

Ideas for an Anti-Racist Future

As Jesuit colleges and universities consider next steps in creating their own anti-racism plans, we encourage you to consider the following suggestions from members of the AJCU network.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

- **Don't skip the step of talking about the biases that we each hold.** Give colleagues the time and space to do this, so that the links between personal bias – based on societal norms, the influence of family and friends, media, etc. – can be seen as part of the college's or university's current reality. Building comfort, over time, with having conversations about our biases strengthens relationships between colleagues and has a freeing effect on how we think and act on behalf of the school.
 - *How will we create thoughtful and productive opportunities for sharing our personal biases? How might we link this step to institutional decision-making?*
- **Focus much of the effort on systemic racism.** Institutionalized racism is, by its nature, hidden. It does not present itself in overt prejudice and easily identified forms of discrimination. Rather, its effects are long-range and insidious.
 - *How will we work, as a community, to identify and eradicate systemic racism across the college/university? What listening, learning and concrete planning will be required?*
- **State the college or university's vision in the context of the AJCU network of institutions.** As an AJCU member institution, how can we exercise our voices on campus, and with the AJCU network, to foster both personal conversion/growth and institutional metamorphosis?
 - *Where do we, as a school and a network, want to be in 2-5 years? How will we communicate that intent?*
- **Be accountable.** All of our anti-racism efforts should include clear measures of accountability, lest they evaporate into the category of “unrealized intentions.”
 - *What accountabilities are we willing to put in place, to keep anti-racism at the forefront of our mission commitment? How will anti-racism be incorporated prominently into our other plans?*
- **Act in a symbolic and practical way.** The example of presidents, trustees and senior leaders is irreplaceable in setting tone and expectations. Carefully chosen acts can yield powerful consequences. Publicly sharing one's hopes and fears, engaging as a partner with communities of color, and asking for advice from Black community members are among the ways in which leaders build credibility and trust.
 - *How can we send cues to our community that we are taking anti-racism seriously?*

Laying the Groundwork (cont.)

- **Link anti-racism clearly to the mission.** It is important to state, without equivocation, the college's or university's culpability in systemic racism, along with the desire to change. Embedding the institution's anti-racism efforts in the lexicon and worldview of Ignatian spirituality – in speeches, university documents, admissions materials, core curriculum objectives (beyond the “diversity requirement”) – also repositions them at the center of our mission and drives decision-making.
 - *How can we change the way we speak and think about anti-racism, racial justice, and privilege, so that the link to the mission is clear?*
- **Review practices for including Black colleagues and other colleagues of color in key institutional decisions.** Who sits at the table and how reporting lines are constructed affects what is discussed and how decisions are made.
 - *How will we respond to the need for Black voices and leadership in our institutional decision-making? On our boards, senior leadership teams, committees, and academic/operational departments?*
- **Treat anti-racism as a moral and intellectual task.** We can easily overlook the need to apply intellectual rigor to the task of anti-racism. What is current research telling us as a college/university?
 - *How will we harness the capacity of institutional research and faculty scholarship on our own behalf, to advance our anti-racist goals? How might such efforts be undertaken and coordinated?*
- **Address anti-Black racism in tandem with white privilege.** Because these are linked realities, it is impossible to adequately address them in isolation. Assuring that we are paying attention to both sides of the equation also prevents the “othering” (e.g., “we” need to address racial equity issues for “them”) that conversations about racism can unwittingly elicit.
 - *How can our college/university approach to anti-racism address white privilege in a serious way?*
- **Recall that racial categories are complex.** Race is a socially constructed concept, and the multi-racial ways in which we identify ourselves may not fit into old categories. Further, we are all products of the ways in which our multiple identities (race, gender, etc.) combine to make us who we are.
 - *What can we do to assure that our campus conversations on race provide for the expression of complex racial identities?*

Imagining a New Future

The following ideas for institutional growth have been recommended by individual members of the Jesuit higher education community:

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

- **Launch a year of formalized listening sessions with alumni/ae of color**, particularly Black alumni/ae, to listen deeply and learn from their experiences on Jesuit campuses.
- **Develop guidance on anti-racist practices and policies** – rooted in the Jesuit educational tradition – for campus police and public safety forces. Such guidance could include policing practices, along with university policies and structures, such as community advisory boards.
- **Establish anti-racism communities of practice for faculty**. Review, in a systematic way, curricula at the undergraduate and graduate levels for previously unrecognized or un-addressed racial bias.
- **Develop an education program for academic advising and culturally competent advising of all kinds**.
- **Inaugurate Celebrations of Black Excellence, honoring leaders in the local community and notable alumni/ae**.
- **Diversify and educate Campus Ministers, Student Affairs Personnel, Counseling staff, Jesuit community members** and others working pastorally or interpersonally with Black students and/or other students of color. The desire to provide support does not, in and of itself, prepare white staff to do so in a culturally competent way.
- **Develop a collaborative, national academic program in Black Studies**. Many schools are not economically equipped to launch such a program independently or have, by necessity, placed it under the broader category of Ethnic Studies. Those schools that have established Black/African/Africana Studies programs would also benefit from high-caliber faculty at Jesuit colleges/universities across the country.
- **Develop and disseminate a model for building the pipeline toward a more racially diverse faculty and administration in schools**. Scaffold research experiences for undergraduates (REUs) of color and underrepresented groups, doctoral programs, post-docs. fellowships and hiring practices that are connected and in dialogue with each other.

Ideas for Discussion (cont.)

- **Coordinate with other AJCU members to develop more detailed guidance and goals** for the selection of vendors and service providers who demonstrate a commitment to diversity and anti-racist practices, along with assessment tools for campus use.
- **Sponsor a National Teach-in for Racial Justice and Action**, hosted sequentially by Jesuit institutions across the country. Steering Committee leadership could include representation from student governments, Black student unions, chief diversity officers, faculty, and chief mission officers.
- **Create a new national faculty resource, in addition to the AJCU Job Bank, for hiring Black faculty**; launch efforts to recruit faculty as an AJCU consortium.
- **Create a national leadership conference and program for Black students and other students of color**, based loosely on the student-run conference, Ignatian-Q.
- **Launch an academic review of how Jesuit institutions have responded to issues of racial (in)justice over AJCU's 50-year history.** This review would be published, disseminated, and discussed as one critical step in the anti-racism planning process for the future, locally and nationally.
- **Review all campus and national mission formation programs** for trustees, faculty/staff, and students in light of racial justice issues and bias, and design plans for improvement.
- **Establish an AJCU Black Leadership Development Initiative** that includes AJCU members and other Jesuit institutions. Cultivate university leaders who can be “hired from the bench” of Jesuit institutions, thus tapping staff, and faculty for entry-level, mid-level or senior administrative leadership positions.
- **Engage in a board education process on anti-racist presidential leadership.** Make racial justice and an examination of progress toward goals a standing topic on the AJCU board agendas.
- **Incorporate a strong commitment to and assessment of racial justice in the Mission Priority Examen (MPE).**
- **Conduct an equity audit, to identify areas of systemic racism and surface solutions.** It may be practical to conduct the audit in one area of the college/university, to learn from the experience before engaging in a broader process.

We welcome information on current initiatives and/or inspiring ideas for Jesuit colleges and universities engaged in the Anti-Racism Examen. Please write to mission@ajcunet.edu.