

Anti-Racism Report – Summer 2007

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Executive Summary

This report details the purposes and role of the new Anti-Racism Working Group and its corresponding Chair position on the Consortium's Executive Board. Since the creation of this position, all board members and volunteers (20 persons in all) were called by phone in order to gather feedback on how to proceed with anti-racism work in the Consortium. This report includes recommendations based on both a survey taken during the summer of 2006 and on the discussions with individual board members and volunteers.

Recommendations for most *immediate action* include these possibilities:

- Board member commitment to take action for racial inclusion.
- Concerted future inclusion of people of color issues in newsletters and publications.
- Discussions about racial inclusion and the Mentorship program.
- Inclusion of racial justice training in future Creating Change pre-conference institutes.
- Posting of resources on email list leading up to and during each cultural heritage month.
- Creation of an organizational values statement on racial justice and inclusion.

Recommendations for *further action* include these possibilities:

- Creation of print and online compilation of anti-racism resources.
- Revising the F.A.Q.'s on the website for a greater racial lens on each.
- Increasing Consortium memberships by those working in multicultural centers.
- Outreaching specifically to communities of color about Consortium job listings.
- Creating a Consortium internship that focuses on people of color and racial inclusion.

Recommendations for *longer-term consideration* include these possibilities:

- Developing a new member packet that includes information about racial justice.
- Recommendations to campuses about how to obtain racially diverse candidate pools.
- Face-to-face orientation program for Executive Board, including anti-racism training.
- Support of regional meetings, including anti-racism training, possibly travel scholarships.
- National Consortium conference, including institute on racial inclusion/justice.
- Database of best practices, including practices for building anti-racist organizations.
- Cohesive career advancement programs for people of color and young professionals.
- Deepening and leveraging relationships with other higher education associations.
- Training anti-racism trainers within the Consortium to hold regional trainings/workshops.

All of these recommendations are simply recommendations, not mandates. They are open to further discussion and change. In order to accomplish results, however, there must be a commitment from individual board members to make these changes. Responsibility for change can not simply rest upon the Anti-Racism Working Group.

Full Report

Following a tumultuous discussion about issues of race during the first Consortium pre-conference institute at Creating Change in November 2005, the Consortium formed an ad hoc Anti-Racism Working Group and conducted an Anti-Racism Survey during the summer of 2006. This led to the official creation of the Anti-Racism Working Group in November 2006. This report details the purposes and role of the new Anti-Racism Working Group and its corresponding Chair position on the Consortium's Executive Board. Since the creation of this position, all board members and volunteers (20 persons in all) were called by phone in order to gather feedback on how to proceed with anti-racism work in the Consortium. This report includes recommendations based on both the survey and the discussions with individual board members and volunteers.

Most importantly, we need to take responsibility for anti-racism work within our own work as board members. This means taking a racial justice lens to each component of every thing that we do as board members and looking to see how it can become more racially and culturally inclusive. Once we make a commitment to taking on some of these tasks, I would like to publish what we intend to do, who intends to do it, and the projected timelines to the entire Consortium list. This is a way of holding ourselves accountable; keeping our members informed about what is going on so that they feel a sense of progress; and inviting our membership to provide assistance in moving forward with these changes. Initiatives that nobody volunteers to lead will not happen.

As the Anti-Racism Chair, I will commit the Anti-Racism Working Group to significant work in managing these initiatives (if it is agreed by the group that these are important):

- Posting of resources on the listserv leading up to and during each cultural heritage month.
- The development of a print and online guide of resources on anti-racism and people of color, including already available articles/publications, films, and trainings/conferences. (To be done in conjunction with the People of Color Group.)

However, all additional projects need to be led by others. I make myself available as Anti-Racism Chair for anyone who would like consultations and assistance in finding volunteers, however. As an important note before getting into the rest of the recommendations, when implementing these recommendations, the opportunity to examine other issues of diversity (e.g. [dis]abilities, transgender inclusion, etc.) ought to be taken whenever possible. However, token inclusion is not our goal, so simply listing out categories to be included is insufficient without the backup of actual actions and programs that demonstrate inclusion. Such programs should be developed in conjunction with affected parties – those who identify with these constituencies.

Recommendations for most *immediate action* include these possibilities:

- Each board member is asked to commit to applying an anti-racism lens to their board roles and to report on this periodically (twice a year, possibly in the annual report if it is an organizational rather than personal application of an anti-racism lens).
- Inclusion of a short blurb/article on a best practice for racial inclusion in each Consortium newsletter.

- Arrange a conference call between People of Color Group Chairs and those working on the Mentorship program to discuss mentoring needs of people of color in the Consortium and any ways in which mentorship and support can be improved. Results from the Anti-Racism Survey from Summer 2006 indicate that one of the top ways that Consortium members of color support themselves is through specific supportive colleagues and people who they have identified. Is there a better way the Mentorship Project can assist with these efforts of our members of color in supporting themselves?
- A commitment from the Board to include anti-racism/people of color components in all future Consortium pre-conference institutes at the Creating Change conference.
- A values statement on anti-racism, racial inclusion, and racial diversity to be added to our constitution/bylaws. This statement should help us to explain *why* this work is important to us and how it will enhance our organization.

Recommendations for *further action* include these possibilities:

- Going through every F.A.Q. currently on the Consortium website with a fine-toothed comb and seeing how the answers might be able to include resources and information specific to racial inclusion and diversity (as well as transgender and other communities that seem salient and missing from the equation).
- More deliberate membership recruitment and outreach (mailing, emailing, phone calls) to those who work in multicultural centers.
- Develop more targeted ways to outreach about Consortium job and internship announcements to communities of color (including those who might not currently be in our membership).
- Use some Consortium funding to create an internship that focuses on an anti-racism project that supports the Consortium and the priorities of the Anti-Racism Working Group.

