

A brief overview of HSU's Campus Dialogue on Race, history, assessment of 2012, and future needs.

Executive Summary: 2012 Campus Dialogue on Race

Office of Retention and Inclusive Student Success
October 1, 2013

Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality. –Martin Luther King, Jr.

HISTORY

HSU Campus Dialogue on Race (CDOR) started in 1998 spurred by President Bill Clinton’s Initiative on Race. He recognized that America was increasingly becoming a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-religious society making it imperative to identify common values¹ and advance together across our differences². He challenged universities and communities across the nation to begin a very difficult dialogue about race. University campuses hosted town hall meetings, programs, speaker series, and workshops to facilitate the long road toward awareness and progress around complex issues of race.

HSU responded to the call and held its first dialogue on race in 1998 on the first floor of the J, with approximately 80 people in attendance. Over the years, HSU has been committed to creating safe spaces for this important dialogue. CDOR provides an opportunity for students, faculty, staff, and the community to participate in a week or more of workshops, keynote speakers, poster sessions, panel discussions, and dialogues addressing critical race issues and the intersection of gender equity, sexual identity, immigration, disability justice, body justice, prison industrial complex, and more.

ATTENDANCE AT 2012 CDOR

The 2012 Campus Dialogue on Race was held from Oct. 29 – Nov. 9, 2012. The importance of a Campus Dialogue on Race was evidenced by attendance of a substantial portion of our community members. Students, faculty, staff, and the local community filled 1,151 confirmed seats at twenty-one offerings across the 10 day event. (It should be noted that these counts are low, since swipe technology was not working properly at several of the sessions). Four of the twenty-one sessions saw attendance over 150, and the “Latinologues” saw attendance at 250.

¹ “A dialogue on Race with President Clinton” Transcript of *PBS NewsHour*. July 19, 1998. Retrieved 25 Sept. 2013. http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/race_relations/OneAmerica/transcript.html

² The Civil Rights Monitor. “President Clinton Announces Race Initiative.” The Civil Rights Monitor. 9.2-3 (1998). Web. Retrieved 25, Sept. 2013. http://www.civilrights.org/monitor/vol9_no2_3/art4.html

WHAT DID ATTENDEES SAY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES?

Evaluations measuring organization, facilitation, effectiveness, and content were given at each of the sessions. All sessions received high scores in each area. Participants were also asked for feedback about the learning experiences taken away from CDOR. Feedback was centered on awareness of the continuing struggle around race: “The struggle for equality continues today and our vigilance is necessary to continue progress towards equality and liberty for all.” There was also a general appreciation for the importance of dialogue: “I enjoyed the entire workshop. It’s important to create a space for discussion on these topics.” Finally, one participant noted that CDOR was given as extra credit for students at Arcata High and that several students came. Although the extra credit was focused on minority students, CDOR is an ideal outreach opportunity for all local high school students regardless of race.

GOING FORWARD: WHY IS CDOR RELEVANT?

CDOR Maps onto University Vision

At the 2013 Convocation, President Richmond reminded HSU of our commitment to exploring diversity and ensuring equity and success for students, staff and faculty. To that end, HSU is rolling out a comprehensive Campus Diversity Plan designed to spur the success and inclusion of underrepresented students, as well as expand workplace diversity through equitable hiring practices³. Second, HSU is standing up a new division, Retention and Inclusive Student Success, dedicated to bridging the gaps between student support and academics. This work needs to be done in order to retain and graduate HSU’s underrepresented students.

The Campus Dialogue on Race creates a forum to explore the roots of inequity and talk about where to go from here. These discussions are often difficult, but CDOR is a support mechanism that can help us

³ Humboldt State Now. “Centennial Convocation Highlights Student Support Goals.” Humboldt State Now. 21 Aug. 2013. Retrieved 25 Sept. 2013. <http://now.humboldt.edu/news/centennial-convocation-buoys-student-support-goals/>

find our collective voice as we steer HSU in a new direction. In the spirit of the original initiative⁴, CDOR provides a safe space where we can become educated about the issues surrounding race. CDOR also creates an opportunity for a constructive dialogue to work through difficult and controversial issues. Finally, CDOR provides a forum for collective discussion about solutions.

