



UC Coalition for Anti-Racist Action
December 2023 Newsletter

In This Issue



- Co-Chair Comments: Keith Lanser
- Reflection on Native American Heritage Month: Ken Tankersley
- Reflection on the November 15th Coalition Dialogue: Faith Gingrich Goetz-Isaacs
- Ignite Peace Training "Strategic Nonviolence Intensive": Amy Koshoffer
- What are you reading?
- Upcoming Events
- Call for Contributions.

Co-Chair Comments: Keith Lanser



by Keith Lanser

A few weeks ago, I hosted a [RAPP](#) meeting where an incident shared by one of my students deeply troubled me. While discussing biases, prejudices, and stereotypes, the student chose to recount a personal experience that transpired near campus in the spring of 2022. He explained that he was walking to a corner store on West McMillan to buy some medicine, when a car carrying a group of white men, likely fellow college students, drove past him. Shockingly, one of the men hurled a beer can at him, striking his foot. To compound the offense, the man yelled, "Go back to your country" before speeding away. He stood there, stunned, watching beer spill onto the sidewalk. His story left me and my students speechless. The proximity of such a racially motivated assault to our campus was disconcerting. I expressed my gratitude to him for his courage and honesty, and we resumed our meeting.

Following our meeting, I contacted the student via email to request an interview for this story. I introduced him to our Coalition for Anti-Racist Action, and emphasized how our faculty and staff could benefit from hearing his experience. He graciously agreed to sit down for an interview. The student requested that I not share his name in this story.

During the interview, I began by asking him about his emotional response to the assault. He revealed that he didn't immediately register the gravity of the situation and only began processing it later at home. Overall, he felt angry, lonely, and frustrated: "Why do I have to pay good money to go to school here [as an international student], and deal with this? We pay double the tuition, and it feels like you only get half the resources. And then we get discriminated against. This feels unfair."

The student recounted additional instances of racism he has experienced since becoming a Bearcat:

- About a month ago, while out with friends to buy ice cream at a store near campus, a man assumed he worked there and asked him a merchandise-related question, even though he was dressed casually and bore no indication of being an employee. How often do you get mistaken for a convenience store employee?
- Another time, the student went to a store near campus and an employee asked him to say, “Welcome to Seven Eleven”, like Abu from the Simpson. Has anyone ever caricatured your accent? Probably not.
- The student said he went to Parking Services to ask a question, and a staff member yelled at him and spoke to him very slowly, as if he couldn’t understand her. The student is a fluent English speaker. Why was he spoken to like that? Could it be because of his race?
- He also said that he has had a hard time building friendships with other Bearcats who are US citizens, and he wondered if it is because of his race: “The perception of not being from this country is important; other students don’t talk to me because I’m Indian.” Have you ever been isolated because of where you come from or how you look?

I asked the student about how the University could support him, and other students like him, moving forward. He underscored the necessity for the University to address student complaints promptly. He also thinks that there needs to be better mental health outreach to international students to help them cope with racist attacks. Moreover, he thinks that UC needs to do a better job serving international students in general. For example, he said that many of his international friends can’t find on-campus jobs: “I went to a hiring event for parking services, and there were at least 200 international students there, applying for 50 jobs. Is that fair?”

My student’s story isn’t an isolated incident. A focus group I helped facilitate last academic year featured a student from Vietnam who expressed feeling unsafe on or near campus, especially when using public transit. She recounted an incident during the pandemic where someone on a Metro bus directed racial slurs at her and accused her of causing the COVID pandemic.

These incidents compel us, as faculty and staff, to consider how we can support international and minoritized students who routinely endure racist assaults, verbal attacks, and microaggressions. We all bear the responsibility of ensuring that our students have a safe and equitable college experience. Will you take the time to listen to and validate students when they share such experiences? Will you guide them towards mental health services like CAPS? Will you engage in conversations about how the University can provide support? What actions will you take within your sphere of influence to combat white supremacy at UC?

Native Americans: An Invisible Minority



Perspective on the Invisibility of Our Native American Colleagues

by Kenneth Barnett Tankersley, Ph.D. (Piqua Tribe of Alabama)

As Native American students, staff, and faculty, it is assumed that if we are to function within the Western norms of academia, then we need to assimilate into Western culture. Even complete assimilation and Sanskritization does not provide Native Americans immunity from experiencing intractable conflicts in academia. Intractable conflicts are impossible situations that have no solutions and no positive outcomes that lead to social isolation.

Intractable conflicts exacerbate intergenerational trauma because education is a Native American pathway away from poverty and poor health care. As Native Americans in academia, we are continuously confronted with intractable conflicts, and we must find ways to rise above them. We use intractable conflicts as means to empower our creative processes.

