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Greetings!

“Thinking Together: The Power of Dialogue”

Some see discussions and partnerships as the softer sides of diversity and inclusion work, viewing these as activities, which appeal primarily to the interpersonal dimensions of engagement. Over the last few months, many students, faculty and staff have engaged in numerous meetings, dialogues, and symposiums about differences, climates, belonging, and diversity and inclusion at Harvard. These conversations have emerged out of a variety of contexts across our Schools and focus on the idea of what we as a community can do better, and how we can be most inclusive. We are enthusiastic about how many students, faculty, and staff are working together through meetings, events and ongoing discussions to engage the aforementioned, and related topics.



The Office of the Assistant to the President for Institutional Diversity and Equity has planned multiple opportunities for networking, collaboration, and reflection and continues to work with our partners across the Schools. One of our newer programs is called “Thinking Together”. This year’s focus is entitled, “The Power of Dialogue.” Through this series with selected presenters, participants examine current research about living and working across dissimilarities, and how to create new networks, analyze data, employ case studies, sit with discomfort, talking, learning and deliberating, with colleagues across the campus, and how to leverage differences as individual leaders and managers. We look forward to our ongoing conversations with members of Harvard’s innumerable communities. Our collective and individual inquiries to better understand one another will make us more informed listeners, more inquisitive learners, and more engaged and inclusive students and colleagues.

Lisa M. Coleman, Ph.D.

Generous Gift Will Enhance Services for People with Disabilities

The University Disability Services office recently received generous gift from Christopher '84 and Silvana Pascucci '83, JD'86, to establish the Silvana and Christopher Pascucci Fund for Assistive Technology at Harvard University that will be used to enhance critical support services for people with disabilities.

Through this expendable gift, Harvard will expand its technologies lab and lending library to create a university-wide resource for members of the Harvard community with disabilities. Specifically, the Pascucci Fund will underwrite purchases of state-of-the-art technologies, including, but not limited to, software, hardware, applications, scanners, magnifiers, and portable assistive devices, as well as support activities such as tool demonstrations, database development, and training and technical assistance for faculty and staff.

The University Disability Services office, using input from students and colleagues, both with and without disabilities, is actively exploring university-wide collaborative opportunities to effectively grow the Assistive Technology Lending Library and Lab into a robust resource for students, faculty and staff with disabilities.

Charting New Collaborations with Diversity Officers Across the University

Harvard Office of the Assistant to the President for Institutional Diversity and Equity (H-OAP) has engaged in a series of activities in an effort to foster stronger ties with diversity and inclusion officers across the campus. "We estimate that there are more than 60 people throughout the university who are doing diversity and inclusion work. Working together, we can be a very large and powerful team. We want to share our diversity and inclusion vision with those practitioners, and want to support their efforts as well," said Norm Jones, H-OAP associate chief diversity officer and deputy director.

Earlier this academic year, H-OAP hosted a Diversity Officers Reception in the Barker Center's Thompson Room. Diversity and inclusion staff members from all of the schools at Harvard were invited. The goal was to bring the D&I community together in an informal, social environment. "Our goal was to meet D&I people from all of the schools in the university, have them get to know each other, and to network," Jones said.

In mid-February, forums were held with diversity officers to discuss the H-OAP diversity and inclusion framework. The sessions were focused around the development of the framework and the ways in which it is grounded in the four principles of H-OAP: best practices, leadership development, equity, and partnerships. The purpose of the focus group-like meetings was to solicit feedback from partners who support and advance the principles of D&I. Participant feedback will be used to inform the implementation of the framework.

Finally, on February 25th, Lisa Coleman hosted a diversity officers meeting to provide an overview of H-OAP, including mission statement, organizational chart, and strategic foci. In addition, diversity officers were invited to provide updates on activities in their areas as well as share ideas for cross-school collaborations. H-OAP sent a follow up survey to solicit topics of discussion for future meetings. The next diversity officers meeting is scheduled for May 5, 2015 in Pound Hall Room 201 at Harvard Law School.

Harvard Club Women Name Coleman One of Boston's Most Influential Women

"Lisa is the perfect person to inspire transformation in an organization committed to helping people recognize their value and use it to create good in the world. Lisa shows us all how traditional forms of exclusion hamper this commitment. Lisa's academic training, keen social and political analysis, warmth, and wit are the foundation of her influence. I admire her for her indomitable spirit and relentlessly positive disposition and wish her every success as she impacts Harvard and the higher education sector more broadly."

-Mitalene Fletcher, Director, PreK-12 and International Programs, Harvard Graduate School of Education

The Women of The Harvard Club Leadership Committee has selected Lisa Coleman as one of Boston's most influential women. Coleman will be one of nine women to be recognized at the 4th Annual Boston's Most Influential Women Gala at the Harvard Club on Commonwealth Avenue, April 22. "We will acknowledge each honoree for their extraordinary achievements, invaluable contributions to our communities and their enduring positive influence, which inspires many," the Leadership Committee stated.

In a statement regarding Coleman and the other honorees, the Leadership Committee said it recognizes and honors the 2015 recipients for having "created circles of influence and access in the areas of business, healthcare, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), community service, arts, media, academia and leadership."

Letty Garcia: Leading at Harvard



Letty Garcia

Most members of the Harvard community have heard it before: Harvard can be a very difficult place to navigate. It can be more daunting for people of color. For Letty Garcia, a Mexican-American, it was no different. In 2003, she began a Masters of Theological Studies program (MTS) at the Harvard Divinity School (HDS) and found the culture at Harvard could be intimidating. Garcia said, "Originally, I did not plan to apply to HDS, but my faculty advisors at St. Thomas University in Miami saw potential in me and urged me to apply." She applied to Harvard, got in, and her life has not been the same.

