CORED

THE COMMISSION ON RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY
SPRING SYMPOSIUM/OPEN HOUSE

The Potential of Diversity in the Classroom and Beyond: Encouraging Discussion and Eliminating Unspoken Barriers

Tuesday, March 4, 2014
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Pasquerilla Spiritual Center, University Park Campus

Agenda

9:00 – 9:15 a.m. Registration
9:15 – 9:30 a.m. Introduction by W. Terrell Jones, Vice Provost for Educational Equity (Frizzell)
9:30 – 10:45 a.m. The Challenges and Promise of Diversity: Realizing its Potential (Frizzell)
John F. Dovidio, Carl Iver Hovland Professor of Psychology, Yale University
10:45 – 11:00 a.m. Break
11:00 a.m. – Noon Breakout sessions
1. Fostering Diversity at Penn State: What Next? (Room 124)
   John F. Dovidio, Carl Iver Hovland Professor of Psychology, Yale University;
   Victoria Sanchez (interviewer), Assistant Vice Provost for Educational Equity, Penn State
2. Advancing Inclusivity in Penn State Classrooms (Room 122)
   Theresa Vescio, Associate Professor of Psychology and Women’s Studies, Penn State
3. Empowering Students (Room 126)
   Jonathan Cook, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Penn State
Noon – 1:00 p.m. Lunch/networking; Highlights of CORED (Frizzell)
1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Panel: Student Perspectives on Stereotype Threat and Social Identity at Penn State (Frizzell)

For those who cannot attend in person, portions of the program will be available via Adobe Connect. Depending on the session and approval from the presenters, some sessions may not be available.
The Challenges and Promise of Diversity: Realizing Its Potential

John F. Dovidio

Despite living in a society and in communities that profess broad and deep commitment to egalitarian values, members of traditionally disadvantaged groups face barriers, often subtle and unintentional, to achieving success. This presentation reviews psychological knowledge about the nature of contemporary racism. It considers the unconscious influences that can influence well-intentioned people to discriminate and illustrates how these hidden biases can affect a range of outcomes for members of disadvantaged groups and create intergroup miscommunication and distrust. Even in the absence of immediate discrimination, contemporary racism can arouse feelings of stereotype threat, mistrust, and lack of belonging that adversely affect academic aspiration, responsiveness to feedback, and achievement among members of traditionally underrepresented groups. The presentation provides examples of how these factors operate in classroom settings and reviews specific ways to limit the expression of subtle bias, increase feelings of belonging and trust, and prevent the activation of stereotype threat.

John F. (Jack) Dovidio, who received his Ph.D. from the University of Delaware in 1977, is currently the Carl Iver Hovland Professor of Psychology at Yale University. He previously taught at the University of Connecticut and Colgate University, where he also served as Provost. His research interests are in stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination; social power and nonverbal communication; and altruism and helping. Much of his scholarship, in collaboration with Dr. Samuel L. Gaertner, has focused on “aversive racism,” a subtle form of contemporary racism. He has published over 300 articles, chapters, and books.

Fostering Diversity at Penn State: What Next?

John F. Dovidio and Victoria Sanchez (interviewer)

Penn State has followed the “Framework to Foster Diversity” for fifteen years, with positive results. A recent analysis of Penn State’s climate for diversity and inclusion by the research and consulting firm Halualani and Associates revealed that Penn State ranks in the top four compared to peer institutions for diverse undergraduate student enrollment, diverse student graduation rates, and new minority faculty hire numbers. Furthermore, Penn State features one of the top twenty diversity, inclusion, and equity organizational infrastructures in American higher education. We celebrate these achievements, but there is much more to do. In this session, Dovidio will respond to questions about strategies that Penn State might consider to advance efforts to foster diversity and enhance inclusivity.

Victoria E. Sanchez is an Assistant Vice Provost for Educational Equity at Penn State. She works with planning, implementation, and assessment of A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State, the University’s strategic plan for diversity. She also works with Penn State’s Presidential Commissions for Equity and chairs the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee. She holds a Ph.D. from The Ohio State University, specializing in American Studies and American folk-life, with specific emphasis on contemporary American Indian issues, intersections of identity, tradition, and popular culture, and American Indian literature.

Advancing Inclusivity in Penn State Classrooms

Theresa K. Vescio

Unconscious biases, in both instructors and students, can have a large impact on how included students feel in the classroom and how well they can learn. The objective of this session is to provide faculty with practical strategies for creating a more welcoming environment by minimizing stereotype threat. The session will begin with an overview of the impact of stereotype threat on students in class and then share concrete strategies for minimizing stereotype threat in the classroom, followed by open discussion with participants.

Theresa K. Vescio is an Associate Professor of Psychology and Women’s Studies at Penn State. She received a Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of Kansas. Her research seeks to understand the factors that can facilitate or temper the expression of sexism, racism, and heterosexism. Within that context, Dr. Vescio is interested in the interplay between the stereotypic behaviors of powerful people and the consequences that those behaviors have on the emotions, motivation, and performance of low power women and people of color.

Empowering Students

Jonathan Cook

Students from underrepresented groups may find themselves in situations both in and out of the classroom in which they are prevented from performing their best because of unintentional actions by others. This session will discuss strategies students can use to empower themselves when they are faced with environments over which they don’t have control.

Jonathan Cook is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Penn State University. Dr. Cook received his Ph.D. from the University of Oregon and worked as a research scientist at the University of Colorado and Columbia University before coming to Penn State. His research focuses on social identity processes and how threat from important social categories, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, or chronic illness, can affect cognitive, affective, and neurobiological processes over time.

Student Panel: Perspectives on Stereotype Threat and Social Identity at Penn State

Curt Marshall (Moderator)

Jesus Hinojosa, Penn State University Park, Psychology and Economics, 2014
Alice Gyeti, Penn State Altoona, International Politics and International Relations, 2014
Kayla Franklin, Penn State Greater Allegheny, Engineering, 2016

Curt Marshall is the Multicultural and Recruitment Programs Coordinator for the College of Arts and Architecture. He graduated in 1986 from Penn State with a degree in Agricultural Business Management, but found his passion in higher education. Curt is a past President of the Forum on Black Affairs (FOBA) and past member of the Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity (CORED).