

JHCOE College/Faculty/Student Meeting, September 4, 2020

- August 17<sup>th</sup> email – shared student stories, need to create an academic climate of awareness, sensitivity and advocacy for students of color, acknowledge personal learning and growth is part of the process
- Go over the information (Report a Concern) on the college website
- Go over the procedures for students/faculty reporting a potential case of discrimination/harassment (Click on the Report a Concern button on the JHCOE main web page which takes you to several areas [sexual misconduct, discrimination/harassment, general report, or concern for a student])
- Talk to the Dean – open door visit policy (contact Ms. Kathy Schultz – [Kathy.Schultz@utoledo.edu](mailto:Kathy.Schultz@utoledo.edu) or call 419-530-6126 to schedule a confidential meeting)
- College wide meetings have been set up for us (faculty/staff/students) to have dialogue centered around race, privilege, systematic injustice for students of color, academic and interpersonal climate, as well as other important issues and/or challenges.

**The JHCOE Summer Student Group – please introduce yourselves and explain how all of you became involved in the ongoing racism conversation along with your ideas of how we can move the college forward (a specific list of “areas of exploration” this group generated is provided later in this document)**

- The listed racist events/comments in the email (the generation of inaccurate, insensitive, careless and/or harmful statements or actions that negatively impact members of particular groups) are just not a JHCOE issue; similar events unfortunately happen across the university.
- Dr. Spann to share his student experiences at the university level
- The scheduled meetings are not designed as an “ambush” of anyone in the college. However, we need to be honest with ourselves and admit that we all have bias (faculty, staff and students) – we all have to admit that to ourselves first and own it, recognize it for what it is, and then decide what we are going to do about it – in particular, continue to be influenced by it through thought and deed or to actively reconstruct how we think and act toward others.

- Every JHCOE faculty member is devoted to providing the best learning experience/opportunity for every student. This requires genuinely recognizing, understanding and supporting the individuals within the audience you are teaching.
- Teaching is more than the content that is covered, it's also about the process of helping students succeed. And our students can't succeed if they are exposed to and have to contend with comments and/or actions that do just the opposite.

According to Ms. Malaika Bell – Program Manager, Office of Diversity and Inclusion at The University of Toledo (Getting Comfortable with Talking About Race) what black students want to have happen include the following:

- Respect us
- Listen to us
- Find out about us
- Don't make assumptions
- Don't take over
- Stand by my side
- Teach your children about racism
- Interrupt inappropriate jokes and comments
- Don't take it personally
- Don't be afraid of me
- Don't ask me to speak for my people

I ask all of you to consider the following questions:

1. How do we as faculty and staff make things permanently better for our students of color? What specific actions need to take place? What should be our first step? Second step? Thoughts?

We don't have to come up with the solutions today but we need to start the search for answers.

2. What structures, policies, and/or procedures need to be in place within the college to ensure events like those presented in the email are not repeated?
3. What does each student need to do/follow/demonstrate to make sure all students feel safe and valued on the university campus?

## **Specific Areas of Exploration Sent to the Dean (Summer 2020)**

**Create meaningful dual appointments between JHCOE and other departments including Africana studies, Sociology and Anthropology, Women and Gender Studies**

**Diversity/Antiracism as a framework for every course (undergraduate and graduate) and every interaction with students and staff in the JHCOE (and every college throughout the university). Also, multicultural education courses need to be a requirement for all programs, undergraduate and graduate.**

**Increase enrollment of minority students, those with disabilities, low income and international populations by providing access and opportunity through removal of barriers and more intentional/recruitment efforts.**

**Hire and retain a diverse faculty – in JHCOE approximately 15.5% are faculty of color**

**All faculty and staff will be trained to better understand and implement an anti-racist framework.**

**Students, faculty, and staff will participate in monthly ongoing dialogues.**

**Ongoing dialogue with the administrators, faculty, staff, to address discrimination, change policies, practices, and perceptions related to race and racism.**

**A system will be put in place for students, faculty, and staff to report incidents of discrimination.**

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As a college we need to grow our awareness of self and others, and that can start with the understanding of privilege.

A simple google search on privilege will generate something similar to the following:

**Privilege is a benefit or advantage enjoyed by an individual or group beyond what is (or is not at all) available or provided to others.**

A more detailed explanation of privilege (provided below) as well as other terms can be found on The University of Toledo Office of Diversity and Inclusion Racial Lexicon:

**PRIVILEGE** — Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to all members of a dominant group (e.g. white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it, but it nevertheless puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

Examples of White Privilege:

### **WHITE PRIVILEGE** —

- *Structural White Privilege* — A system of white domination that creates and maintains belief systems that make current racial advantages and disadvantages seem normal. The system includes powerful incentives for maintaining white privilege and its consequences, and powerful negative consequences for trying to interrupt white privilege or reduce its consequences in meaningful ways. The system includes internal and external manifestations at the individual, interpersonal, cultural and institutional levels. The accumulated and interrelated advantages and disadvantages of white privilege that are reflected in racial/ethnic inequities in life-expectancy and other health outcomes, income and wealth and other outcomes, in part through different access to opportunities and resources. These differences are maintained in part by denying that these advantages and disadvantages exist at the structural, institutional, cultural, interpersonal and individual levels and by refusing to redress them or eliminate the systems, policies, practices, cultural norms and other behaviors and assumptions that maintain them.
- *Interpersonal White Privilege* — Behavior between people that consciously or unconsciously reflects white superiority or entitlement.
- *Cultural White Privilege* — A set of dominant cultural assumptions about what is good, normal or appropriate that reflects Western European white world views and dismisses or demonizes other world views.
- *Institutional White Privilege* — Policies, practices and behaviors of institutions — such as schools, banks, non-profits or the Supreme Court — that have the effect of maintaining or increasing accumulated advantages for those groups currently defined as white and maintaining or increasing disadvantages for those racial or ethnic groups not defined as white. The ability of institutions to survive and thrive even when their policies, practices and behaviors maintain, expand or fail to redress accumulated disadvantages and/or inequitable outcomes for people of color.

So what does this mean? Some of us have more privilege than others? The answer is yes. You may automatically respond with, “Wait we live in America where everyone has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Unfortunately right and privilege are two different things. Moreover, the foundational expectation of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness has not been granted and exercised for some groups for hundreds of years (e.g., the Indian Civil Rights Act was only recently passed in 1968; the Voting Rights Act of 1965 officially gave women of color full voting access). Both of these events have occurred within the last fifty-five years.

Exercise: Do you believe you have a privilege list? If so, what items would be on that list? Please generate your potential list at this time (keep this list for later review/analysis)

- I, Raymond Witte, hold privileges and benefits that others may not. Many, if not most, were unearned privileges that have been granted to me within society just because I am a male and my skin is light/white. I believe I have worked hard for the attainments I have experienced (which may or may not be true). However, my gender and color of my skin have always worked for me in my accomplishments and never against me. That benefit has followed me and my ancestors (on my maternal side) for over 11 generations in this country.
- The Dean's list of privileges – let me share a list of some of my privileges

#### Ray Witte – Just a Few of My Many Privileges:

- I am a white male
- Youngest of four children
- I was fortunate to attend college and obtained three academic degrees
- My parents moved (from a lower SES, non-postsecondary oriented school district to a higher SES, postsecondary oriented school district) so that I could receive a better education
- My neuro-atypical learning issues were well disguised and my school performance was not adversely impacted
- My home life was stable; I never suffered from hunger
- I was able to work several jobs while I attended college
- My school loans were few and manageable
- My sisters began working right after high school to help the family (and I did not have to) and they also financially assisted me with my college costs
- I am a recognized US citizen and was eligible for financial aid and grants
- I received scholarship support while in college
- The war in Vietnam ended before I was drafted
- I had supportive role models (e.g., father, coaches, college professors, fellow colleagues) who helped guide and mentor me
- I currently operate from a position of organizational power and influence
- I hold an administrative position in higher education
- I have work experience (over 30 years in PK-12 and higher education)
- I am a licensed psychologist in the state of Ohio
- My physical/mental health is relatively good
- I drive a car that is paid off
- I live in my own house (which the bank really owns)
- I have a job and work with impressive colleagues and students

Do you share similar privileges? Do these privileges provide you a personal advantage that others may not possess?

I continue to grow in understanding the privileges I possess. I continue to think about what I can do to ensure everyone receives comparable privileges. This is important work for me. In my reflective process, I have created a personal statement that guides this work.

Do you have a personal statement? If so, what is it?

My personal statement/assertion:

*I recognize that I hold privilege, and I am committed to using my privileged position to promote the well-being of all students, and especially for those who are not as privileged, within the college and across the university.*

- Recognition of privilege is an important antiracism start – but what do we do with that awareness?
- This awareness cannot be forgotten – it becomes a part of who you are
- Maybe you could use your privileged position to make system changes so all receive privilege? Is there a desired pathway?
- So what are specific examples of change that could take place in our college/university?
- ?
- ?

What about these possibilities?

- Access to any program area in the college (no testing or selection obstacles)?
- College support for those with highest financial need (emphasis on scholarship monies and grants and not on loans) – Funding through Giving circles and “Students without Debt” program?
- Mental health support, mentor support, virtual “connection groups” during isolation, study groups/circles for students?
- College diversity resource site for all faculty, staff, students, alumni as well as our colleagues and practitioners in the field

“So please, check your privilege. Check it often.” *So you want to talk about race* by Ijeoma Oluo

As part of this collaborative work, Aaron has challenged me (and collectively us) to ask the important questions:

**What do we ultimately want to happen because of our meetings, dialogue, and work?**

**What are our ultimate goals?**

Critical questions to address for sure. As a college, we jointly need to find the answers. That is why we are here and doing this work.

If asked, as Dean of the Judith Herb College of Education, a primary goal of mine for the college is:

*That the events I shared with you in the email of August 17 never happen again (ever). That everyone of us is treated with respect, dignity and value forever. We all deserve this level of care and I choose to accept nothing less. This is one of my goals for the college and I will do my very best to make sure that it is achieved every day.*

**I would greatly appreciate (and be forever grateful) your support and personal pledge in the pursuit of the aforementioned goal. Thank you.**

Next Steps for the October 30 meeting?