Social Justice Series

Submitted by Amanda Ingram and Paige Miller

**Overview:** This series of workshops is designed to enhance the awareness, knowledge, and skills of Student Affairs staff. When we create a learning environment that provides a diversity of voices, life experiences, and backgrounds, we create a welcoming and nurturing environment for not only our students but also for our staff. The workshops in the series will be provided in two hour sessions the first Thursday of every month and will feature speakers from across the campus community. Four open workshops are offered throughout the semester. Each of these workshops centers on a particular theme for that semester related to social inequity, and directly supports development in the NASPA professional development competency area of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. This fall series has centered on issues of race. The spring will focus on issues of gender.

**The Sessions:**

**September 19, 2013**

**Presenter:** Bryan Fair, J.D.

**Program Title:** Still Standing in the Schoolhouse Door: Brown at 60

**Program Description:** Dr. Bryan Fair, a professor at The University of Alabama School of Law since 1991, discussed the legacy of the famous case, Brown versus the Board of Education, and why the Nation continues to struggle with segregated public educational systems.

**Total Number Attendees:** 15
October 17, 2013

Location: 309 Ferguson Center

Presenter: Thomas Herwig, Ph.D.

Program Title: Why Societal Groups Hate Each Other and How They Can Reconcile – Observations, Thoughts, and Experiences from a German Background

Program Description: Dr. Thomas Herwig, a professor in The University of Alabama Honors College, presented an interactive workshop that engages participants in exchanging experiences and ideas about the intercultural situation in the U.S., especially considering experiences at The University of Alabama. After the introduction focusing on historical and present events in Germany, Dr. Herwig lead a discussion about how to identify and overcome interracial hostilities in the U.S. (past and present).

Total Number Attendees: 16

November 21, 2013

Presenter: Nirmala Erevelles, Ph.D.

Program Title: Thinking with Critical Race Theory: Examining Race in Higher Educational Contexts

Program Description: In this workshop, Dr. Nirmala Erevelles, professor in The University of Alabama College of Education, will introduce participants to a few key concepts of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and will discuss the relevance of these concepts in university contexts.

Total Number Attendees: 15

December 12, 2013

Presenter: Debra McCallum, Ph.D.

Program Title: Student Perceptions of Race and Race Relations at The University of Alabama: Current Views and Historical Context

Program Description: Dr. Debra McCallum, director of The University of Alabama Institute for Social Science Research, will review the results of a student survey conducted in spring 2013 which investigated attitudes and perceptions about race relations at The University of Alabama. Participants included over 4000 undergraduates who completed a survey in class or online. Results will be compared to similar surveys conducted from 1963 through 1988, with a focus on results that can inform those who work closely with students and student groups as they develop programs and strategies for a healthy campus environment.

Total Number Attendees: 18
January 17, 2014

Presenter: Lee Keyes, Ph.D.

Program Title: Pain of Men and its Role in their Development

Program Description: The inability of many men to recognize and address their own emotional and physical pain leads to disastrous results for them and those around them. This talk examines the experience of pain in men, how it is and is not managed well, and the consequences of the latter in individuals, groups and entire communities, and how men develop this problem in the first place. The presentation will also focus on related aspects of development in college-aged men and how this may affect those who love and work with them, especially in Student Affairs.

Total Number Attendees: 15

February 20, 2014

Presenters: Jessi Hitchins, M.A., and Jason Garvey, Ph.D.

Program Title: #GenderinHESA

Program Description: Gender knowledge is continuously morphing and evolving through policies, politics, education, and social media (#GenderinHESA). This session will focus on the intertwined relationships of gender policies, institutional structure, and daily interactions in higher education and student affairs (HESA). Learn the ways that you can change this campus today to foster a more welcoming, safer campus for students, faculty, and staff of all genders.

Total Number Attendees: 12

March 20, 2014

Presenter: Meredith Bagley, Ph.D.

Program Title: Breaking Bad (Habits): Gender, Sex, and Patterns of Essentialism

Program Description: Gender scholar Judith Butler has argued that gender actually defines sex, not the other way around, and feminist theorist Monique Wittig went so far as to say there is no such category as "woman." What do these sophisticated theoretical assertions have to do with social justice and student affairs? Dr. Meredith M. Bagley, Asst. Prof in the Dept. of Communication Studies, explores the way we all are affected by habits of gender essentialism -- assuming a natural base of "woman" or "man" that is somehow rooted in our physical bodies then expecting a specific type of gender expression based on this alleged "natural" foundation. These patterns are deeply ingrained, from pop culture to sport to language itself. To the extent that a basic value of social justice is creating the conditions for every human to live safely, healthily, and successfully, we have little option than to constantly challenge ourselves to break the bad habits of gender essentialism.
3.9.3 Qualified Student Affairs Staff  
Social Justice Series Summary  2013-2014

Total Number Attendees: 10

April 10, 2014

Presenters:  Elle Shaaban-Magana, M.S., and Beth Howard, J.D.

Program Title:  Title IX: Implications for Higher Education Yesterday and Today

Program Description:  Title IX is the federal legislation that prohibits sex discrimination in education. This presentation will provide information on the history and theoretical implications of Title IX plus the University's Title IX compliance process. This includes University policy, claim reporting, University employee legal reporting requirements, confidentiality, the investigation process, interim resources for a complaint, and training/education & prevention requirements.

Total Number Attendees: 14

Program Assessment

Goals:

• Provide monthly workshops open to all Student Affairs staff around topics related to social justice and inclusion

• Increase multicultural competence of Student Affairs staff

• Establish an understanding of social justice among Student Affairs staff

• Collaborate with experts across campus (both within Student Affairs and Academic Affairs) to provide training aimed at increasing awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work with a diverse group of students and staff

Learning Outcomes:

• Recognize social systems and their influence on people of diverse backgrounds

• Articulate the history of inclusion and exclusion of people with a variety of identities in higher education

• Express their role and responsibility in a global society

• Reflect on how identity, social justice, and oppression impact their daily practice within student affairs
Summary Results:

• The workshops were well-attended from a variety of divisional departments

• 95% of respondents agreed that student learning outcomes had been met for each of the workshops

• The divisional newsletter was the primary source of learning about the series followed by departmental communications.

• Themes noted as strengths in participant comments included an appreciation of the opportunity to dialogue and converse with colleagues on these complex issues, relevance and timeliness of these issues to our work, the opportunity for personal reflection, and the importance of multiple perspectives.

• Suggestions for consideration in future workshops included continued/increased opportunity for participant input, more time/discussion for reflection on the connection to our roles in Student Affairs or to The University of Alabama specifically, and more varied methods of presentation (ex: more visuals and handouts).