REACT!
Race, Ethnicity and ACTION through Dialogue

Jaime L. Russell, Ed.D.
Director, Office of Student Leadership and Engagement
University of North Carolina Wilmington
Session Objectives/Overview

• Introductions and Interests
• Background/Getting Things Started
• Project Overview
• Session Content
• Assessment Data
• Lessons Learned
• How to Get Started
Introductions and Interests

• Name, Institution, Role

• Why are you here at NASPA Region III?

• Why did you choose this session/what do you hope to gain/learn?
Race, Racism, and White Privilege in Higher Education:
A Graduate Student Discussion

SEPTEMBER 13, 2017
Education Building
Room 162
5-7pm

#Charlottesville

White Privilege Conference/DIS

Social Justice Training Institute

ETEAL Grant

NASPA REGION III SUMMER SYMPOSIUM
Project Overview

• Proposal Submitted in late September, received approval in early November
  • “Racial/Ethnic Caucus Groups for Student Leadership Development”

• Project Outline:
  • Two 2\textsuperscript{nd} year Higher Education Graduate Student Facilitators
  • Recruit student leaders to participate
  • Held five 90 minute sessions throughout the spring semester
Engaging Dialogue, FREE Food!
Program Outline

• Meeting 1: Orientation and Definition of Terms
• Meeting 2: Socialization and Identity Development
• Meeting 3: Intersectionality
• Meeting 4: Power, Privilege, and Oppression
• Meeting 5: Social Action/Leadership Implementation
Meeting 1: Orientation and Definition of Terms

- Welcome and introductions
  - Who we are, what are we doing here, and why is this important?

- Community agreement
  - Respect, Lean into vulnerability, Seek to understand, Be brave, Confidentiality

- Pre-test/Discussion
  - Define the following: Race, Ethnicity, Privilege, Oppression, Identity, Equality/equity, Social Justice

- Group Activity/Icebreaker

- Caucus Groups
  - What are your initial feelings about these sessions?
  - What do you want to get out of this program?
  - What are you anticipating?
  - What topics do you want to discuss?
  - What are you hesitant about?

- Sharing in the Large Group

- Wrap up and 3 Minute Paper –
  - Initial thoughts? Goals for this program?
Meeting 2: Socialization and Identity Development

- Welcome/Check-in/Community Agreement Review
- Cycle of Socialization (Harro)
- Critical Race Theory
  - The ordinariness of racism, Interest convergence, Social construction and differential racialization, Intersectionality and anti-essentialism, and Counter-storytelling
- Speed Pair And Share Activity – discuss the following:
  - "All lives matter"
  - Freedom of speech and hate speech on campus
  - "I see no color"
  - Affirmative action
  - Interracial relationships
  - Kneeling for the flag and National Anthem protests
- Caucus Groups
  - Were there any topics today that challenged your thoughts or understanding?
  - What do you want the other caucus group to learn or take away from tonight?
  - How can you apply what you learned from tonight in your respective student organizations?
- Large Group Sharing and Wrap-Up
Meeting 3: Intersectionality

- Welcome/Check-in/Community Agreement Review
- Identity Activity: Who are you?
- Ted Talk: Kimberlé Crenshaw, The Urgency of Intersectionality
- Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity (Jones, & McEwen)

Speed Pair And Share Activity:
- Talk about your most salient identity.
- What identity do you think people see first when they meet you?
- Talk about one of your identities that someone might not know by looking at you.
- What have been some challenges you’ve experienced with other people’s identities?
- Do the student clubs and organizations you’re a part of value identities?
- Do you think the institution values identity?

Caucus Groups
- What is your most salient identity? Why?
- What do you think are some barriers that keep us from understanding other people’s identities?
- Which of your identities grant you privilege here at UNCW? How can you use your privilege to benefit others?

Large Group Sharing and Wrap-Up
Meeting 4: Power, Privilege, and Oppression

- Welcome/Check-in/Community Agreement Review
- TEDTalk: Brittany Barro; What Beyonce Taught Me About Race
- Privilege Walk
- Defining Oppression
  - Examples: Pervasive, Restrictive, Hierarchical (Bell)
  - Five Faces of Oppression: Exploitation, Marginalization, Powerlessness Cultural imperialism, Violence (Young)
- Caucus Groups
  - How do you view privilege here on campus?
  - What privilege do you bring to this campus? How does that play out in your [our] experiences as student leaders?
  - What can WE do as student leaders to be more conscious of our privileges so that we don’t contribute to systems of marginalization?
- Group Sharing and Wrap-Up
Meeting 5: Social Action/Leadership Implementation

- Welcome/Check-in/Community Agreement Review
- StrengthsFinder as a Framework for Leading Social Change: *Understanding your Strengths can help provide the self-awareness necessary to become an effective advocate for social justice*
  - Awareness of Self, Awareness of Others, Awareness of Community (SCM and EIL)
- Strengths Philosophy/34 Themes/Top 5 Talents/4 Domains
- Strengths Reflection:
  - Which of your strengths describes you best?
  - What does this strength empower you to do? Provide an example of when you used it recently.
- What about Weaknesses?
- Strengths and your Values:
  - What relationship do you see between your top value and one or more of your Strengths?
  - What is a recent example of how your top value activated or influenced your Strengths?
Strengths and Social Justice Advocacy:
- What challenges do you anticipate facing in the future?
- How can you utilize your strengths and the knowledge you have gained here to address these issues?

Individual Development Plan
- Create a Goal/Objective
- List your talents that connect to this goal
- List intentional steps you will take to leverage your talents to reach this goal
Student Reflections

“Due to the open-minded nature of my white peers [I felt empowered during our conversations and I not longer feel obligated to explain my experiences and/or comfort to white students]. It is empowering to know your listener is listening.”

“I think participating in the [REACT] group has given me a different perspective of the groups I am involved in. It has made me a more proactive leader to tackle issues like inclusion and racism...I hope to bring more people with different backgrounds and ideas to my organization to make it stronger.”

“I now have a better understanding of the experiences that students of color go through.”

“I loved the community that was built. I enjoyed watching each of us grow more open with each other...I hope to implement them into my [student organization].”

“I really did feel empowered during my caucus group conversation. When I’m supported by other people of color, I feel united and not alone.”
...and Feedback

“Try to make the group bigger and have set locations and time prior to invitations [going out].”

“I wish we had gone over more ways to help add what we learned to our organizations in positive ways, [and] actively recruiting from the STEM community would be beneficial to the group.”

“It would have been more beneficial to have everyone here each time...not sure how to enforce that.”

“Fantastic program! Improvements: More icebreakers/bonding. Create comfortability/more comfortable environment. I am not very comfortable talking about myself.”

“Please continue doing this.”
Lessons Learned

• Do StrengthsFinder at the beginning of the program
  • Establishes a common, positive language
  • Weave philosophy throughout all sessions
  • Use knowledge of students’ strengths to customize the sessions

• Make the sessions more activity-based
• Schedule sessions closer together
• Discuss action items throughout the program
• Plan for the future – now what?
How to Get Started

• Specific Goals/Current Issues?
• Possible Partners?
• Funding Sources?
• Students to Invite/Engage?
• Ideal Outcomes?
• Next Steps?
Resources


Questions?

Jaime L. Russell, Ed.D.
Director, Office of Student Leadership and Engagement
University of North Carolina Wilmington
russelljl@uncw.edu