higher you are, the nearer you get to the people on the top of floats throwing beads, and the more beads you can catch. I’m just short of average height for a woman in the U.S., so a ladder would be ideal. My friend, Toby, is quite taller than me, so he doesn’t really need a ladder to help him catch beads. Let’s pretend, however, that Toby and I are at the back of the crowd, putting us both out of reach of a good amount of beads. In all fairness, Toby and I should each be given ladders, and to make sure we’re treated equally, we should be given the same ladder. So, now equipped with 3-foot ladders, we climb to the top step. At 6’1,” Toby has a clear space between him and the people throwing beads. He loads up. At 5’4,” I still can’t see over the crowd, and I am still not catching beads.

This is where equity comes in. To catch as many beads as Toby, what I really need is a ladder that is taller than Toby's, and to make that happen, I need to quell my desire to make sure we remain equal. Because of our differences (i.e., diversity) in height, we will never truly be equal. The ladder that I need to have the same opportunity as Toby is different; it needs to be taller. The same goes for our diverse students: because of different learning styles, cultures, or family structures, for example, the resources our students need to be successful will not be the same. If we give a blind student the same book as a seeing student, the blind student—although given the same resource—will not have the same opportunity to be successful as the seeing student. In other words, we have equal resources, but inequitable opportunities.

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Just because we begin to think with equity in mind, we need not stop thinking with equality in mind, nor should discussions of equality be replaced with discussions of equity. Instead, conversations of equity and equality should happen in tandem. If we step back and take a critical look at the Mardi Gras parade scenario, we can start to ask important questions regarding power, privilege, and oppression as they relate to equality. The fact that Toby and I, as well as others in the crowd, were able to use ladders, gave us equality.

Equality does not necessarily result in fairness, however, because not everyone in the crowd is in the same position, nor does everyone need the same resources to catch beads. So, when we have conversations about equality, we need to ask related and important questions to make sure we don't really need equity instead. For instance, why are some people in the front of the crowd, and others in the back? Did they arrive earlier, or is it because they were able to purchase better tickets that put them closer to the bead throwers? If they were able to get to the parade earlier, what enabled them to do that and how easy was it for them? We can ask similar questions about the people who purchased tickets: what enabled them? What about the people behind my friend and me, or those with-

out ladders? With these kinds of questions, we explore context, and ask what systemic factors have enabled some people to have better access to resources. In this way, as we push for an understanding of the difference between equity and equality, we inevitably begin to reconsider our role in the system of privilege and oppression.

Before we can fully move to critical consciousness within a social justice framework, we must look at ourselves.

INTERROGATING OUR INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN PRIVILEGE, POWER, AND OPPRESSION

Building critical consciousness under a social justice framework “begins with people’s lived experience [in order] to create critical perspective and action directed toward social change.”⁹ In other words, before we can fully move to critical consciousness within a

social justice framework, we must look at ourselves, our own identity and experiences, our own privilege and power, and what makes us into the person we are.

An important first step is for an individual to name the social constructs (e.g., gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, age, dis/ability, income level, religious beliefs, and education) of their identity. Even though we use these social constructs on a daily basis to rank and categorize others and ourselves, naming them as they relate to us individually is essential to laying the groundwork for interrogating our role in privilege, power, and oppression.¹⁰ It also is important to name how each social identity category relates to being either dominant or subordinate (for example, male is dominant; female is subordinate). Dominant groups have power in society, but they “are frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge—its existence.”¹¹ This step lends to self-actualization and greater consciousness of our role in oppression.

Self-actualization, however, does not necessarily follow self-reflection of one’s social constructs alone. Rather, it also requires us to consider our mind-body-soul connections to others in our social groups, and with dominant power. While “[m]any of us are both dominant and subordinate,” most of us do not think about how we have played the

part of the oppressor or oppressed, or been a part of the dominant or subordinate group.¹² We must examine these oppressor/oppressed relationship roles so that we can see how dominant powers affect us, others, and the connections within the institution. Understanding oppression “connects to the range of one’s social identities,” and begins to raise our critical consciousness.¹³

This work necessarily involves thinking about our own biographies, those intricacies of defining who we are as individuals. Specifically, we should think about who we are in a “multidimensional” sense regarding “individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts.”¹⁴ The dominant culture ultimately labels individuals as normal or other based on our social

constructs, but when we are able to think about our multidimensional selves, we can view our experiences not only as an integral part in shaping us, but also in shaping how we examine privilege, power, and oppression. The goal for this step is to encourage the choice to “see each other as [we] really are” and commit to the continuous process of building critical consciousness.¹⁵ It calls individuals to embody a framework of social justice.

