

Strategies for MSW Academic Leadership Seeking to Disrupt Anti-Blackness

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Agenda



Background

Anti-Blackness in SW education

Strategic steps

Intrapersonal work

Interpersonal work

Lessons learned

Recommendations

Background



The 2020 killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and countless others since, reflect our country's history of systemic racism, and anti-Black racism specifically. As a result, our department re-committed to improving our response and effort to becoming an anti-racist Social Work Department.

- For true change to happen within Social Work programs we must continue to develop accountability to ensure delivery of an intersectional, healing-centered, anti-racist curriculum; collaborative teaching and learning spaces; and forums to share action strategies to accomplish intersectionality-based, anti-oppressive practice (Blitz, 2008; Kendi, 2019).

Anti-Blackness in SW education

Despite visible leadership in our nation's most important social justice movements and in creating our country's social safety net, the social work profession has also contributed to ongoing discrimination and oppression of people of color through its systems, policies, and practices.

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Anti-Blackness at CSUN

CSUN MSW reaffirmation and program leadership changes promoted awareness of:

- MSW Department has historically been led by white leadership with dominant, non-racist perspectives
- Black leadership is frequently minimized or ignored
- Bias among faculty led to inconsistencies in curriculum, policy and procedure development, and conflict resolution within the department
- Low accountability for microaggressions, especially in faculty meetings

Strategic steps

Commitment to antiracism, dismantling racism and restructuring as an antiracist department

- Awareness of inherent inequities in education and higher learning

Acknowledgement of our MSW department as participating in racist behaviors and actions

- Acknowledge multiple truths regarding racism and oppression

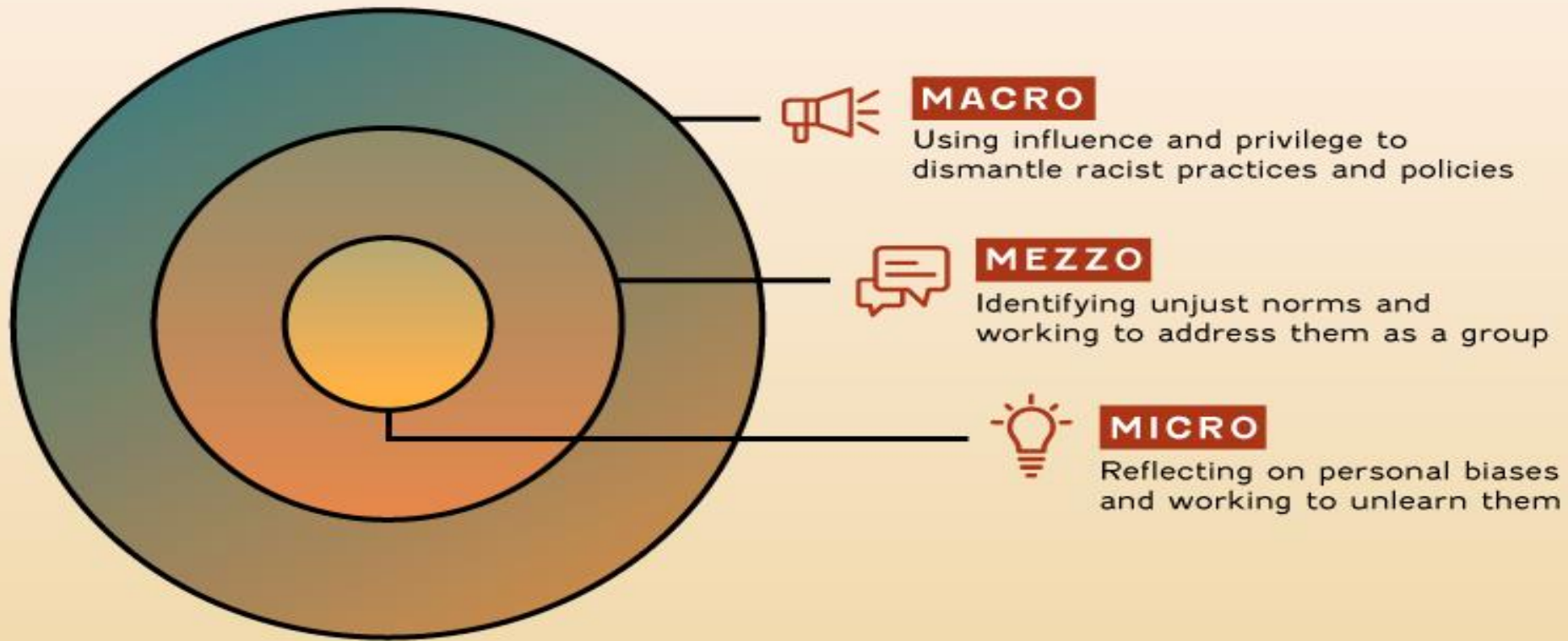
Create space for and engage in uncomfortable dialogue that explicitly examines race (including whiteness)