CDOR is Responsive to HSU's Changing Demographics

As of Fall 2012, underrepresented minority (URM) students comprised 31.0% of the total population at HSU, and 46.7% of first time freshmen⁵. For the first time in university history, HSU qualifies as a Hispanic Serving Institution with Hispanic/Latin@ students comprising 25.6% of enrollment⁶. Despite these numbers, HSU's retention and graduation rates indicate a substantial achievement gap between URM and non-URM students⁷. This gap in educational performance is one indication of the disproportionate effect of race on minorities. It is promising news that HSU is gravitating toward a more diverse student body, however, in conjunction with this shift we also need to be responsive to the fact that more of our students will have been touched by socio-economic and cultural factors that may make success in academia more challenging.

Based on the most recent HSU statistics, it is no coincidence that the most attended session (even more attended than the keynote address) at the 2012 CDOR was the "Latinologues," a collection of monologues about the Latino experience in America. In its centennial year, HSU finds itself achieving major benchmarks in transition. This is an opportunity for us to respond and support the changing demographics on campus with dialogue that reflects our transition. This dialogue will help shape a campus climate that fosters inclusivity and will help pave the way for the other initiatives

⁴ The Civil Rights Monitor. "President Clinton Announces Race Initiative." The Civil Rights Monitor. 9.2-3 (1998). Web. Retrieved 25, Sept. 2013.

http://www.civilrights.org/monitor/vol9_no2_3/art4.html

⁵ HSU Office of Diversity and Inclusion. *5th Annual Report, Cultivating Diversity at HSU: Enriching our Educational Community*. Fall 2013. p8. Print.

⁶ HSU Office of Institutional Research and Planning, 2013 Census data.

⁷ HSU Office of Diversity and Inclusion. *5th Annual Report, Cultivating Diversity at HSU: Enriching our Educational Community*. Fall 2013. p10. Print.

happening at HSU with regard to inclusivity and retention.

The HSU Community Lives this Dialogue on a Daily Basis

Students, faculty and staff live the intersection of race and education in terms of where they stand on the opportunity scale. According to the Fall 2012 HSU Campus Quality Survey⁸, URM students, regardless of gender, reported higher classroom experiences and observations of insensitive behavior. URM students were less likely to report that the university is equally supportive of all racial/ethnic groups and that they feel less connected to the town and surrounding community. Race and other markers continue to be profound realities in the daily lived experiences of our HSU community members. The following submissions from the 2013 HSU Diversity Report are an expression of this reality in students' own words:

"As a student that identifies as a 'minority,' I felt that my lived experiences, my overall success, and myself were not valued as much as those who identify with the dominant race. I constantly struggled with the concept that even if I commit myself to hard work over time, and no matter what I, or the other members of my ethnic group, accomplish, these accomplishments are not likely to change how I, and other members of my group, are viewed by the larger society. How can I aspire to work towards excellence when it is unclear whether or when evaluations of my work will be taken seriously? ...I have never felt so out of place and marginalized in my life as I felt my freshman year attending HSU. I constantly to this day ask myself, "Why am I here?" –*Tina Sampay, HSU Student*⁹

"I have been hearing a lot of stories about racial discrimination, and how people are fighting for their rights, asking for equality and being considered as Americans, apart from their color. The American society is not really the ideal society, as so many people think about it; it has many

⁸ HSU Office of Institutional Research and Planning. *Fall 2012 HSU Campus Quality Survey*. Humboldt State University. Web. Retrieved 25 Sept. 2013.

