RACE, ETHNICITY, AND INCLUSION TASK FORCE REPORT 2017-2018

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Office of University Life

August 2018

Introduction

Dear Fellow Members of the Columbia Community:

Welcome to the second annual report from the Race, Ethnicity and Inclusion Task Force. Established by the Office of University Life in 2015, the Task Force brings together students, faculty and staff from all of Columbia's schools to address campus climate issues related to diversity and inclusion. This report reviews the projects undertaken by the Task Force in 2017-2018 and serves to inform the larger campus community of this critical work and invite all to engage with its initiatives and conversations.

Advancing diversity in the nation and at a global university remains a complex and urgent charge. Moreover, as President Bollinger has said, successful citizenship in a pluralistic world requires a commitment to advancing diversity. Thus, the goal of the Task Force is to create a University community free of bias and discrimination and thereby support students' full participation while at Columbia and beyond.

Students, faculty and staff at Columbia have shared experiences and insight that inform the work of the Task Force. We are thankful for the participation of all Task Force members and in particular the students willing to engage in these conversations. Their efforts and challenges have kept the work of the Task Force focused, relevant and meaningful.

As we begin a new year, we commit to moving the Task Force closer to its goal and look forward to further developing the work of this group on campus. Along these lines, we are pleased to share that the Task Force will now be known as the **Task Force on Inclusion and Belonging at Columbia**. More details on this name can be found in the conclusion of this report; in brief, however, this change ushers in an important expansion and deepening of focus for the group.

As always, we welcome your thoughts and reflections. You can reach us at universitylife@columbia.edu. The Task Force will convene again in early fall 2018 and all Columbia community members are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Sincerely,

Ixchel Rosal
Associate Vice President for University Life
Office of University Life

Roosevelt Montas
Associate Dean
Director of the Center for the Core Curriculum
Columbia College

Co-chairs for the Race, Ethnicity and Inclusion Task Force

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Overview

The Office of University Life established the Race, Ethnicity and Inclusion Task Force in 2015 to further cultivate a culture of inclusion at Columbia. Rooted in the concept of community citizenship and shaped by the values of inclusion and belonging, the Task Force works to identify issues and develop strategies that address students' experiences related to diversity in and out of the classroom.

Scope and Structure
Collaboration grounds all of the work of the Task Force. Students, faculty and staff from all Columbia schools and campuses have participated in meetings throughout the year. The Center for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion, among many other University offices, serve as partners in the Task Force. Each of these voices, from all corners of the University, enhances the Task Force's effectiveness, scope and impact (see Appendix A for roster of members).

The 2017-2018 school year began with an invitation to the campus community to join the Task Force. Over the course of the year, members convened in large general meetings to share updates and feedback on projects.

Members also joined one of four working groups, each with a specific project:
- Awareness Project – to produce a short video to promote inclusion and belonging as core community values at Columbia.
- Campus Conversations – to create a conversation-based initiative for the University community.
- Discussion Group – to explore possibilities for a student-driven response to incidents of bias on campus.
- Inclusive Classroom – to develop an anthology of students' stories about their experiences inside the classroom.

In addition to working on their group's project, Task Force members continued drafting a values statement that could help to define inclusion and belonging at Columbia. The plan for the 2018-2019 academic year is to finalize this statement at our first general meeting.

Current draft of values statement:
Promoting **a culture of inclusion and belonging at Columbia** is a collective responsibility. It challenges us to sustain an environment that nurtures dialogue across difference, enhances accessibility and cultivates community.

What follows in this report is a review of the work accomplished by each group. Some projects changed in scope or focus as participants dug deeper into what was feasible and would accomplish the goals of the group. And, while there was significant progress on all

projects in 2017-18, we anticipate continued work by each group in the coming year in addition to the introduction of new projects.

Awareness Project

"Inclusion and belonging define Columbia as a community rather than just another academic institution". – Nathan Lam, Columbia College '20, in *Are You In?*

Overview
Building on work done in the previous year, Awareness Project group members continued discussing a video project proposed at the end of 2016-2017. The video uses the prompt "Are you in?" to communicate inclusion as a University-wide value and to invite students to join in the work of further cultivating a culture of inclusion at Columbia. "Are you in?" propelled the project's development in 2017-2018, culminating with a video being debuted in Fall 2018.

Goals and Results
There were many aspirations for the role this video could play on campus. Using "Are you in?" as a prompt, the group invited students across Columbia to participate in its production. Students from Columbia Business School, Columbia College, Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science, General Studies, School of International and Public Affairs, School of Professional Studies, School of Social Work and Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons volunteered to be filmed offering their testimonials about the

importance of inclusion and belonging on campus. These testimonials resulted in a video that powerfully conveys the students' definition of inclusion and belonging.

After completing the video and sharing it with friends and others across Columbia, group members felt the video would help communicate values at Columbia to new students. The Office of University Life has worked with student affairs staff to incorporate the video into orientation sessions at many Columbia schools beginning fall 2018. Additionally, the video will be featured on the Office of University Life website (www.universitylife.columbia.edu)

Next Steps – The Chalkboard Project
With the initial video complete, the Awareness Project group members desire to continue convening and developing more videos. Their desire is to reach returning students and to convey lived experiences on campus, including times when they've felt included, as well as when they've felt excluded. Their continued goals are to:

> **Potential Prompts for the Chalkboard Project video:**
>
> 1. What makes you feel…
>   a. In?
>   b. Out?
> 2. What makes you feel…
>   a. A part of Columbia?
>   b. Apart from Columbia?
> 3. What makes you feel like…
>   a. An insider?
>   b. An outsider?