Intractable conflicts in academia come from stereotypes about what it means to be a Native American. For many academicians, Native American is an assumed blood quantum or a stereotypical physical appearance. For others, it is an assumption that Native American art, culture, and knowledge are primitive. Thus, our contributions to academia are diminished, ignored, or shunned.

As Native Americans, we are the only ethnic group in the United States required to carry an identity card (i.e., a tribal enrollment card). They are used as proof that we are a lineal descendant of someone on our tribal base roll. Tribal enrollment cards are also required as proof of eligibility for Indian Health Services (IHS) or proof that we can legally sell our art, books, crafts, and music. In the 21st century, enrollment cards are an ever-present reminder that we are still wards of the state.

Even as accomplished mature adults in our academic disciplines, we are treated like children by our settler colonist colleagues. We have been given the legal right to practice our beliefs and speak our

languages, but these rights are neither institutionalized nor operationalized. Instead, our culture, history, language, and accomplishments are devalued in academia.

Reflection on the November 15th Coalition Dialogue



by Faith Gingrich Goetz-Isaacs

“Before you post about Israel-Palestine, take a deep breath and ask yourself: Will this move us closer to peace?”

Following our recent November 15th Coalition Dialogue, I’ve been contemplating the poignant quote I encountered shortly afterward on social media. This simple yet profound question encapsulates the essence of our discussions and deeply resonates with me.

MK’s email, a call to action advocating support for Palestine, sparked a wave of emotions – agreement with some parts, yet deep hurt over others. This led to days of reflection and a yearning not only for recognition of the pain I felt, but for a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted struggles faced by various communities, including my Jewish identity and recent instances of ignorant comments rooted in antisemitism.

As someone deeply invested in my Jewish identity and committed to advocating for antiracism, the dialogue's impact was profound. It kindled a wide array of emotions, urging me to confront the intricate complexities surrounding this issue. The nuance and depth of this issue are staggering. My faith journey, a tapestry woven with diverse experiences and viewpoints, remains an evolving exploration – a quest through the “ish” in Jewish. Notably, within my familial tapestry lies the story of my biological father's spiritual journey across seven different religions – just in my lifetime. It is a unique experience that adds layers of complexity to my relationship with faith. A fascinating footnote to this journey: he currently serves as a Greek Orthodox priest.

I must take a moment to acknowledge my privilege with my faith journey, as I am sure that informs my response to MK's initial email and the following Coalition Dialogue. While my Jewish identity is very important to me, I was not raised Jewish in the traditional sense. While I have fought against antisemitism for most of my life, I was extraordinarily privileged to not be directly subjected to overt antisemitism for most of my life. I am generations removed from much of the persecution that many of my Jewish friends and colleagues are merely one degree separated from.

The Coalition Dialogue served as a platform for candid, heartfelt exchanges. We grappled with three essential questions posed to us:

1. How did receiving this email make you feel and why do you think you felt that way?
2. Should CARA have formally responded to what is happening in Palestine? If no, why? If yes, how should CARA have responded?
3. How should CARA respond to international crises?

I candidly shared some of my recent encounters with antisemitism and expressed a desire for broader acknowledgement and understanding – acknowledgment for the deeply complex narratives underlying these issues. While I resonated with much of MK's calls to action, I sought acknowledgment of the pain associated with the events of October 7th in Israel. While I personally will take every opportunity I can to condemn the Israeli government, I support self-determination for both Jews and Palestinians. I underscored the complexity of the situation, calling for empathy and understanding, rejecting the oversimplification of this multifaceted struggle. In the moment, I found myself feeling particularly thankful that these crucial conversations were already happening within the LGBTQ+ Center and in the context of the ignorant comments that had been made. Our office works extremely hard to ensure we are fostering an environment where all students, faculty, and staff feel welcome and safe and worked tirelessly to engage with our students, facilitating open-hearted discussions. We really strive to create an inclusive space that fosters safety and acceptance for all, and the Coalition Dialogue felt extremely in line with that goal.

The Coalition Dialogue served as a platform for candid exchanges, allowing us to share experiences and perspectives. Individuals shared their fears, hopes, and the urgent necessity for safe spaces. The dialogue shed light on moments of pain and prompted essential acknowledgements within different communities. These conversations were pivotal, setting the stage for understanding and healing. Certainly, there were parts of the dialogue that evoked discomfort, yet they served as crucial catalysts for groundbreaking conversations. We explored the multifaceted nature of the situation and emphasized the imperative need for inclusive, safe spaces valuing all voices. Colleagues of so many vastly different

backgrounds shared the common thread of yearning for safe spaces – a shared longing for environments where Muslim, Middle Eastern, and Jewish voices are welcomed without fear. There was a sense of a collective optimistic belief in the possibility of peace.