http://www.humboldt.edu/irp/Reports/CQS/CQS_Narrative_Final_Report.pdf

⁹ Sampay, Tina. "The Art of Mastering Humboldt's Environment." *5th Annual Report, Cultivating Diversity at HSU: Enriching our Educational Community*. Ed. HSU Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Fall 2013. p31-32. Print.

internal conflicts between races. I was amazed at how American people in the United States, the country the most known for its freedom, judge people depending on their color and not their way of thinking and their behaviors.” –*Reeham Ramadan Mohammed, HSU International Student*¹⁰

“Humboldt State is a great example of an organization labeling itself as diverse and assuming that people will change; and the white population can help or hurt the problem. As the majority group, white people should address covert racism and work with students who are under-represented and un-heard to improve the situation for all students on our campus. Covert racism and cultural appropriation need to become a larger part of our campus dialogue, and we should utilize this dialogue as a helpful tool when working to understand the roles we play, either as victims of cultural appropriation or as the perpetrators. Real, lasting diversity requires constant thought, consideration and a change in the mindsets and hearts of people.” –*Taylor McCulloch, HSU Student*¹¹

CDOR Goes Hand-in-Hand with Retention and Inclusive Student Success

Discrimination is often subtle and complicated. Elements of race are imbedded into the institutions that shape one’s opportunity for mobility. These delicate nuances are difficult to tease out. Before we can create mechanisms to address inequity we need to be able to name the barriers. This requires thoughtful dialogue and use of a vocabulary which reflects the complex issues surrounding race. CDOR is one of the platforms at HSU where this type of dialogue takes place. In that way, CDOR is a mechanism for retention and success.

We cannot go about the work of retention and inclusive student success without, first, having language that allows us to understand one another. CDOR creates a safe environment for the larger work to happen. CDOR is a way for HSU to validate our community’s voices and experiences. CDOR also

¹⁰ Mohammed, Ramadan Reeham. “The American Dream, Between Reality and Imagination.” *5th Annual Report, Cultivating Diversity at HSU: Enriching our Educational Community*. Ed. HSU Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Fall 2013. p25-26. Print.

¹¹ McCulloch, Taylor. “Flying Under the Radar.” *5th Annual Report, Cultivating Diversity at HSU: Enriching our Educational Community*. Ed. HSU Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Fall 2013. p29-30. Print.

shapes campus perceptions and climate and is a neutral way of ushering in dialogue connected to the recent steps HSU has taken with the Campus Diversity Plan and the new Division, Retention and Inclusive Student Success (RISS).

GOING FORWARD: HOW WILL CDOR BE HANDLED?

The 2013 CDOR will be held from Nov. 1 – 8, 2013 and will be the 16th annual Dialogue at HSU. Planning for 2013 CDOR is nearly complete. The Office of Retention and Inclusive Student Success will be conducting a comprehensive assessment of this year’s CDOR and using that data to inform future planning efforts.

As a result of restructuring, future iterations of CDOR will be housed within the new division, The Office of Retention and Inclusive Student Success. RISS will have a larger role in the planning and implementation process of CDOR, including: integration of CDOR into curricula and campus happenings, coordination of logistics, and an annual assessment.

FUNDING

The MCC manages the CDOR budget every year. Initially, funding for the annual CDOR came from the President, Provost, three colleges, Associated Students, and contributions from other departments. When the Diversity Program Funding Grant process was put in place, the Director of the MultiCultural Center (MCC) submitted a CDOR grant proposal every year. In 2011, recognizing the importance of this and other ongoing dialogues for our students and our campus, President Richmond asked the Office of Diversity and Inclusion how his office might lend its support to this effort. That conversation resulted in the President volunteering to fund CDOR out of his office going forward, and towards that end, \$5000 has been allocated from the President's Office every year since. We are asking for continued support from the President’s Office in the amount of \$5,000 per year for CDOR, and for this support to be institutionalized as part of HSU’s longer term goals of becoming an inclusive campus.