- Build awareness on campus about what inclusion and exclusion look like;
- Generate a call to action encouraging students to participate; and primarily,
- Promote inclusion at Columbia.

Building on the first video in the series, new releases would be screened in residence halls, student lounges and within classrooms, and include discussion questions for post-viewing conversations. Tentatively called *The Chalkboard Project*, working group members will explore this second video project in 2018-2019.

Campus Conversations

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." - James Baldwin

Overview
After spending the fall 2017 semester developing and testing a conversation guide about inclusion and belonging, this working group launched the Campus Conversations Initiative in spring 2018, including two written guides, one titled *Identities: Me, Others, Us*; the other using a portion of the poem *Citizen* by Claudia Rankine to launch a discussion about identity. Both provide activities and questions to generate conversation among participants about identity and community (see Appendix B).

Goals and Results
The guides begin with the question: How do we have conversations that are both hard and necessary? The question was inspired by the repeated concern heard by working group members from students at Columbia who said they are eager to have conversations about diversity and inclusion but are uncertain of a) how to start them and b) how to handle tensions that can arise when tackling these complicated topics. The Campus Conversations Initiative offers a starting point and framework to sustain conversations through difficult moments.

Divided into three sections ("Getting Started," "Digging In," and "Wrap-Up"), the guides take approximately 90 minutes to complete and work well with groups of about 20, though adjustments can easily be made for larger or smaller groups. The sequencing of the activities allows participants to introduce themselves first through low-risk activities where they share stories about their names and begin to explore their own identities. From there, participants begin to unpack some of the assumptions they may have made about the identities of others in the room. The conversation concludes with questions about how to build community in a setting of diverse people.

> "Having a toolkit of ways to facilitate and navigate these conversations is really important. I'd love to recommend this to other students."
> **-Social Work student at facilitation training**

To launch the initiative, the guide was posted on the Office of University Life website, universitylife.columbia.edu. In addition, Office of University Life staff trained students who wanted to use the guide to host their own conversations. (The guide also includes "Steps for Hosting a Campus Conversation" and "Ten Tips for a Great Conversation.") More than 40 students were trained including undergraduates and graduates from both Morningside and CUIMC campuses. The launch of the initiative was also covered by the Columbia Spectator (see Appendix C).

Next Steps
The ongoing purpose of this project is to equip Columbia community members to have successful and substantive conversations about critical issues that impact the climate and culture on campus, and thereby improve the quality of life for all students at Columbia. For

the 2018-2019 academic year, this working group will continue to host facilitation trainings and launch a campaign to generate greater awareness of these conversation tools.

Discussion Group

Overview
The Discussion Group began the 2017-2018 year with a decision to focus their conversations on the role students can play in responding to bias incidents. The group explored the following question: should students create opportunities for processing, reflection and moving forward after a bias incident?

Bias incidents (e.g. graffiti, use of slurs, etc.) differ from hate crimes in that there is no criminal activity involved, however, these incidents can have a tremendous impact on campus climate, often for a lengthy period of time.

Goals and Results
The discussion group met quarterly to share their experiences with bias in both institutional and personal settings, as well as their reflections on what helped them recover and progress after these incidents.

Students in the group shared that after a bias incident they appreciated support from University staff and statements by leadership in their schools and at the University that affirmed their place on campus. They also shared that cultivating resilience among students is important pre-emptive work, which can minimize the impact of bias.

Conclusions
As the 2017-18 academic year came to a close, the Discussion Group consensus was that while student leadership in responding to bias incidents on campus has been helpful, routinizing this leadership role may be less critical than providing tools throughout the year to cultivate resilience among students and continuing support from school-based administrative leadership in responding to bias incidents on campus.

Inclusive Classrooms

Overview

The convening of this working group is done in partnership with the Center for the Teaching and Learning and its purpose is to explore the dynamics that shape the classroom environment, specifically the role of students. As with the other working groups, the membership of this group includes students, faculty and staff from across the University, which leads to rich and robust conversations.

Definitions of inclusive classrooms shared at the Café:
- Purposeful
- Interdisciplinary
- Growth mindset
- Enabling
- Intellectually challenging
- Flexible
- Courageous
- Understanding
- Empathetic

Goals and Results

Originally, this group's project was to create an anthology of stories about learning, however, their project evolved after additional conversations and outreach to peers. The group instead decided to create conversations in café-like settings where students could discuss experiences in the classroom and explore their definitions of inclusivity.

The group introduced the Inclusive Classrooms Café during Wellness Days at Columbia in spring 2018. Facilitators led participants at the café through activities that generated:

- Descriptions of an inclusive classroom
- Additional ideas to support the work of promoting inclusivity in the classroom
- The identification of key partners on campus to move this work forward

The working group also explored what role students could play in cultivating greater classroom inclusivity. Questions asked were: Should students be leading this work? How can students effectively partner with administration? And, how do we include faculty in these conversations? A subset of the group met with staff from the Center for Teaching and Learning to discuss further how to effectively engage faculty, generating a number of ideas that will inform the group's work going forward.