This reflective dialogue spurred critical introspection, compelling me to reevaluate my own advocacy methods, and engage in meaningful reflection on engagement, amplifying diverse voices, and the language we employ in such discussions. The pivotal question – “Will this move us closer to peace?” – remains a guiding beacon, urging us to continue these vital conversations that foster empathy, understanding, and unity within CARA.

During this Hanukkah season, a time of hope and unity, I am profoundly grateful for the November 15th Coalition Dialogue and the opportunity it presented – it served as a catalyst for conversations vital in fostering empathy within CARA. I remain committed to continuing these discussions to deepen our collective understanding and unity within CARA.

Ignite Peace Training "Strategic Nonviolence Intensive"



by Amy Koshoffer

On September 23, 2023, I attended the Ignite Peace sponsored workshop “Strategic Nonviolence Intensive”. [Ignite Peace](#) is a Cincinnati community organization that works to bring change in the areas of criminal justice and immigration. Their mission is to “educate and advocate for peace, challenge unjust systems, and promote the creation of a non-violent society.”

The focus of the workshop was considerations for organizing a nonviolence protest with a strong emphasis on strategies, planning and collaborator engagement. Related themes discussed in the workshop were dealing with conflict, de-escalating conflict, bystander intervention, and self-care.

We started the workshop with definitions and perspectives of non-violence from three major leaders in non-violence philosophy – Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, and Gene Sharp. All three see non-violence principles as political tools and forms of civil disobedience that are most effective to bring about long-lasting change. The research by Erica Chenoweth shows that people power is what makes the difference.

Though the main type of event discussed in the workshop was a large, organized protest, much of the content translates well to conflict between individuals and small groups. And the tools were helpful for spontaneous moments of conflict as well as planned out events aimed at bringing about social

change. We did an activity that highlighted how to engage with collaborators by defining a power map and understanding who might have the biggest impact on your work.

Other exercises challenged participants to reframe our conversations and perspectives to rethink judgements and use a more observant mindset.

One final module was a bystander training. We discussed reasons why people don't intervene, a big one being fear. We worked through case studies and chose from one of five strategies we would feel most comfortable intervening.

The closing session focused on self-care, and how important boundaries and planning for self-care are. And the facilitators left us with the saying that "we are harmed in relationship, and we heal in relationship. Healing cannot be done in isolation" – Diane Poole Heller. The whole training was an intense couple of hours but well worth the time. This is in total alignment with the work of the coalition.

Resources:

- Video: The success of nonviolent civil resistance: [Erica Chenoweth and TEDxBoulder](#)
- Video: [Don't be a Bystander: 6 Tips for Responding to Racist Attacks](#)

What are you reading?



- Amy Koshoffer: [How to Say Babylon](#) by Safiya Sinclair
 - The audio book is amazing for this story and is read by the author. Tough and totally engrossing memoir about a woman overcoming her strict upbringing in a Rastafarian home.
- Suzanne Buzek: [Homegoing](#) by Yaa Gyasi
 - I regret that it has taken me 6+ years since publication to read this captivating narrative spanning eight generations.

Upcoming Events

- [Register](#) for the UC Libraries RESPECT committee's [book discussion](#) on "The Sum of Us" by Heather McGhee
 - Beginning in January, the book club will meet via Zoom to discuss the text over a series of three Fridays from 10-11 a.m.: January 26, February 23 and March 22. These meetings will culminate in a final wrap-up discussion on Friday, April 5, in-person and facilitated by Sinclair Community College's Chief Diversity Officer Michael Carter.
- January 10 - [Living the Dream: It Starts with Us: A Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.](#), at the AACRC from 11AM-1PM
- January 11 - [MLK Day of Learning Part 1](#) and [MLK Day of Learning Part 2](#), at AARCC from 10:30AM- 2:30PM
- January 16 - [National Day of Racial Healing](#)
- January 29 - February 29 - 28 Days of Black Excellence. More details to come.
- February 8 - "Solidarity Across Diaspora: The Interconnectedness of Liberation Struggles" - a lunch and panel discussion from 11 am -1:30 pm. More details to come.
- February 14 - [Douglass Day](#)
- March 1- [8th Annual Feminist Symposium](#) at TUC Great Hall from 8AM-4PM

Call for Contributions!



Suzanne Buzek and Amy Koshoffer, CARA Newsletter Editors

Please consider making a contribution to the newsletter. It can be a reflection from an event you attend or an update on anti-racist work or initiatives you are part of. Our next issue is tentatively scheduled for release in Spring 2024.

Send your contributions to CincyCARA.information@gmail.com.