

Reference: McNair, T., Bensimon, E. and Malcom-Piqueux, L., 2020. *From equity talk to equity walk*. Hoboken: Jossey-Bass.

Case Study #1

Claiming Not to See Race

The Counselor at Anywhere School, notices a trend in program plans, that a large number of African American and Latinx students who are placed in the basic skills math course do not proceed to credit level math courses. She provides the data at a cabinet meeting for discussion. One faculty member says, “This has nothing to do with race.” Others say, “I teach students. I don’t care whether they are white, black, or purple,” or, “Maybe these students are not predisposed to doing well in these courses.”

Reflection:

1. What did you notice?
2. How does this impact the students?
3. How can one or more Principles of Community be used to determine how to proceed in this situation?
4. How can you use an equity minded lens to resolve the scenario?
5. What actions, recommendations, or ideas would you have for institutional administrators, faculty and staff members, about this issue?

In the example above, the presentation of disaggregated data by race and ethnicity to raise awareness of race inequities is met with defensive claims that reject the possibility that race and racism are causes.

- Saying, “this has nothing to do with race” shows a lack of awareness of the ways in which race may be placed in the classroom.
- Saying, “I don’t care whether they are white, black, or purple ” is a claim of color-blindness as if it were a virtue. The individual that refuses to see that a student is Black, white, Latinx, or Native American is essentially refusing to see the student.
- Saying “these students are not predisposed to doing well in mathematics” is claiming not to see race while stereotyping minoritized students as not having what it takes to do mathematics.

Case Study #2

The Pervasiveness of White Privilege & Institutionalized Racism

A black woman director was an active participant at an institute on equity and inclusion for student services programs that included about 50 members from departments across campus, all but of 3 who were white. In sessions, the woman provided examples of ways in which black

and Latinx students were subject to microaggressions in and out of the classroom. She also provided many useful and practical examples that helped the institute directors situate their content in actual situations. Before breaking for lunch, the institute directors received a message from one of the institution's vice presidents advising them that other participants had complained that the black woman was monopolizing the conversation and that the others did not feel 'safe' to participate. The black woman was admonished by her supervisor for dominating the conversation. The incident silenced the three black women for the rest of the institute.

Reflection:

1. What did you notice?
2. How does this impact the students?
3. How can one or more Principles of Community be used to determine how to proceed in this situation?
4. How can you use an equity minded lens to resolve the scenario?
5. What actions, recommendations, or ideas would you have for institutional administrators, faculty and staff members, about this issue?

The scenario above, which is based on an actual situation experienced by CUE facilitators, depicts strategies borne out of white privilege in the following ways:

- The complaining faculty and the administrators they complained to were white.
- The white faculty, rather than saying they did not want to listen to the black woman's analysis of the racial consequences of their practices, exercised their "white privilege" to make a kind of complaint that is often used to silence minoritized groups.
- The complaining faculty felt the right to make their discomfort known and likely did not anticipate being ignored. No one said to them.
- The black woman had insider knowledge about the classroom experiences of minoritized students. Her knowledge enriched the content of the institute and provided teachable opportunities for STEM faculty to learn equity-mindedness. However, her knowledge was dismissed as not objective. The black woman was an administrator, but in the eyes of STEM faculty she was not viewed as an authority.

Case Study #3

Background:

Higher education utilizes industry-specific language to identify roles, policies, and standards. The arbitrary language perpetuates the campus structure, as faculty, staff, and administrator labels provide an easy system to identify an individual's primary job responsibility. Faculty, staff, and administrator labels give consistent structure for higher education institutions to delineate between role responsibilities; they also serve as a means for maintaining order for campus governance, as faculty titles provide the historical control of the institution (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

Situation to Navigate:

You are a college leader and learn through a member of the community that your campus has shared that there is an invisible hierarchy between faculty and professional staff. They explained that faculty do not acknowledge the value or the contributions of professional staff to the success of the campus. A possible explanation is that some faculty members know little as to how the department/s function or the exact impact of the accomplishments of the professional staff.

You attend your first committee meeting and the members consist of classified professionals, faculty (part time and full time), and administrators. The committee is tasked with reviewing the strategic plan goals, and the group is discussing how to prioritize the goals that are focused on student success. During the meeting you notice that some of the classified professionals' comments are valuable, however, the faculty contributions receive follow up questions and are listed as next steps.

You bring this issue up, and you notice there is a resistance.

1. What steps would you take to address this matter?
2. What are some immediate things that can/should be done?
3. How can one or more Principles of Community be used to determine how to proceed in this situation?
4. What are some long term things that you can/would do?
5. Is this the right thing to do?

Case Study #4

A Hispanic-serving Institution community college with a student body that is 60 percent Latinx was excited to announce that the college received a \$2 million grant to implement a program that creates Open Education Resources. "This grant will enable us to help all of our students by providing them with the tools and resources to access course materials at a low-cost," the president said. The governance committees received the information and a member of the

Academic Senate shared, *“This is great news, and I am sure it will help many students. But I have a concern. It sounds as if ‘open education resources’ is being presented as a solution that is good for ‘all’ students. We seem to be ignoring that our students are not all the same. It strikes me that ‘open education resources’ is a solution focused on the reality of white students who have easy access to the internet. In the past, we have tried many other ‘solutions’ to address student success and most have had limited impact. The common element among these solutions is that they have been designed by well-meaning innovators who don’t realize that their way of understanding student success is not the universal understanding.”*

Reflection:

1. What did you notice?
2. How does this impact the students?
3. How can one or more Principles of Community be used to determine how to proceed in this situation?
4. How can you use an equity minded lens to resolve the scenario?
5. What actions, recommendations, or ideas would you have for institutional administrators, faculty and staff members, about this issue?

Universalism is a prominent characteristic of whiteness (DiAngelo 2011) based on the assumption that white person’s view of the way things are is objective and representative of reality (McIntosh 1988). Universalism is also a prominent characteristic of the ways that higher education is theorized, measured, and portrayed...For example, trending higher education initiatives such as pathways, predictive analytics, intrusive advising, dual enrollment, and promise programs assume they will benefit all students. They fail to see that they might be harmful and worsen disparities. According to Robin DiAngelo, “Universalism functions to deny the significance of race and the advantages of being white. Further, universalism assumes that whites and people of color have the same realities, the same experiences, in the same contexts (i.e. I feel comfortable in this majority white classroom, so you must too), the same responses from others, and assumes that the same doors are open to all” (2011, p. 59)