

Advancing the scope of the IUPUI Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion by adding social class to its definition of diversity

A review of the IUPUI The Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) website (<https://www.iupui.edu/about/diversity.html>) shows DEI's "A foundation of diversity" and states, "Diversity is at the core of our culture at IUPUI. We've worked from day one to build a diverse campus community that reflects IUPUI's urban environment, embracing a broad definition of diversity that includes gender, race, ethnicity, veterans, people with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community."

Yes, "...embracing a broad definition of diversity" is foundational for an urban campus like IUPUI. Thus, it is essential that "class" be added to the DEI's categories of diversity.

Why? There are 2 main reasons:

1. We must wake up to the fact Indy is the segregated not only by race but by class

According to the 2010 census our city is one of the 21 most segregated in the US. But, as the presentation will emphasize, Indianapolis is not only segregated by race, but by class. Note the low percentage of African Americans south of Washington St. on the map and consequently the high number of white citizens--in this case mainly working-class. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/walkingsf/5560477952/in/album-72157626354149574/>

Also, note the IUPUI campus, on its west and south sides, is surrounded by the Black working-class neighborhoods of Haughville, and the white working-class neighborhoods of Stringtown and the Valley.

2. An IUPUI student's social/economic class background influences their identity

How a student views themselves, how they are viewed by others/society, and how the person perceives how they are viewed by others/society are each influenced by that student's social-economic status.

The factor of social class also affects the identity of university administration, faculty and staff, and employees (maintenance) and even those employees whose labor is out-sourced, such as with the Aramark campus food service workers.

The 2017 publication of *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* by Nancy Isenberg challenges the DEI and symposium attendees to discuss exposing the hidden story of how the ramifications of social class are basic to understanding America, Indiana, Indianapolis, the story of IUPUI, and diversity on campus.

Summary

Because of the present attention given to America's class and racial divide surrounding the presidency of Donald Trump, it is important that the IUPUI Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion take on this unprecedented challenge of leadership regarding campus awareness of society's social class issues.

Social Class and Indy's Community Relations Initiatives

To support the importance of issues raised here, The Southeast Working-Class Task Force is now working with the Race and Cultural Relations Leadership Network (RCRLN/<https://indygipc.org/initiatives/rcrln/>) on class awareness. RCRLN is a standing committee of the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee (GIPC/<https://indygipc.org/>).

RCRLN has decided to add “class” to race and culture as factors to take into account when understanding current events—especially social issues and their possible solutions.

Urban Education: Social Class and Race

Also, SEWCTF members were invited by IUPUI School of Ed. urban PhD program graduate assistant Gayle Cosby, who is teaching a class on culture to pre-service teachers, to discuss social class with her students.

Conversations were held around the importance of teachers who want to be culturally relevant to add the white working-class culture to their list of cultures they must appreciate in order to be culturally competent. Such discussions with teachers are relevant because of the high numbers of white working-class families who may not try to get their children into boutique charter schools or white working-class students who reject public schools that confuse education with assimilation. White working-class students want the skill sets schools offer, but not at the expense of the culture they bring to school from which schools try to educate them.

Here are maps of the other 21 most segregated US cities

<http://www.businessinsider.com/most-segregated-cities-census-maps-2013-4>