



Old Dominion University

## Building Your Capacity to be an Ally and Advocate in Confronting Systemic Racism, Discrimination, and Freedom of Expression

October 15, 2020

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### **OVERVIEW:**

On Thursday, October 15, 2020 114 ODU faculty, staff and students participated in the first virtual event to discuss and learn how to build their capacity to be an ally and advocate in confronting systemic racism, discrimination, and freedom of expression. The event also included 14 other participants who served as facilitators and co-facilitators.

Participants were able to engage in sessions centered on the following topics:

- Learning more about racial inequality;
- Recognizing when to step in and strategies to have better conversations;
- Understanding your privilege and/or freedom;
- Understanding intent vs impact in the context of free expression.

Participants were assigned to sessions based on responses to the following survey:

**On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), how comfortable are you in being given the role of an ALLY?**

**What resources would you need to move you closer to a 5? (Check all that apply.)**

- Learning more about the history of racial inequality
- Recognizing when to step in and strategies to have "better conversations"
- Having a better understanding of privilege and/or freedoms
- Understanding intent vs impact in the context of free expression

**On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), how comfortable are you in being in the role of an ADVOCATE?**

**What resources would you need to move you closer to a 5? (Check all that apply.)**

- Learning more about the history of racial inequality
- Recognizing when to step in and strategies to have “better conversations”
- Having a better understanding of privilege and/or freedoms
- Understanding intent vs impact in the context of free expression

Each group included a trained facilitator to provide up to 17 minutes of content on the topic. The group also included a co-facilitator to ensure that the remaining 23 minutes gave participants an opportunity to react to the content and to provide personal narratives that would assist in strengthening the conversation.

### SUMMARY OF RESPONSES:

There were 42 returned surveys. Below is a chart that summarizes the data received.

Evaluation:							
	<b>Material Content</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Total</b>	
<b>1</b>	The format and organization of the event was effective	<b>85.71%</b>		<b>14.29%</b>		<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>2</b>	Participating in this conversation was useful	<b>90.48%</b>	<b>2.38%</b>	<b>7.14%</b>		<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>3</b>	The moderators were effective	<b>87.80%</b>		<b>12.20%</b>		<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>4</b>	Dialogue objectives were met	<b>88.10%</b>	<b>2.38%</b>	<b>9.52%</b>		<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>5</b>	Pace of the event was comfortable	<b>85.71%</b>		<b>14.29%</b>		<b>100.00%</b>	
<b>6</b>	I would attend and/ or recommend future dialogues to others	<b>97.62%</b>	<b>2.38%</b>			<b>100.00%</b>	
	<b>Overall dialogue Rating</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Total</b>
	How would you rate the overall quality of this event?	<b>61.90%</b>	<b>33.33%</b>	<b>4.76%</b>			<b>100.00%</b>

Below are the qualitative responses to the following question: How will you use this experience to further diversity and inclusion?

Talk to others
I hope to use this experience in future interactions with students, families, faculty, and staff, but I also hope to share this with people in my personal life.
I learned so much! I received confirmation of things I have known or suspected for some time, which was a bit heartbreaking in one instance, but showed me that I must continue to seek to understand what others are experiencing and find ways to positively impact other's experiences of the university and my community. This seminar/discussion is further proof that I must continue to strive to be an ally.
In support of adding a D&I requirement to our curriculum and garnering support for more internal buy-in to change within the dept.
Always learning, trying to listen, helpful to think about education as privilege
Knowledge is power.
I was provided very useful tools to assist me when engaging in difficult conversations.
Techniques to practice in how to address inappropriate comments and verbiage were useful for deescalating or inviting difficult/courageous conversations
Continue to have the necessary conversations within my departmental area
I will try implement some of the ideas I heard.
I am reflecting a lot on privilege and power, and how those of us who have these can level the field in meaningful ways.

I am encouraged that these events are going on in higher ed (especially as a 6-12 educator). I will take these notes to other conversations that I have in the K-12 realm.

There doesn't appear to be a space for written feedback so I'll share here. One suggestion is to have more time for discussion. In one case, the facilitator (who had very interesting content and whose time and effort are very much appreciated) spoke after every speaker and, in the end, only 6 of the 12 participants were able to share something... As for what I will do: continue to listen, learn (e.g., currently reading 'Cultivating Genius' and also 'Caste') and integrate equity and inclusion into my personal and professional life through actions and advocacy (e.g., integrated into each class session I have the good fortune to teach).

Look at the ways my department can more purposefully engage students with these initiatives.

I think I needed to hear what Ariana said. Now I feel more comfortable speaking out if I hear or see someone being racist or sexist.

Being more mindful and doing more research into how to better support marginalized groups.

I like the idea we discussed that race is not a scientific fact but rather socially constructed - it can open up interesting dialogues with others. I also appreciate some of the suggested phrases we can use after challenging conversations - e.g., "I need your help understanding what just happened. Can we talk?"

Strive to make a conscience effort to more inclusive and diverse within my unit and the decisions that we make

I will share ideas, strategies, and tools gathered through this event with my colleagues.

I will try to stay aware of my actions and be vigilant in promoting equality and inclusion in all facets of my daily life.

Use some of tips/tactics discussed in my conversations with others

To better myself and help others around me

Use the conversation starts that Lisa Mayes discussed

Engage in more productive and intentional conversations and actions

The conversation sheds light on awareness may not be for all and can use this throughout my career and interactions.

The final question on the survey, was a Call to Action. Participants were asked if they would like to partner with the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity as we continue to build our capacity to be allies and advocates. They were asked to select from the following: participate in a podcast, write a blog, share a video of experiences, or participate in a book talk. Just over 45% of the respondents to the survey indicated they would like to participate in one of the activities.

We are planning more conversations (with more time), and will be reaching out to the members of Monarch Nation who want to partner with us, but in the meantime, we hope you will access the [Understanding and Confronting Systemic Racism Resource Guide](#) that can be found on the new [Diversity and Equity Website](#). Also, check out the updated [Diversity at ODU Webpage](#). This page will connect you with other resources specific to the campus, teaching and research faculty and students. You will also see links to contact Lesa Clark for student led initiatives and Dr. Narketta Sparkman-Key for teaching and research faculty initiatives. If anyone has questions about commUNITY Conversations or needs assistance, please contact Dr. Veleka S. Gatling at (757) 683-3141.