Next Steps

Given the success of the Inclusive Classrooms Café, the group will host more in the next year. In addition, insights gained at the cafés will be collected and incorporated into reference materials produced for teaching staff at the University. Lastly, group members will continue to identify faculty at each school who can further the conversation on how to cultivate inclusivity in the classroom.

Summary and Next Steps, including a new name for the Task Force

Over the course of the 2017-2018 academic year, Task Force members met to discuss, develop and implement projects to further cultivate a culture of inclusion and belonging at Columbia. Conversations within each working group and the Task Force as a whole added depth and complexity to projects, strengthening each and making them more responsive to the needs of the campus community.

Working groups also examined the scope and name of the Task Force itself. Members shared that "Race, Ethnicity and Inclusion Task Force" by name limits the focus to issues related to race and ethnicity, yet diversity and inclusion work includes issues related to gender, class, ability status, religious identity, and other aspects of identity. Thus, the group recommended changing the name to "Task Force on Inclusion and Belonging at Columbia," effective the following academic year.

For the 2018-2019 academic year, the Task Force will again invite the campus community to join in its efforts, including its expanded focus. Moreover, given this expanded focus, the 2018-2019 Task Force on Inclusion and Belonging at Columbia will include additional working groups, and staff from various campus service offices – such as those that work closely with students with disabilities and LGBTQ students – will be invited to present to the Task Force as a way to inform and guide new projects.

Appendix A
Roster of Race, Ethnicity, and Inclusion Task Force Members 2017-2018

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	School
Aisha	Abdelmula	Administrator	School of General Studies
Samia	Abedin	Student	Columbia College
Samia	Abedin	Student	Columbia College
Alexis	Akagawa	Student	School of International and Public Affairs
Yasi	Alipour	Student	School of the Arts
Precious	Amoako	Student	Mailman School of Public Health
Melinda	Aquino	Administrator	Columbia College
Stephanie	Autenrieth	Administrator	College of Physicians and Surgeons
Humaira	Awal	Student	School of General Studies
Rosemarie	Barbalace	Student	School of Social Work
Rosemarie	Barbalace	Student	School of Social Work
Rosemarie	Barbalace	Student	School of Social Work
Rosemarie	Barbalace	Student	School of Social Work
Christy	Bean	Administrator	Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning
Desmond	Beirne	Administrator	School of International and Public Affairs
Jessica	Bennett	Student	School of General Studies
Susan	Bernofsky	Faculty	School of the Arts
Shyamolie	Biyani	Student	Columbia College
Adrienne	Blount	Administrator	University Life
Liz	Boylan	Administrator	Columbia Law School
Jennifer	Brown	Administrator	Libraries
Chardee	Bryant	Student	School of Social Work
Chardee	Bryant	Student	School of Social Work
Kati	Cadenhead	Administrator	University Life
James	Carter	Student	Columbia Graduate School of Business
Ka Tung	Chan	Student	School of General Studies
Ka Tung	Chan	Student	School of General Studies
Patel	Chandani	Administrator	Columbia Center for Teaching and Learning
Barbara	Chen	Administrator	University Life
Jim	Crocamo	Administrator	Libraries
Jim	Crocamo	Administrator	Libraries
Lisa	Davis	Student	General Studies
Mistee	Denson	Student	School of Social Work
Raygine	DiAquoi	Faculty, Adminstrator	Mailman School of Public Health
Ina	Dogani	Student	Columbia Law School
Kuheli	Dutt	Administrator	Earth Observatory
Miriam	Edelman	Student	School of Social Work
Trey	Ellis	Faculty	School of the Arts

Bryn	Evans	Student	Columbia College
Alison	Ewing	Administrator	University Life
Julia	Flasphaler	Student	School of General Studies
Franklin	Forbes	Student	School of General Studies
Robert	Ford	Administrator	Columbia Law School
Jason	Freeman	Student	School of Social Work
Denise	Frutos	Student	School of General Studies
Amari	Gaiter	Student	Columbia College
Anish	Gawande	Student	Columbia College
Malina	Giulino	Other	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Henry	Gonzalez	Student	Columbia College
Yonah	Hain	Other	Kraft Center
Craig	Heck	Other	Mailman School of Public Health
Hilda	Hutcherson	Faculty, Adminstrator	College of Physicians and Surgeons
Anne	Im	Student	Columbia College
Greg	Inchaustegui	Student	School of General Studies
Empress	James	Student	Mailman School of Public Health
Amalya	Johnson	Student	Columbia College
Carl	Jones	Administrator	Columbia College
Riley	Jordan-Swain	student	Columbia College
Chabely	Jorge	Student	Columbia College
Shalaka	Joshi	Student	School of International and Public Affairs
Michael	Karbowiak	Student	School of Professional Studies
Natasha	Korgaonkar	Student	Columbia Graduate School of Business
Shreyas	Lakshminarayan		Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Shana	Lassiter	Administrator	Office of the Provost
Katie	Leonard	Student	School of Nursing
MeiMei	Li	Student	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Armando	Lozano	Student	Columbia Law School
Chioma	Madubata	Student	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Laila	Maher	Administrator	School of the Arts
Celina	Malavé	Student	School of Professional Studies
Cynthia	Marino	Administrator	School of Nursing
Zoe	Marquedant	Student	School of the Arts
Fatimah	Martin	Student	School of International and Public Affairs
Livier	Martinez	Student	School of International and Public Affairs
Monica	Martinez	Student	School of International and Public Affairs
Mica	McGriggs	Staff	CUMC Student Health Services
Samantha	McLaughlin	Student	School of Professional Studies
Marc	Mejia	Administrator	International Students and Scholars Office

