

Faculty and Staff Discussion:
Concrete Actions to Change Structural Problems
that Uphold Racism at St. Olaf College
June 15, 2020 2pm-3:30pm CDT
<https://stolaf.zoom.us/j/97646170935>
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Task Force shared Team [Drive](#)
(accessible to ALL faculty and staff, and will eventually
be open to student participants in this task force as well)

- Introduction: **Task Force to Confront Structural Racism at St. Olaf College** (name can change)
 - Introduction to current Task Force members: Faculty: Kelly Figueroa-Ray (Religion), Rehanna Kheshgi (Music); Staff: Alyssa Melby (ACE), Theresa Heath (IOS)
 - What to know before joining this task force (formalizing membership will come at a later date):
 - This is a group that is organizing to push for structural change. This is not an educational group about anti-racism. Please pursue this type of learning in other spaces.
 - This group is open to anyone, but it is spearheaded by white faculty and staff members who will take full accountability for its actions. We will seek advice from the whole faculty and staff about plans we wish to advance, but will be most interested in feedback from non-white faculty and staff. Such feedback will be treated with confidentiality if requested.
 - Students will be invited to participate. Their voices will be integral to the task force's organizing, planning, and implementation of our action items. We recognize that faculty and staff are in a position of power over students. We also recognize there is a power differential between faculty and staff and in this space we will strive to minimize this reality. Therefore, faculty and staff members will be full participants in leading this group and therefore accountable for all actions equally, including student contributions.
 - The work of this group will be transparent and accessible to anyone.
- Articulating problems at St. Olaf. The first three sets of ideas are paraphrased from Michelle Gibbs's letter sent to the all faculty listserv on 6/13/2020. *The issues below are faculty-centered. We look forward to hearing from staff and incorporating additional issues that apply to their experience.*
 - **Lack of support for faculty of color:**
 - White people are needed to use their privilege to stand up and with Black and Brown people to protest systemic and institutional racism at St. Olaf.
 - White colleagues are not fully supporting Black colleagues.
 - **Guise of Effective Teaching and Learning / Ole Culture Standards and Norms:**
 - Who are the entities who get to determine effective teaching or pedagogy?
 - Ole culture has an invisible set of norms and values used to evaluate teaching and pedagogy. This is a hurdle to those new to Ole Culture, since the norms and values are not clearly articulated, but assumed to be understood by everyone.
 - Moreover, it is confusing when the message from St. Olaf College is that there is a value placed on diversity, when those with different forms of pedagogy and new content areas are not supported but instead punished.
 - Content that strays from a certain "canon" of Ole Culture is labeled as inappropriate.
 - Faculty of color are disproportionately burdened with the emotional labor of fearing white rage and the white students who threaten their career by contacting their departmental superiors and members of the Administration with unsubstantiated claims. Faculty of color also are called upon to educate students and colleagues about structural racism,

and to support students of color who are experiencing analogous forms of structural racism and microaggressions. When faculty of color do this work, they do not receive any credit as they work toward tenure for this extra unpaid work.

- When faculty of color call out racism, this is not appreciated by white colleagues, administrators, or students. Instead, faculty of color are often met with disrespectful and judgmental comments about their character and lack of care for white students.
- **Lack of protection for faculty of color / acknowledgement of white rage:**
 - When white students engage in racist behavior in the classroom, they need to be held accountable by white faculty and administrators. The burden must not fall on faculty of color to resolve racism-related conflict in their classes.
 - Faculty should not be forced to teach in fear of racist backlash by students.
 - White rage should be addressed at a structural level and considered during faculty review as a potential factor in student evaluations.
 - When faculty of color ask for support from white colleagues, they should actively pursue next steps, which means that protocols need to be put in place for addressing racism directed toward faculty of color.
- **Administration's insufficient response to 2017 campus protests**
 - [Racism and Change on The Hill](#), The Collective for Change on the Hill (2017)
 - Demands proposed by [The Collective for Change on the Hill](#) #inSTOtutionalRacism
 - [Report of the Task Force on Institutional Racism](#) (2017)
 - Statement in response to The Collective by [Working Group on Equity and Inclusion](#)
 - [Working Group on Equity and Inclusion 2018 Report](#)
 - Creation of [The Council on Equity and Inclusion](#) - Guiding Principles and Pledge
 - Council on Equity and Inclusion [Vision Statement](#) and [Plan](#) (2019)
 - "Where the inequity lies." By Avery Ellfeldt. May 3, 2019 Messenger Article on what steps have been taken in response to the Collective's demands (see list at the end of the article). <https://www.theolafmessenger.com/where-the-inequity-lies/>
 - Student critiques of The Council's Response:
 - REL232: The Insurgent Multiculturalism of Beloved Community - Student papers on the use of Beloved Community in St. Olaf's Equity and Inclusion Vision Statement and Plan:
 - [Student #1's Paper](#) (shared with permission)
 - [Student #2's Paper](#) (shared with permission)
 - [Student #3's Paper](#) (shared with permission)
 - [Student #4's Paper](#) (shared with permission)
- Breakout Groups: Come up with 2-3 ideas for concrete change (30 minutes)
 - [Motivating Questions and Action Items \(separate doc, please add your contributions here\)](#)
 - [Resources to aid in discussion:](#)
 - [Michelle Gibbs's Letter](#) (highlighted sections paraphrased above)
 - [Letter from University South Florida Black Faculty & Students to President Currell](#)
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 - [Student #4's Paper](#) (shared with permission)
 - [Online Resource List, please add relevant material](#)

- **Large Group Discussion:** decide on one action item to focus on and come up with an action plan. We can do multiple things, but let's start with one.
- Action Steps, Assign Tasks, Due Dates
- Next Meeting: ?