After graduating from the Divinity School in 2005, Garcia worked for a couple of years at the MIT Sloan School coordinating the Seminar in Leadership for the Sloan Fellows Program in Innovation and Global Leadership. At Sloan, she said, "I felt a desire to work directly with leaders and help shape their education." Over the past six years at Harvard, Garcia made that desire a reality working with global leaders as part of the Leadership Initiative at the Harvard Business School (HBS). While she found her work at HBS gratifying, Garcia also wanted to reconnect with the larger Harvard community. It was during a conversation with her manager, Tony Mayo, the Director of the Leadership Initiative, and the Thomas S. Murphy Senior Lecturer of Business Administration, that she discovered the Harvard Administrative Fellows Program (AFP). The program provides exceptional professionals with an opportunity to broaden their professional experience through work and a study fellowship at Harvard.

The Leadership Initiative has historically supported the AFP with HBS Faculty belonging to the Initiative, including Linda Hill, Joshua Margolis and Tony Mayo, having taught in the program. As Garcia mentioned, "participating in the program allowed me to engage with the community at Harvard and exercise leadership and fellowship." She added, "it made a real positive difference for me. It enhanced my confidence as a leader." Now, as Assistant Director of the Leadership Initiative, Garcia is returning the favor by serving as a leadership coaching advisor for the AFP because she believes that, "if you want to become a leader, the program can help."

In turn, in 2014 the AFP helped the Leadership Initiative by connecting them with a dynamic Visiting Fellow, Angela Counts, who is helping the Initiative increase its outreach efforts with MBA students and its social media strategy. "I needed a key resource," Garcia commented, "and I knew the program would help me to find high-potential candidates who also wanted to be a part of the Harvard community."

Eva Longoria Celebrates Harvard Diversity



Eva Longoria with Students

Acclaimed actress Eva Longoria was presented the 2015 Harvard Foundation Artist of the Year award at the 30th annual Cultural Rhythms festival in Sanders Theatre. While she was ensconced in a throne-like chair at the back of the stage, some of Harvard's best-known cultural performance groups serenaded Longoria. Performances included Ballet Folklorico de Aztlan; Harvard's oldest cultural organization; a spirited Taekwondo martial arts group; the pan African Dance and Music Ensemble; and the Harvard College Hellenic Society doing dances of Greece. And, performing her favorite kind of music was Mariachi Veritas.

To access the full Harvard Gazette article on Longoria's visit, please click [here](#).

Breaking Down Barriers that Divide Diverse Communities



Shaun Harper, Ph.D.

If one thinks that simply putting diverse students together in classes, residence and dining halls they will magically benefit from and engage with each other across their differences, it's not going to happen. That's magical thinking, said Shaun Harper, executive director of the Center for the Study of Race and Equity in Education at the University of Pennsylvania. And, there are real consequences of magical thinking, he declared.

During a recent presentation, *Fostering an Inclusive Campus Environment: From Magical Thinking to Strategy and Intentionality*, Harper, the inaugural Harvard College Visiting Scholar Program presenter, said that institutions like Harvard and Penn, assume that “merely having a diverse student body insures that they will magically benefit from and interact across difference and that the university doesn’t have to do much.” That is “magical thinking,” and the consequences are numerous.

One of the consequences of this magical thinking, he said, is “balkanization and inescapable patterns of racial segregation.” He said that in his research on campuses across the country, there are observable trends of racial segregation. There are certain parts of campus where you only see white students, or Asian students, or black students, etc. “When there is no institutional strategy to disrupt that or at least raise consciousness, we presume it will go away.”

Another consequence of magical thinking, Harper said, includes student dissatisfaction and departure. The student may feel isolated because they are the only one of their race in classes, and other environments on campus. Attrition rates among blacks, Latinos, Native Americans and others, he said, are often due to diversity climate issues on campus. And, he said many people from “dominant power groups” come to college campuses with problematic assumptions. There must be institutional strategies to combat those sometimes-accidental racist, sexist or homophobic assumptions.

College and universities must be intentional about raising consciousness and battling bias on campus, Harper said. They must develop deliberate strategies that bring principles of good educational practices to fruition. Intentionality requires individual reflection, he said. It demands that colleagues come together to think about and talk about what we need to do to disrupt segregation, assure student success, and ensure that they are racially competent global citizens.

Harper said that at least some racism is because of the incompetence of people working at colleges and universities. That’s because “no one ever taught them.” Cultural competency requires literacy, he said, but too often administrators and faculty do not read about race and equity because they do not have the time. They must make time. There is a lot of programming dealing with diversity that is based on nothing because there has been little of not research behind them.

Collaboration with students is also an important part of intentionality. Harper argues, “Well-intentioned faculty and administrators are doing things they think will work for students but without engaging students as meaningful partners in the design and conceptual building and implementation of these efforts.” They are then surprised when students do not show up for their programs. Cross-sectional partnerships are also crucial, he said. It is important to bring together, in meaningful and collaborative ways, faculty and administrators, breaking down silos in which they work.

Finally, Harper said, one of the key ingredients of intentionality is a written, actionable plan. “Too often,” he said, “I ask administrators for their plan, and they say it’s all here” (points to his head). “It’s not a plan if it is not written.” The plan must be “actionable, identify key people, key collaborative relationships, anticipate some barriers, and forecasting for what might be helpful to overcome those barriers. It has to have data, an assessment strategy, and must have resources attached to it,” he concluded.

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