

Racial Justice Taskforce Meeting

June 19, 2020/1:30pm

Participants:

Administrators

Jessica Cobb, Director, Prison Education
Hortencia Cuevas, Director, TRiO
Tenisha James, Dean, Student Services
Monica Green, President
Sam Lee, VP Academic Affairs

Judy Perry, Professor, Computer Science
Timothy Russell, Associate Professor, History
Sigrid Williams, Assistant Professor,
Administration of Justice

Faculty

Ruben Aguilar, Associate Faculty, Kinesiology
Courtney Buchanan, Assistant Professor,
Anthropology
Sarah Burnett, Professor, Early Childhood Ed
Araceli Covarrubias, Associate Faculty,
Spanish
Ryan Hitch, Associate Faculty, English
Amy Kramer, Assistant Professor, Counseling
Lisa Nelson, Professor, English
Dominique Hitchcock, Professor, Spanish &
French
Dan Reade, Associate Professor, English
Christopher Rios Berrios, Associate Faculty,
Psychology

Staff

Natalie Aceves, Ed Advisor, Transfer Center
Charise Allingham, Admin Asst III, IE
Patricia Gill, STEM Services Developer
Ruth Jones, Student Success Coach
Arezoo Marashi, SI Coordinator
Diana Meza, Public Affairs Officer
Denise Terrazas, Exec Admin Asst
Tanya Wilson, Admin Asst IV, SS

Students

Angelica Calderon, ASNC President
Gerardo Devora, Student
Sarah Gadalla, former ASNC President
Shaun Leflore, Student

I. Welcome

Monica opened the meeting at 1:31 pm

Ryan Hitch will help to facilitate meetings monitoring the chat and bringing the topics into the discussion. Establish a protocol that we ditch titles, please refer to ourselves with first names.

II. Member Introductions

- This is a voluntary taskforce, welcome all individuals, recognized that we had people missing from the last meeting, we have a few new faces who have joined us.

III. USC Equity Leadership Alliance Report

- College has joined this alliance, Kaneesha is our liaison working with Gustavo. This is three-year commitment with 64 colleges participating. Kickoff was on Monday, evidence informed, interactive, actionable strategic partnerships, each month there will be 5 participants per college (guidance will be given based on topic) 4 hours of training and the first three hours is content, last hour is an exercise on taking back to the college, and action plans. By the end there will be 12 action plans, translating research into practice. Integrating race through curriculum, campus climate, hiring diverse, faculty, retaining students and employees of color. Field informed, so additional convenings will be build around our needs. Resource portal, case students, syllabi, rubrics, conversation scripts, available to all employees at participating colleges. Three surveys in a three-year rotation, multi-year commitment, first year is student survey, second year faculty survey, third year is staff survey, repeating in this pattern. Dr. Harper encouraged different attendees for each session. The work with this alliance will help inform our work and vice versa.

IV. Taskforce Purpose

- 22 respondents to the survey

Monica shared the survey results highlighting the top 5 and top 10 rated purposes.

1) 10 or above ranked in Top 5

- Identify racial inequities and dismantle racist practices in our institution
- Inward assessment to examine where and how systemic racism is affecting our students and employees
- Audit classroom climate and create action plan to create inclusive classrooms and anti-racism curriculum (Call to Action)

2) 15 or above ranked in Top 10

- Develop and implement action plans to eliminate racial inequities in our institution
- Identify manifestations of systemic racism and anti-Blackness within our institution
- Identify and dismantle institutional barriers for students and employees
- Educate on how to identify race issues at the college

Discussion Points:

- Lower priority items were discussed with comments that the larger policy work that needs to be reformed could be addressed by a smaller group. There is a district -wide taskforce that is also starting, not that they are not important, but it is not the work of this body.
- Looks like we need more information, some of the things that have ranked high, they are the most difficult to do. This demonstrates our willingness to do the hard work.
- It was suggested that since our top 3 priorities were to identify and assess, a great point to start would be to have a place where racist incidents and/or areas of concern can be reported, similar to how behavioral concerns are reported to the CARE team. Should have a similar platform in place as we educate ourselves. This might be an action item out of one of the workgroups associated with the purpose components. Careful about the language and do we have a mechanism safe to speak, who forms the committee, and 'reporting' someone. We have systems/policies in place, it may be that they need to be enhanced, but we have them. What we are hearing is that we need to be aware of the current policy, and that we need to perhaps expand.
- Is there a policy in HR against discrimination, this is one that is an improvement recommendation for our district as to the review and updating?
- Thinking through the idea of a committee, part of the concern, is if a student reports a racist action, faculty may not be aware of the policies and mechanisms are. Clarifying and publicizing the process and resources.
- Title IX officer on campus, Susan Boling. In areas related to harassment and discrimination, they are referred to Title IX officer for investigation.
- Agreement with Dan, we need to be more informed on the process, along with the students. We need to do more with onboarding. Informing of responsibilities and rights, training, guidance, orientation video. Need to know who to refer to and how to act.
- Discussion about updating the orientation message from the president, informing of the zero-tolerance policy.

- Hearing concerns around reporting system for students. This is part of our purpose, if we are looking at our practices, we need to make a way for students to hear it.
- In addition to Title IX, some colleges have civil justice investigators, this is not something we currently have within our district.
- Adopt more restorative practices to bring up problems, fix them, and move on.
- Sat in on the white people taking to white people about race. Kathy O’Bear resources on white accountability, how to engage white people to move from punitive to restorative justice. *Add resource to notes and website www.drkathyobear.com/resources
- There are a lot of things that white people do not know, as a student, it would be good to hear that staff, faculty, administrators can speak honestly that we do not know. Be human.
- Hearing that we want action, it seems that we are ready to move on
- From Tenisha James to Everyone: 02:15 PM
I think that we can keep the top 7 but we commit to pursuing our purpose through a restorative justice framework
- From Sigrid Williams to Everyone: 02:16 PM
I would prefer to combine the first bullet point and the 6th bullet point, "Identify racial inequities and dismantle institutional barriers for students and employees."
I'm concerned about push back from the words dismantle racist practices in our institution.
- These seven purpose statements look good to begin our work, suggestion that equity in hiring could be associated with action related to the first bullet and responding to mental health as associated with the second bullet.

V. Taskforce Name

- Racial Justice Taskforce

In favor of restorative justice, it seems that racial justice is a better. Anti-racism is a strong message to send. The most important thing is that need to be heard and connected. Doesn't really matter what the name is, it is important that we are here. The taskforce conducted a vote via chat, Racial Justice Taskforce had the most votes.

VI. Workgroup Development

- How will these groups divide when there is so much overlap? It might be easier to work in smaller group discussions. I think it is hard to tackle all areas as a large group all together. Maybe we should take a broader direction at first.
- Assess, and ask the right question first. It will not be possible if we are not educated in what we are doing. USC alliance walked through and modeled how to engage facilitating conversations, and the consequences of avoiding difficult conversations.
- We need to educate our selves on how to facilitate the conversations. Need more time, breaking out too soon will not be productive if we are not ready.
- Leading conversations about race, need help. Who would like to help to lead some conversations? Christopher Rios Berrios volunteered.
- How long do we need to properly equip ourselves? Through the assessment and education period this will help facilitate actions that we can move forward on.
- Need to know what kind of racism happens at our college.
- Suggest two different tracks, to help move the work faster. Should continue the dialogue, additional work for white people to do that is separate. Jessica Cobb will be glad to help.
- Natalie Aceves has organized a summer book club; everyone is welcome to join. Reading *So You Want to Talk About Race*, and *White Fragility*.
- Suggested survey of where we stand. Who are we, what do we feel? Wants to know who are we first? Gain an understand our taskforce climate and its members. Courtney volunteered to put together some self-assessment questions that can be shared with the group. Charise volunteered to run the survey by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness for feedback.

- We have a meeting next week, divide that meeting into a conversation on race (Chris volunteered to lead), activity and look at the areas to include in a group survey, and educating on the processes we already have in place for reporting. June 3rd is a holiday, we can work on getting the survey out as it will take time to complete it, meet again on July 10.
- Question raised regarding open forum for students to voice their concerns and experiences, allowing an opportunity for different deans and faculty members to hear the concerns. It worked well with La Sierra, it may be beneficial for us. Kaneesha was working on coordinating a student forum and mental health professional to be a part of it.

VII. Good of the Oder

- Meeting closed at 3:02pm