First	Last	Role	School
Theo	Milonopoulos	Student	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Kanako	Mori	Student	Columbia College
Michael	Naft	Student	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Monica	Ng	Student	Mailman School of Public Health
Diane	Nguyen	Administrator	School of International and Public Affairs
Danielle	Noel	Student	Mailman School of Public Health
Edwin	Okoth	Student	Graduate School of Journalism
Lolade	Omokanwaye	Student	The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
Bailey	Peacock	Student	Columbia College
Melissa	Peña	Student	School of Nursing
Tran	Pham	Administrator	Columbia College
Kenneth	Pham	Student	Columbia College
Yvonne	Pitts	Administrator	Columbia College
Marya	Pollack	Faculty	College of Physicians and Surgeons
Michael	Price	Student	School of General Studies
Diana	Punales	Faculty	College of Physicians and Surgeons
Zoha	Qamar	Student	The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
Boyang	Qu	Student	School of General Studies
Maria	Raible	Administrator	School of International and Public Affairs
Yadira	Ramos-Herbert	staff	Columbia Law School
Karla Nohemi	Reyes Diaz	Student	Columbia College
Brennan	Rhodes-Bratton	Student	Mailman School of Public Health
Erica	Richardson	Student	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Sofia	Rinvil	Student	School of Professional Studies
Viviana	Rivera-Burgos	Student	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Sojourner	Rivers	Other	Columbia Health
Chelsea	Roberts	Student	School of the Arts
Chanel	Roche	Administrator	Graduate School of Journalism
Ashley	Rodriguez	Student	The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
Daniel	Roque	Student	School of Professional Studies
Joseida	Rosario	Student	
Jyotirmayee	Sabat	Student	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Malaya	Sadler	Student	Columbia College
Katherine	Santana	Administrator	Columbia Law School
Katherine	Santana	Administrator	Columbia Law School
Brian	Sarfo	Other	Columbia College
Bonnie	Schipper	Student	Columbia College
Carly	Scramstad	Student	Mailman School of Public Health
Samantha	Shapses	Administrator	School of International and Public Affairs

Hadia	Sheerazi	Student	School of Professional Studies
Chris	Sinclair	Student	School of General Studies
Adrienne	Strong	Other	Mailman School of Public Health
Vanessa	Suarez	Student	School of General Studies
Alex	Tapnio	Administrator	Arts Initiative
Vivian	Taylor	Administrator	School of Nursing
Matt	Taylor	Student	Columbia Graduate School of Business
Ellis	Trey	Faculty	School of the Arts
Sahar	Ullah	Student	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Stephanie	Vargas	Student	College of Dental Medicine
Pooja	Varman	Student	School of Professional Studies
Lucy	Wang	Student	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Emilee	Warner	Student	Mailman School of Public Health
Judy	Wolfe	Administrator	School of Nursing
Taylor	Wood	Student	Columbia Law School
Danait	Yemane	Student	Mailman School of Public Health
Yi	Zheng	Student	The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Sciences

CAMPUS CONVERSATIONS
at Columbia

Race, Ethnicity and Inclusion Task Force
Office of University Life
Spring 2018

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The Importance of Campus Conversations
An Invitation from the Columbia Race, Ethnicity and Inclusion Task Force

How do we have conversations that are both hard and necessary? Especially conversations about what it means to belong at Columbia. Meaningful inclusion and belonging are core Columbia community values, but our different experiences – and the realities of history, inequality and disparities – complicate where we start. Playwright and novelist James Baldwin once said, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." The Race, Ethnicity and Inclusion Task Force *Campus Conversations* Initiative aims to help us get started.

Who We Are

Dozens of students, faculty, and staff from each Columbia school belong to the Race, Ethnicity, and Inclusion Task Force convened by the Office of University Life. The Task Force works to identify issues and develop responsive strategies that address students' experiences both in and outside of the classroom related to race, ethnicity, and other intersecting aspects of identity.

What is the Campus Conversations Initiative?

You can think of this initiative as a conversation-based project that offers you a jumpstart and a helpful guide to discussing identity, race and inclusion with peers, friends of friends, and others at Columbia or elsewhere in your life.

Each conversation has been developed by members of the Race, Ethnicity and Inclusion Task Force and has three parts that, all in all, take around 90 minutes to complete:
1. An introduction for the group to get to know each other and set conversation guidelines.
2. A discussion on a specific topic.
3. A closing exercise to help everyone think about next steps.

Join Us In Conversation

We invite – and we'll help – you to host a conversation – in your residence, in your class, in your organization, or with your friends. We'll provide the tools, and you'll provide the space and opportunity. Sign up for a free facilitation training by contacting universitylife@columbia.edu.