In addition to this self-reflection, it is also important to learn to recognize how privilege and oppression might be operating in others’ lives, and between others and us. Examining ourselves is only helpful if we then think about ourselves in relation to others. This requires reflexivity in addition to reflection, and so a final step in working to raise critical consciousness is to encourage reflective and reflexive faculty members.

HOW DO WE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RAISING CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG FACULTY

The intent of this piece is not to provide readers with answers; rather, it is to encourage changes in our current discourse on diversity, equity, and social justice. In this concluding section, I offer some suggestions for ways that we, as a higher education community, can think and discuss raising

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critical consciousness among faculty. Faculty recruitment is always important, as well as supporting new and veteran faculty members.

Within the current discourse on diversity, faculty recruitment is a priority, and it should remain so when shifting to a framework of social justice. Colleges and universities need to continue to attract diverse applicants,

but they also need to attract diverse applicants who have an understanding of diversity, social justice, and equity. The reason is simple: it's a lot easier for a campus community to focus on and build a strong social justice framework when faculty members are already invested in social justice in higher education.

Equally important is the retention of socially justice-minded faculty members, and those efforts must start on day one, specifically


Faculty orientation needs to move from the passive to the active, and encompass interaction, dialogue, and critical engagement.

during new faculty orientation. The majority of new faculty orientations are passive—involving lecture formats that merely raise awareness around campus diversity issues. Instead, to be effective, orientation needs to move from the passive to the active, and encompass interaction, dialogue, and critical engagement. Rather than viewing a PowerPoint about campus demographics, what if new faculty heard from a diverse panel of students and faculty about their experiences on campus? Or, instead of being told that the curriculum and syllabi need to focus on social justice, how about they spend time with a faculty mentor to talk about the goals of social justice that they want their courses and syllabi to embody? Yes, these suggestions are more time-consuming than traditional faculty orientation, but a framework of social justice takes a deep commitment to building critical consciousness that goes beyond an avowal of advocacy for social justice.

Ongoing support for these new faculty members to build their critical consciousness is vital to a framework of social justice, as is continued support for veteran faculty members. A change in discourse and increase in action for social justice takes time. It is important to consider that this change needs to be gradual and strategic; a sudden shift or mandate for all faculty members to switch their mindset to social justice will do nothing but undermine efforts.

One way to ensure active training and ongoing support for faculty members is to focus on social justice leadership training, to sustain and grow the efforts of faculty members already leading efforts in a framework of social justice, and to cultivate the efforts of faculty members who desire to possess a critical consciousness. Trainings for these groups of people will vary, so it is important that the campus community carefully assesses the current climate and mindsets of faculty. When thinking of ways to accomplish social justice leadership training in higher education, I turn to the values set by the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership at Kalamazoo College that set forth to: (1) inspire unity, (2) spark intellectual growth, (3) nurture leadership, (4) build community, and (5) embrace change.¹⁶

Having a set of strong core values helps to work towards building critical consciousness among faculty members.

The type of work needed on each campus is going to vary, as is the work needed for each individual faculty member. But having a set of strong core values helps to work towards building critical consciousness among faculty members, and ultimately, to help to advance the goal of operating from a framework of social justice. 

END NOTES

1. Clark, "Diversity Initiatives in Higher Education: Just How Important Is Diversity in Higher Education?"
2. Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*; books, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*.
3. Bettez, "Navigating the Complexity of Qualitative Research in Postmodern Contexts: Assemblage, Critical Reflexivity, and Communion as Guides," pp. 3-5.
4. Reed, et al., *Interpersonal Practice Beyond Diversity and Toward Social Justice: The Importance of Critical Consciousness*.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-86.
6. Johnson, *Power, Privilege, and Difference*, p. 12.
7. Bell, "Theoretical Foundations for Social Justice Education."
8. Sensoy and DiAngelo, p. xviii.
9. Bell, *op cit.*, p. 14.
10. Johnson, *op cit.*
11. Delpit, *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*, p. 26.

12. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" *And Other Conversations About Race*, p. 27; Collins, "Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination."
13. Hackman, "Five Essential Components of Social Justice Education," p. 107.
14. Tatum, *op cit.*, p. 18.
15. hooks, *op cit.*, p. 183.
16. See the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership's website at <https://reason.kzoo.edu/csjl/>.

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