

Educating for Liberation and Innovations and Risk Taking Discussion Guide, March 2, 2022

Opening Words “The next call to action for racial justice has arrived. My people: Will we answer? The UU White Supremacy Teach-In movement was unprecedented in its scope, and it was just the beginning of a crucial conversation. This conversation has angered some and empowered others. It is, for the first time, an honest conversation. What is at stake is the heart and soul of Unitarian Universalism. We are a people of faith, a faith that demands of us reflection, determination, and yes, a commitment to justice. Centering the voices of the marginalized will be part of becoming whole as a faith and as a people.” (the words of Aisha Hauser from Widening the Circle of Concern, p. 89)

Encourage Board Anti-Racist Training March 30, April 6 and 13

Is someone willing to take notes?

Check In (10 mins) How are you thinking about Widening the Circle since we last met?

Discussion (45 mins):

1. What did you take away from the February 13 worship service?
2. Do you see yourself or anyone you know in either of the avatars?
3. Did you find the definitions helpful?
4. What brought you to engage anti-oppression? How has it changed your life? Your perspective? (If it has.)
5. Where do you get stuck when engaging anti-oppression?
6. How can we help people see the need to do this work? How can we get the whole congregation involved?
7. How can we make sure that any future staff or congregants with identities not well represented are not only not harmed, but are welcomed and included in the fullness of their humanity?
8. What do we need to change about USG culture to help us make sure the above can happen?

COIC Report Recommended Goals and USG Proposed Actions (20 mins)

* means it has been chosen as a priority, purple means it was added since the last meeting.

Educating for Liberation (from the COIC)

Use resources and tools that ensure a variety of entry points into the spiritual work of embracing one’s own identity and the identity of others should be curated and, where not available, developed. Resources on healing religious wounds and productive conflict engagement are also needed as a core part of faith development. A comprehensive path to understanding the work of equity, inclusion, and diversity should be developed and maintained as part of faith development.

For USG:

*T3.1 Action: Each lay leader commits to attend a **structured, facilitated** workshop/course/program focused on anti-oppression per year **or at least every two years**.

*T3.2 Action: Encourage all congregants to attend a **structured, facilitated** workshop/course/program focused on anti-oppression of their choosing per year **or at least every two years**.

T3.4 Action: Create a line item in the annual budget for anti-oppression trainings and allocate sufficient funds each year.

L 1.1 Action: Encourage everyone at USG to engage with at least one of the many USG groups doing anti oppression work including but not limited to: Widening the Circle, White Anti Racist Discussion, Ending Racism Committee, Racism Book Study, Standing in Solidarity Vigil, New SJ Book Discussion, Beloved Conversations (from Meadville Lombard), Trans Inclusion, **one of the POWER teams**.

From our last meeting:

R1.2 action: Apply for and schedule the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop with enough advance notice that it can be promoted, protected (from conflicts) and attended by as many people as possible. (Scheduling should happen during the summer after June 1, 2023. The actual BCT should happen anytime from late August to December 2023.)

New proposed:

1. Next DSD will be asked to provide a list of resources/recommendations for people to engage anti-oppression including a workshop/training/course at least once a year.
2. Make it an explicit expectation that everyone who is part of the USG community will engage anti oppression training in a way that works for them as part of their faith journey and our covenant to one another.
3. Continue the White Anti Racist Discussion Group
4. Consider having another group that is open to people to share all their concerns around the changes at church, not limit it to racism, have it feel safe for people to express themselves but facilitated so that it can help them resolve their concerns. Maybe this is a group the interim minister leads? This could be stated as a need, expectation.
5. Specific suggestions/actions as to how to engage the whole congregation?

Innovation and Risk Taking (from the COIC)

Learn from other congregations working for many decades now to become more inclusive, equitable, and diverse. Support circles or caucuses involving Black people, Indigenous people, or people of color as well as young adult groups. Funding is needed to ensure that Black leaders, Indigenous leaders, leaders of color, and leaders from other marginalized groups with lower financial resources can be engaged and provide leadership into a more inclusive future.

For USG:

*T2.1 Action: Look to a range of communities for wisdom while being sure to credit and acknowledge those sources

T2.2 Action: Examine UUA guidelines about cultural misappropriation:

<https://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/introduction/misappropriation> to ensure that USG events/worship services are mindful of sources and attribution.

H3 Goal: Provide support for convenings at the regional and cluster level for marginalized groups, including people of color, young adults and youth.

*H3.1 Action: Make funding available for people who want to go to regional and cluster events who would be unable to attend without financial support.

From our last meeting:

R1 Goal: Reduce barriers to entry and improve the quality of livelihood for those who seek to serve as religious professionals, particularly those who are not well represented in UU communities: Black, Indigenous and other people of color and those who are non binary or on the transgender spectrum. *Are people comfortable with this level of specificity?*

R1.1 action: Ask the Board to create a policy that states that USG compensates staff according to the UUA fair compensation guidelines.

Check Out (10 mins): Our next meeting is in May, we are planning to finish the report at that meeting. Does that feel right? How did this session feel to you?

Closing Words The pace and extent of change require us to reexamine how we lead, staff and organize our shared community life. ...the ways we have been doing business need to change and we need innovation, experimentation, and support for those risk-takers who are building new ways. (COIC report page 102)