Building a diverse university community is not the work of a moment. It requires
sustained commitment, concerted effort, and the attention of us all.
- Lee C. Bollinger, President, Columbia University

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Campus Conversations Continue with #unitedCU

As members of one community, we can care for one another, hold each other accountable, and commit to acting with each other's best interests in mind.

- Associate Vice President for Student Life Ixchel Rosal

Campus Conversations help us explore the ideas of meaningful inclusion and belonging. #unitedCU is a way for students to share their perspectives on these ideas with the University community, and thus, continue the conversation.

After you facilitate a conversation, consider writing a post reinforcing #unitedCU. Here are some examples of thoughts students have shared, with tips for more personal posts, below:
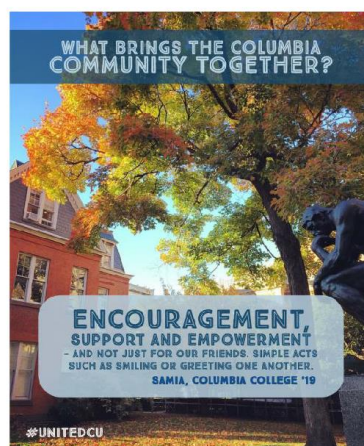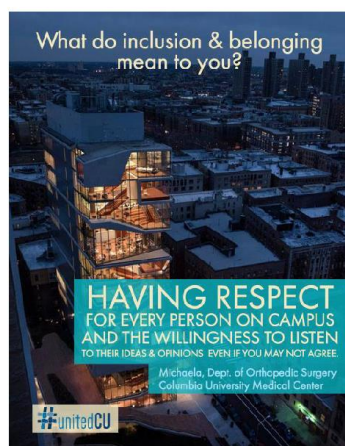
1. **Take posed, "spontaneous" or artsy-abstract photos - your choice** (but we love to see your faces)! If posed, encourage everyone to smile and show pride in participating in your conversation. Use #unitedCU!
2. **Tell us who's in the photo/s you're sending** - if the people in your conversation are comfortable being identified, give us their first and last names (or just first and last initial, or first name only if preferred), your schools, and any student organizations applicable!
3. **Share an inspiring line or idea from your conversation**, such as something you learned or just really enjoyed about having the conversation. Or, share an aspiration or topic you are working through.
4. **Share your picture/post with our Facebook group:** http://bit.ly/ULifeCampusConvosGroup.
5. **Look out for your pic on the University Life social media – share, tag and like!** Our accounts are:
   Facebook – @ColumbiaUniversityLife   Instagram – @ColumbiaULife
   Twitter – @ColumbiaULife   YouTube – Columbia Office of University Life

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Steps for Hosting a Campus Conversation

Before
1. Pick a time and date that works for you.
2. Pick a location. Perhaps:
    - Your residence hall or apartment
    - A lounge or space within your school (ask your school's Student Affairs office)
    - A coffee shop or other open spaces on campus
3. Invite friends, classmates and friends of friends to participate. A few ideas:
    - Make an announcement before the start of one of your classes.
    - Reach out to your study group, student organization, team, etc.
    - Ask someone in your school's Student Affairs Office to help you connect with other students who may be interested.
4. Apply for a mini-grant with which to buy snacks for your conversation: http://bit.ly/unitedCUgrant.
5. Check out the 10 Tips for a Great Conversation (see next page).
6. Please review the conversation guide a few times before your group meets. (If you have a question, the Office of University Life can help – just reach out to AVP for Student Life Ixchel Rosal at irosal@columbia.edu.)
7. Pick up supplies from the Office of University Life.
8. Create a welcoming environment – arrive 20-30 minutes before the conversation to set things up. If possible, have people sit in a circle.
9. Place a copy of "The Importance of Campus Conversations" (page 1 in this packet) on each chair.

During
1. Most importantly: Stay relaxed and enjoy yourself.
2. Practice the 10 Tips for a Great Conversation (next page).
3. Collect names of people who express interest in hosting a conversation. The Office of University Life can reach out to assist them.
4. If everyone is comfortable doing so, take a group picture at the end of your conversation and help spread the word about campus conversations and the #unitedCU campaign.
5. Collect all materials and cards / post-its written by the group.

After
1. Share feedback from the conversation on our quick evaluation form (http://bit.ly/CUCampusConvoFeedbk).
2. If you haven't already, join the Campus Conversations Facebook group (http://bit.ly/ULifeCampusConvosGroup)! Share any photos using #unitedCU. (See previous page for more.)
3. Turn in index cards, dated for your group, to the Office of University Life. Also return leftover supplies.
4. Make a list of names and contact information of anyone who wants to host a conversation. (You can email the list to irosal@columbia.edu.)
5. Consider hosting a future conversation!

10 Tips for a Great Campus Conversation

1. **Offer snacks/refreshments!** People are more likely to participate if they're feeling welcomed. You can apply for a CommUnity Grant to help cover costs at http://bit.ly/unitedCUgrant.

2. **Make the conversation your own.** We've prepared a conversation guide – not a script; you're not required to use every activity or ask every question. Pick and choose what works for you. The main point is to get folks talking!

3. **Take time to prepare.** Including, make sure you have all the supplies you need (see page 11; the Office of University Life can provide these). Reach out to universitylife@columbia.edu or irosal@columbia.edu if you have any questions or concerns.

4. **Be clear about logistics.** Make sure everyone knows the date, time and place for the conversation. Send reminders.