Recommendations for *longer-term consideration* include these possibilities:

- A new members packet to new Consortium members with resources, including information about anti-racism.
- A resource that we can send to campuses that have open positions with our recommendations for how they can obtain a racially diverse/inclusive candidate pool and have an inclusive search process (e.g. sample cultural competency interview questions, information about outreaching to specific groups, etc.)... Maybe we have some sort of criteria for posting job announcements on our website such as specific proactive steps to make searches racially inclusive.
- Face-to-face time for Executive Board orientation/training during Creating Change or at another point, including development of racial justice skills.
- Greater Consortium involvement with regional meetings, including resources as necessary for incorporating anti-racism into these meetings.
 - This may include scholarships for people of color who otherwise might not be able to afford to attend the regional meetings.
 - This may include assistance with curriculum/training development.
- National conference for Consortium members and friends of the Consortium, including intensive institute on racial inclusion/justice.
- A database/collection of best practices, particularly including ones on building anti-racist/diverse/racially-inclusive organizations.

- Development of a more cohesive young professionals and people of color career advancement program (going deeper and beyond what we have through the internships and mentorship programs) that works with grad students and young professionals. This includes identifying students of color to track towards our profession and also providing career guidance, professional development, and support for the career advancement of young professionals (e.g. many LGBT2's).
- Developing relationships with NASPA, ACPA, and LGBT-related groups in other student affairs professional organizations (e.g. NAFSA), and leveraging these connections for racially inclusive resource development and sharing of best practices.
- Train the trainer for Consortium members to be able to go back to their regions and hold regional trainings on anti-racism, racial justice, etc.

If you have additions or suggestions regarding these recommendations, please let me know. I am looking forward to discussing these ideas on our board calls and hopefully having board members commit to lead a variety of initiatives for both the short-term and the long-term in order to bring us toward a more inclusive place in our history.

Anti-Racism Survey Completed During the Summer of 2006

Respondents overwhelmingly believe that the Consortium should be addressing anti-racism issues, should have a values statement on this, and should be doing trainings/discussions/etc. on anti-racism and white privilege.

The greatest support that people of color in our membership have been able to find for themselves is through other people -- colleagues and friends who understand, value, and support their struggle as people of color working in this field.

The word "racism" probably does not resonate the same with everyone. We need to look at other terminologies to discuss the issues, such as micro-inequities and micro-aggressions. Or racial justice and inclusion, racial diversity and equity, multiculturalism, etc. When discussing these concepts, we should make it clear that the impact of these problems is great, but the way in which they play out is often subtle and part of the learned unconscious/subconscious (though sometimes it is a conscious action). This may help people to break beyond their view of racism as equal to the KKK, segregation, outright discrimination, etc.

Some of the most valued aspects of anti-racism training were inclusion of:

- dialogue and interactivity
- a critical, deep look at power and privilege
- skills and coping strategies

Respondents suggested possible support from the Consortium including training opportunities, publicity of opportunities that already exist, maintaining the POC listserv, compilation of resources, inclusion in statement of mission and values, monthly email topic, reading materials, national summit, online training, newsletter articles, regional workshops, identification and development of new professionals, getting the word out about job opportunities to communities of color, money for professional development in this area, etc.

Some respondents seemed to indicate that they or others were burnt out, processed out, done with the 101's, and tired of the emotional work that comes with going through anti-racism sessions, training, or witnessing racial tensions. This is probably related to response from the previous year's Creating Change pre-conference institute that was triggered and taken off-agenda by racial issues. This may also be a rejection by some that it is important to have these discussions because they feel that they have "had this discussion before" and think that they "get it."

Description and Role of the Anti-Racism Working Group and Chair

What is the Anti-Racism Working Group?

The Anti-Racism Working Group acts as an accountability mechanism to move the Consortium towards greater inclusion of a racial justice lens into all of its projects and activities. All who support racial justice and inclusion are welcome to join.

What is the People of Color Constituency-Based Group?

The People of Color Constituency-Based Group is a supportive network and space for people of color within the Consortium. This group is the official voice of people of color within the Consortium. All who self-identify as people of color are welcome to join.

What is the Anti-Racism Chair's job?

1. The Anti-Racism Chair listens to and follows the lead of the POC Constituency-Based Group when it comes to framing anti-racism work and priorities. The Chair also helps to bring allies in the Consortium on board to initiatives for which the POC Constituency-Based Group would like ally support.
2. The Anti-Racism Chair listens to allies and encourages/creates opportunities for the development of stronger anti-racism allies and activists based on the priorities of the POC Constituency-Based Group and the development needs of allies.
3. The Anti-Racism Chair serves as an accountability mechanism for the executive board and others who carry out the Consortium's work. The Chair encourages the distribution of responsibility for anti-racism and inclusion work throughout all Consortium activities, volunteers, and board members rather than centering such work solely on the Anti-Racism Chair or Working Group.
4. The Anti-Racism Chair carries out this work in an environment of multi-directional dialogue and support, while also challenging the Consortium and its members to stretch their boundaries on possibility, to think big, and to always aim for a fully inclusive and just world.

Periodically, the Anti-Racism Chair will engage in discussions with each individual Executive Board member and volunteer in order to:

- Build communication, understanding, and support around anti-racism work.
- Exchange ideas about the integration of anti-racism work into the work of the Consortium.
- Encourage each board member to take on the task of integrating anti-racism into aspects of Consortium work they manage.
- Prepare to integrate anti-racism work across the executive board and Consortium through future synergism during board calls/meetings and long-term planning and goal-setting.