- Among faculty, in classrooms with students

Increase intrapersonal and collective accountability

- Calling in
- Affinity groups

DISMANTLING RACISM ON MICRO, MEZZO AND MACRO SYSTEMS

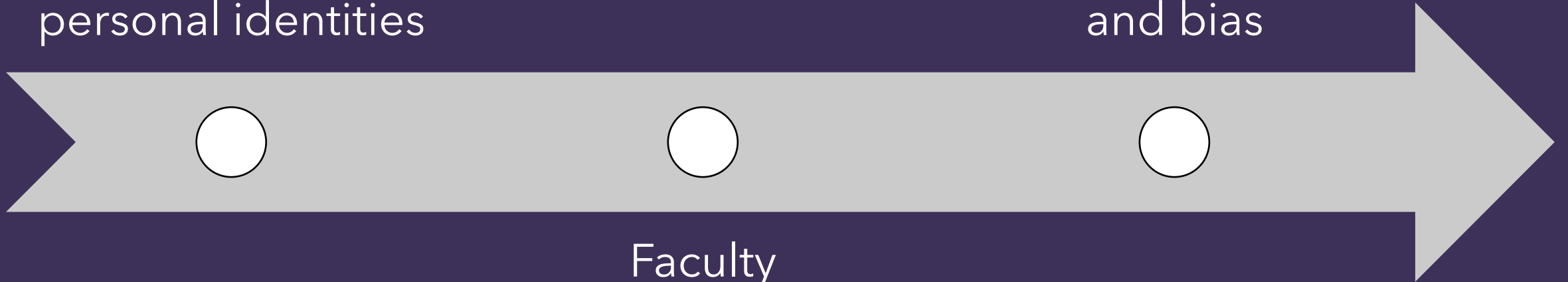


Intrapersonal work

Examining our
personal identities

Awareness and
confrontation of
our own racism
and bias

Faculty
acknowledgement
of positionality
and social location



Interpersonal and collective work

Faculty meetings reframed as “brave spaces”

Personal/professional story telling

Critical consciousness

Consistent time built in for anti-Blackness examination and discourse

What is a Brave Space?

Brave Space is a way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice, moving away from the concept of "safety" to "bravery".

Creating a Brave Space assists participants with understanding and rising to the challenges of genuine dialogue on diversity and social justice issues (Arao and Clemens, 2013).

Changing the Paradigm

Six Common Rules For Brave Space Dialogue:

1. Alternative to Agree to Disagree is **Controversy with Civility**

2 Alternative to Don't Take Things Personally is **Own Your Intentions and Your Impact**

3. Alternative to Own Your Intentions and Your Impact is remembering **intention & impact matter**...the impact of our actions is not always congruent with our intentions and that positive or neutral intentions do not trump negative impact

4. Alternative to Challenge by Choice is understanding that just because someone isn't talking doesn't mean they're not engaged and not doing internal processing

5. Alternative to respect is what are some of the cultural factors that go along with respect?

6. Alternative to No attacks is to understand that Attacks on the individual is an attack on their beliefs

To remain in restorative justice mode, return to : Controversy with Civility

Transformation is a Process

MY TRANSFORMATIVE PLAN OF ACTION

- 1.What is my responsibility? _____
- 2.I plan to start _____
- 3.I plan to stop _____
- 4.I plan to continue _____
- 5.The factors that will presently help me are _____
- 6.The factors that will presently hinder me are _____
- 7.The implications of my failing to act are _____
- 8.The kind of support(s) I need to act are _____
- 9.The people who can provide me with support are _____
- 10.The contacts/contracts I need to make are _____
- I am committing to this plan of action.

Signature _____

Date _____

Lessons learned

Be patient. The process is ongoing

- Consistency is critical
- It can't be just the POC doing the work

Sometimes the best opportunities for growth happen during adversity

Perfectionism is a white supremacist concept. Recognize it when it shows up (in you and others) and actively work to refute it

Racism is interwoven into the very fabric of our society and can be difficult to see

Recommendations

Leaders: make sure you have a supportive team

- Meet regularly
- Make anti-Blackness work a priority
- Call in each other and create accountability partnerships
- Someone has to be the quarterback

Be in relationship with each other

Do the work with each other so you can bring it into the classroom

- If you're a leader, you're modeling
- If you're a leader/instructor, you're practicing what it might look like in the classroom



Questions





Thank you!

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