5. **Respect everyone's time.** Start on time – you want to have enough time for everyone! We recommend 90 minutes to have these conversations. Also, don't go over time. Watch the clock and end on time.

6. **Get comfortable with silence.** Sometimes people need a moment to think. That's okay. If you throw out a question and no one responds, give it some time before you throw out another question.

7. **Build the momentum.** Bring energy and enthusiasm to your role as facilitator. Share your own thoughts on the questions. Just make sure you give others a chance to talk —actively include them. Model the participation you want in the conversation.

8. **Make it a brave space.** Encourage honesty and practice/follow the Community Learning Guidelines (see "Getting Started," page 7).

9. **Get everyone involved.** Watch and make sure that everyone is participating. Gently encourage those who are quiet to share and those who are talking a lot to leave space for others.

10. **Be part of something big,** and bigger than this one conversation. Remind participants they're part of Columbia's Campus Conversations Initiative, and invite them to host a conversation of their own and/or join the Race, Ethnicity, and Inclusion Task Force.

4

A Guide to Campus Conversations
Identities: Me, Others, Us*

First in a series of Conversation Guides from the Race, Ethnicity and Inclusion Task Force

Introduction

The overall goal for this conversation is to **create and engage in open and honest dialogue about identity and building community**.

This guide includes a number of activities to generate and stimulate thoughtful conversation. As the facilitator, **don't be concerned about completing all the activities**. If there's an activity that generates a lot of conversation, it's often best to let the discussion flow!

Sometimes, it can take a little time to get a group to connect and feel comfortable with each other. Other times, people will be ready to dive in and won't need activities to generate conversation. **Use your judgment**, watch how the conversation is going, and pick and choose the activities you think will best get everyone to the goal of talking about identity.

This guide is meant as a jumping off point for you. There are tools you can use to facilitate any number of conversations. Want to talk about climate change and students' role in addressing the issue? Or, the deep political divisions playing out across our country today? Or, the #MeToo campaign? This guide can help frame any conversation you'd like to host. Just choose the topic for "Digging In" and use this guide to get there in a productive and effective way.

Finally, **keep the conversation going** – share a picture or a quote on the Campus Conversations Facebook group and other social media (and use #unitedCU!).

I. Getting Started (30 minutes)

Welcome
- Once your group has settled in, introduce yourself (sharing just your name for the moment) and welcome everyone to the conversation.
- Let them know that this event is part of an initiative from the Office of University Life Race, Ethnicity and Inclusion Task Force, and give out University Life brochures.
- Share the focus of the conversation and review the goal – to talk honestly and openly about identity and community. Let them know the conversation will take about 90 minutes and that you'll be facilitating their participation through a series of exercises.

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Welcome continued
- Give an overview of the flow of the conversation (i.e. the first part is about individual identities, followed by a look at others' identities, and then about community). Then share the following question: How do our identities impact how we connect with others and build community here at Columbia? Ask everyone to keep this question in mind during the conversation.

Introductions
- Have everyone introduce themselves. This gives each person the opportunity to have their voice heard in the circle, which is an important first step in making sure they are all engaged, especially those who may be nervous or anxious.
- Invite everyone to share their name, school or program, the gender pronouns they use, and a quick fun fact about themselves. Not everyone may be familiar with sharing what pronouns they use, so you should explain what this means (more on this in your facilitation training). At this time, it's also good to explain that the exploration of individual's identity begins with these introductions.
- If everyone already knows each other, then the introductions can just include pronouns in use and something each participant hopes to get out of the conversation.
- As the facilitator, you should introduce yourself first (i.e. provide a model) and then pick a direction to go around the room.

Ice Breakers (choose one!)
Ice breakers help people ease into the setting and the topic via a low to no risk activity. They also give participants a chance to gather their thoughts and get to know others.

- ➤ *Option A – Pair and Share[1]:*
- ○ Ask everyone to find someone in the room they don't know and introduce themselves. Share that this is a great tool for practicing listening skills, which are critical to successful conversations and building community.

- ○ Everyone will take turns listening to each other for two minutes (as the facilitator, you'll need to watch and call the time) responding to the following prompt: ***I feel _____ about having this conversation because _____.***

- ○ Remind the group that the job of the person listening is *to simply listen* (i.e. not ask questions or share similar experiences, etc.) and to give their conversation partner complete attention.

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[1] If you don't think the group needs pair & share activities to warm up before starting the activities, you don't need to use the ice breakers.

Ice Breakers continued
- o Explain that if one person runs out of things to say, they can start over again and see if it generates any new ideas. Or, they can simply talk about how their day has been.

- o Once each person has gone, have people share in the larger group what that was like. Encourage them to share what it was like to either listen or be listened to for two minutes, not to describe what the other person said.

- ➢ *Option B – All About Respect*[2]
    - o Ask everyone to pair with someone in the room they don't know and introduce themselves. Have everyone talk for five to ten minutes about respect using questions like: ***What does it mean to you to "show respect"? How do you show respect to others?***

    - o When time's up, ask everyone to regroup. Kick off the discussion with any of these questions (or others you make up):
        - ▪ How did people define respect?
        - ▪ What were some of the core concepts discussed?
        - ▪ Where did your ideas about respect come from and whom are they meant to protect?
        - ▪ Does everyone really want to be treated the same way you want to be treated? Is eye contact during conversation respectful in every culture?
        - ▪ If someone's ideas are oppressive, should we still respect them?

