

You, Me, Racism, & Community

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UConn Hartford | Democracy & Dialogues

You, Me, Racism and Community Dialogue Summary

On November 16th, 2020 The Dodd Human Rights Impact's Democracy and Dialogue Initiative co-organized in partnership with the UConn Hartford Administration a Race and Community Dialogue event for the Hartford campus titled "You, Me, Racism and Community." Within the two hour event, the first portion was a "fish bowl" model dialogue among UConn Hartford community members in which experiences of Racism were discussed. Subsequently, participants engaged in facilitated dialogue of 3-4 faculty, staff and students in each Web-ex breakout room. There were four groups in total.

Within this discussion, groups were asked to respond to the following questions:

- *What do you feel are the greatest barriers to creating a more diverse, inclusive and welcoming University culture?*
- *What concrete steps might we take as a community, as an institution, and as individuals to combat racism and build a more diverse and inclusive campus environment?*

Below is a summary of common responses from all four groups.

Barriers

Within these dialogue discussions, break out rooms identified barriers that fell broadly into the categories of *institutional barriers* and *individual barriers* (Recognizing that many of these discussed intersect and are mutually reinforcing).

The most commonly identified institutional barriers included:

1. Lack of education for administration, faculty and students on diversity and inclusion.
2. Institutional, implicit and explicit racism occurs on campus, which the administration does not respond to as well as the institution could.
3. Lack of accountability for the school itself as well as the organizations to keep up with anti-racism tactics.

The most commonly identified individual barriers included:

1. Racial Microaggressions and lack of addressing Racial Microaggressions are Prevalent (4)
2. Sense of exclusion and separation based on race (4)
3. Lack of knowledge on cultures/cultural competence and anti-racism (3)

Concrete Steps

In these discussions, participants also identified concrete steps of action that could be taken to address racism and to build a more equitable, anti-racist University. Both

specific actions that both individuals and organizations could take, as well as *objectives* or *outcomes* that should result from actions, are listed into categories below.

Of the specific actions, the most common were:

1. Holding well-advertised diversity educational events like dialogues where students can converse and find solidarity in the subject.
2. Having widely known support systems so students facing racism know that there are people they can talk to safely.
3. Include anti-racist and inclusive sentiments in classes across the school and require anti-racist curriculum for First Year Experience classes.

Of the objectives and outcomes, the most common were:

1. Acknowledge racism is in our institutions, actively intervene, and take action when racism occurs (4)
2. Listen to persons of color and sustainably commit to anti-racism (4)
3. Education and knowledge of racism and anti-racism and actions of anti-racism be ingrained as a “norm” in our institution (4)