

How adding social class to the definition of diversity used by the IUPUI Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion functions in relation to the 2019 Social Justice Symposium's themes

Listen: *What stories have been untold? Discuss themes, histories, or topics relating to social justice that you or your organization have studied or organized around.*

- Of the three themes of the 2019 symposium, "Listen" is the most relevant to this presentation. Thinking of diversity in terms of class may seem irrelevant at first. As well, to many, class is not as important as race--which certainly in America it is not. *Nonetheless, social class cannot continue to be the hidden "discriminator" that pervades other categories of campus diversity.* Seeing the entire campus population in terms of their membership in upper, middle, and lower class backgrounds is necessary to expose and eradicate both obvious and subtle forms of bias/prejudice.
- The untold stories of class discrimination, bias/prejudice must be discussed publicly. These narratives concern not only how our larger society views class distinctions, but how class is viewed within racial "categories" exemplified by the "pecking orders" within Black, white, and Latinx societies.
 - See the *New York Times* story, "Black America and the class divide."
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/07/education/edlife/black-america-and-the-class-divide.html>
 - *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*
- This also applies to class distinctions/discriminations around/within DEI's diversity categories of "gender, race, ethnicity, veterans, people with dis/abilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community."

Unite: *What does it mean for us to work together in coalition to readdress the grievances our communities face? What strategies, tactics, and examples can members of the Indianapolis community utilize and learn from to help build unified fronts for action?*

- Once the DEI appreciates the issues around class distinctions inherent within "...gender, race, ethnicity, veterans, people with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community" the Division can lead efforts to work together to readdress the causes and results of discrimination on and off campus.
- This can mean that the various IUPUI students can unite and be an example to the city of cross-class actions.
 - What is especially important here is the opportunity to help the working classes of all colors who share the same issues and destiny. DIE must realize historically and even more currently, these communities are at odds although they face common systems of oppression. This divisiveness benefits the status quo which tells the lower and lower-middle classes to blame each other for their problems.
- References
 - See what Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis & Willie Baptist are doing at the Kairos Center to enable the poor of all colors to self-organize to get rid of poverty
<https://kairoscenter.org/>
 - Bacon's Rebellion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tg0sRx9sNo>

Fight: *How can we put our ideas into concrete action? What avenues of change can we take to create real transformation in our communities, and what does it look like to get there?*

- We can organize to have the DEI further broaden its definition of diversity by adding class. This means appreciating people, not only in regard to gender, etc. but to their past and current social class: lower, middle and upper.
- We bring regard and validation for the working class through promoting a history of labor curriculum in IPS schools, supporting local unions, and respecting and validating the heavy lifting and common labor jobs like construction, factory and assembly line, driving, janitor and maid services, child and elderly care, waiters/waitresses and cooks/dishwashers, cashiers...

<http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Keeping-urban-students-in-school-Adding-the-History-of-Labor-to-IPS-curriculum.pdf>

Other possible actions

- DEI set aside one day a year to recognize and celebrate campus maintenance and food service workers.
- DEI holds an on campus forum around the intersectionality of race, culture and class. <https://www.brookings.edu/events/race-class-and-culture-a-conversation-with-william-julius-wilson-and-j-d-vance/>
- DEI holds a forum on the validity of Ruby Payne's chart on the "Hidden rules among classes." <http://kathyescoabar.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Hidden-Rules-Among-Classes.pdf>
- DEI questions the response of other campus organizations and individual students to the neo-colonial displacement (gentrification) of the original residents taking place west of White River in near campus working-class neighborhoods such as Haughville and Stringtown?
- DEI supports the Southeast Working-Class Task Force (SEW-CTF) proposal that the purpose of urban schools is not to get students out of poverty but to get rid of it. <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SEW-CTF-Urban-schools-as-site-to-contest-inequalities.pdf>
- DEI supports the SEW-CTF white paper "A proposed compromise regarding the Southside debate: 'College or die' vs. 'Not everyone needs to go to college.'" The paper suggests regardless of what working-class students do after high school, each have the critical thinking skills needed for critical employment and critical citizenship. <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/A-proposed-compromise-regarding-the-southside-debate-College-or-die-vs.-Not-everyone-needs-to-go-to-college.pdf>
- DEI helps raise funds for the upcoming SEW-CTF mural honoring the working-class. The action will be designed/painted by local and nationally acclaimed artist Michael "Alkemi" Jordan who designed/painted the Mari Evans mural on Mass Ave.