Community Learning Guidelines
It is important for everyone to think about and share what they need to stay present, focused, and engaged in the conversation. Share the Community Learning Guidelines you received in your facilitation training as a jumping off point and explain their purpose:

- • Respect one another's ideas and comments - Dialogue not Debate
- • Use "I" statements
- • Confidentiality – remind everyone that what is said stays in the room
- • Listen to each other and don't interrupt
- • Support each other
- • Seek to understand and ask questions
- • "Take Space, Make Space" – share your voice but leave room for others to share as well
- • Experiment with new ideas and challenge already established assumptions
- • Have fun!

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[2] Jeremy Goldbach, "Diversity Toolkit: A Guide to Discussing Identity, Power, and Privilege,"*Blog | USC's Online MSW*, 25 Oct. 2017, 20 Dec. 2017, https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/diversity-workshop-guide-to-discussing-identity-power-and-privilege/.

Community Learning Guidelines continued
Review the guidelines and ask the group if everyone can agree, or if there's anything else anyone would like to ask of the group. (Refer to your training for more information about how to respond to any discomfort with the guidelines, and how to work with any proposals for additions to the guidelines.)

II. Digging In: Identity (45 minutes)

Once you've discussed the Community Learning Guidelines, move on to Digging In! The three activities here prompt and guide your group to explore the identities of the self, others, and community. *Complete each of the following activities with your group*:

Activity A: The Story of Your Name[3]
Telling the story of our names is a great way to start to share our personal histories, background and identity.

1. Pair and Share – Have everyone pair with someone they haven't already and give everyone two to three minutes each to share the story of their name with their conversation partner. Prompt people to answer the questions below when telling the story of their names:
- What is the history of your name (first, middle, and/or last)?
- What is the meaning of your name (translation or other meaning as you have learned it)?
- What is the significance of your name? (Are you named for someone or did someone have the responsibility of naming you?)
- Alternatively (or additionally), share what it feels like to have your name.
- Does your name reflect anything about your identities such as your gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic class or religion?
- Do you think people make assumptions about you based on your name?

2. Regroup and Reflect – Once back in the larger group, ask what it was like to do that exercise. Ask:
- What did they notice about the conversation?
- How did they feel talking about their name?
- Do they have any lingering questions for their conversation partner?
- Any new insights about their own names?

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[3] Tanesha Barnes, "Who Am I? The Question of Identity," *Love, Race, and Liberation*, edited by JLove Calderon and Marcella Runell Hall, Love-N-Liberation Press, 2010, pp. 11-12.

II. Digging In: Identity continued

Activity B: *Who's in the Room?* (Post-Its and Identities)

Taking stock of our perceptions of ourselves, and others' perceptions of us, help to illustrate how identities impact everyone's experiences.

1. Put it on a Post-It – Ask everyone to reflect privately on these questions and then put their responses on color-coded paper/Post-Its that you hand out. Pick one color for each question. Provide the same kind of pen to protect anonymity as much as possible.
   - What is the first identity/identities that people perceive about you?
   - What is one aspect of your identity that people do not perceive about you?
   - If you were to describe yourself in one word, what would it be?
   - What current events are weighing on your mind?

2. Post-It Gallery – Divide the wall into four different sections. Direct everyone to place their answers to the first question in one section of the wall, then repeat with the post-its for the other questions in the other sections. Once everyone has finished posting their answers, invite everyone to walk around, look at the post-its, and then take their seats.

3. Pair and Share – Once everyone's sitting, have them pair and share (two minutes each), using the following questions:
   - What did you notice about the identities listed on the wall?
   - What surprised you?
   - How do the identities in this space compare to other spaces? Your classes? Home? Friend group?

Additional, optional questions
   - What did you expect?
   - Which identities may be missing from this space? Why do you think that is?

4. Regroup and Reflect – After sharing in pairs, prompt the larger group to discuss, using the same questions above. Let the conversation flow. If there's a lull, re-ask one of the questions or ask a new question that comes to mind.

II. Digging In: Identity continued

Activity C: Reflection Discussion

Now that everyone has had an opportunity to get a bit more comfortable with each other and the topic, ask the group these questions:

1. Who "owns" identity and how is it defined? How much of your identity is based on how you see yourself, versus how others see you?
2. How do our identities impact connecting with others and building community here at Columbia?
3. How do your identities show-up in various spaces? Classroom? Home? Job? Etc.

Additional, alternative questions

- What have you wanted others to know and/or understand about your identity/identities and lived experiences?
- Our identity/identities can change over time. How is that useful? How is it confusing or challenging?
- Have any of your identities been more salient or prominent in your life since joining the Columbia community? Which?
- We've talked about a lot about social identities, what about personal identities (i.e. political, geographic, personality traits, etc.)? How do they impact your engagement with others/community and how others perceive you?
- How easy or hard is it for you to have a conversation about identity? Why?
- Current events impact how we experience identity and community. Has this been true for you recently? How?

Pair and share for two minutes each, using the questions above as a prompt. They don't have to answer every question during their turn; they can focus on whichever questions seem most compelling to them.

After the pair and share round, return attention to the larger group and ask everyone to reflect on these questions with the group. Remind them that the purpose of the activity is to have everyone reflect on their identities and how identities impact building community at Columbia. (Reminder to facilitators: If the conversation is flowing, don't worry about making sure all the questions are answered. Simply use the questions as a jumping off point!)

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III. Wrap (15 minutes)

1. Closing Circle
Wrap up your campus conversation with a closing circle: Ask everyone to share one quick thing they appreciated about the conversation, and one word to describe how they feel (e.g. hopeful, inspired, stuck, confused, excited, pleased, etc.). Go first, then pick a direction and invite everyone to respond.

2. Closing Thoughts
Ask participants to answer the following question on an index card:

> What did you learn or discover in this conversation?

3. Goodbye and Next Steps
- Thank everyone for participating and encourage them to continue having campus conversations.

- Collect the index cards. Encourage everyone to join the Campus Conversations Facebook group (http://bit.ly/ULifeCampusConvosGroup) and add a post and/or photo about their experience. Remember to use #unitedCU!

- Ask for volunteers who want to host a conversation themselves; the Office of University Life can follow up to provide supplies and other support. Circulate a sign-up sheet.

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Appendices

Supplies

Watch or timer
Post-Its (four different colors)
Pens (enough for everyone, same color, same style)

Handouts:
- Community Learning Guidelines
- Activity Questions
- "The Importance of Campus Conversations"

University Life brochures
Index cards
#unitedCU buttons
Sign-In Sheet
Sign-Up to Host Sheet

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COLUMBIA DAILY SPECTATOR

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NEWS | STUDENT LIFE

With pamphlets and student volunteers, University aims to start conversations on race

NATALIE GUERRA / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Lisa Davis, GS '19, looks through a Campus Conversation guide, which students can receive a copy of at one of the two upcoming facilitator training sessions hosted by University Life.

BY KHADIJA HUSSAIN | FEBRUARY 28, 2018, 1:09 AM

The Office of University Life will attempt to promote difficult conversations between students regarding race at Columbia with Campus Conversation packets, an initiative unveiled this week.

In part because of Columbia's politically correct culture, critical discourse about race and identity can been inhibited by students feeling uncomfortable with or unprepared to initiate these conversations on their own.

According to Associate Vice President for Student Life Ixchel Rosal, the idea for Campus Conversations arose as an effort to foster such dialogue.

"[These conversations] are not easy, but they are so essential. And I think nine-tenths of the time, people are just too scared, they become too timid, and they don't know where to start," Rosal said. "So here's where you start."

First proposed by the office's Race, Ethnicity, and Inclusion Task Force in its 2016-17 report, these Campus Conversation materials aim to encourage students to engage with issues of race, identity, and inclusion by offering them a comprehensive guide to starting such conversations. The task force, which is comprised of students, faculty, and administrators, was formed by University Life in 2015 to develop strategies to address issues related to students' identities.

http://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2018/02/28/with-pamphlets-and-student-volunteers-university-aims-to-start-conversations-on-race/

The packets, each around a dozen pages long, guide students through various exercises, from icebreakers to specific discussion topics, that serve as a starting point for productive conversation.

To supplement these guides, students are also able to sign up for facilitator trainings hosted by University Life that prepare them to lead these conversations. Students who take part in a three-hour-long session will be asked to host a 90-minute conversation this semester either in class, in a student group, in a residence hall, or among friends.

According to Rosal, the number of students registering for these trainings has increased each week. However, while the trainings have proved popular among graduate students, Lisa Davis, GS '19, also a University Life fellow, said she hoped more undergraduates would get involved in the process.

In a university-wide email, Executive Vice President for University Life Suzanne Goldberg announced the facilitator training, inviting students to join her office in conversation.

The guide outlines a series of activities to help students initiate conversations about their identities, such as an exercise in which all participants go around and explain the story behind their name. Some activities are similar to those that happen at Under1Roof, Columbia's inclusivity workshop that all first-years must complete during the New Student Orientation Program. However, while Under1Roof is mandatory, Campus Conversations requires students to sign up on their own.

"What the university is trying to do is get students involved in the stakeholder process and get them engaged in creating a community that is more encouraging," Shyamolie Biyani, CC '18 and a University Life fellow who contributed to the development of the conversation packets, said.

While Biyani acknowledged that the initial participants are likely to be students who have experience with conversations about race and inclusion, she predicted that the initiative will soon reach those who do not actively engage with these issues.

"There might even be a snowball effect, where it starts off with very, very dedicated students," she said. "If they hold a conversation and five people come, and even one of them is interested and excited, it can move from there."

Furthermore, the facilitator training prepares students to approach subjects that they may be familiar with in a way that is sensitive to students who may not be as educated.

"I think that is sometimes a barrier—you can be so educated on perspectives on identity, and people of color, and gender issues, but how do you really speak to someone who is not so knowledgeable without putting them off or making them feel uncomfortable?" Davis said.

While the conversation packets offer a structured, step-by-step approach to starting conversations, students who took part in the training were encouraged to be flexible in their application of its guidelines.

"This is a guide, it's not an instruction manual, it's a jumping off point, so we really want people to use it flexibly."

Students can receive copies of the guide at one of the two upcoming facilitator training sessions, which will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 28 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. or on Thursday, March 8 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.