



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 20, 2017

Another Univ Hosts Workshop to Help White Staff Handle Their “Whiteness”

The University of Michigan is treating “whiteness” as a condition to be approached with caution. The Daily Wire reports that the college offered its white Student Life employees training on how to address the “discomfort” of being white so that they may better engage with non-white students.



On December 5, the university hosted the “Conversations on Whiteness” workshop for the Student Life professional development conference entitled “Identity, Wellness, & Work: Healthier, Happier, & More Efficient.”

A description of the workshop explains that it would use the “Privileged Identity Exploration (PIE) Model” to address the issues to be discussed:

Do you feel uncomfortable as a White person engaging with students or colleagues about social justice issues? Do you want to help students and staff as they work through the difficulty of campus climate issues related to race, but don’t know how? Using the Privileged Identity Exploration Model (PIE), participants will have the opportunity to recognize the difficulties they face when talking about social justice issues related to their White identity, explore this discomfort, and devise ways to work through it. Please join us for this session, as we spend time unpacking Whiteness and how to contribute to the work of supporting students and staff related to identity and social justice.

According to the *College Fix*, PIE was introduced in 2007 by University of Iowa Associate Professor Sherry K. Watt in an article published in the *College Student Affairs Journal*. Watt claimed that privileged people rely on eight defense modes “associated with behaviors individuals display when engaged in difficult dialogues about social justice issues.” Those defense mechanisms are “minimization,” “denial,” “deflection,” “rationalization,” “intellectualization,” “false envy,” “benevolence,” and the use of religious or personal principles.

In other words, any response to being accused of having some sort of privilege is simply that person’s defense mechanism because that individual refuses to accept the fact that he or she is indeed privileged.

Another session, entitled “I Don’t Feel Safe Talking About Race,” focused on giving staff the “tools to create a safer climate to promote dialogue around racial issues.” Meanwhile, “The Intersection of Well-being, and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion on Campus” workshop aimed to help Student Life staff “work towards wellness justice for all students on campus.”

Schools across the country are pushing the notion of white privilege, both amongst staff as well as students. Last year, educators in Philadelphia gathered for the 17th Annual White Privilege Conference, while the Department of Communications at Cal State University at San Marcos (CSUSM) hosted a “Whiteness Forum” at the culmination of a course at the school called “Communicating Whiteness,” which focused on whiteness and white privilege. Glen Allen High School in Henrico, Virginia, landed itself in hot water when it showed students a controversial video on white privilege during two



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assemblies for Black History month.

This year, the federal government gave the National Science Foundation \$3 million to stop “microaggressions, implicit bias, and lack of diversity” on college campuses. Meanwhile, these sort of conferences and studies make no effort to improve the academic experience of the students at these institutions, but instead promulgate the victim narratives that divide the students further.

According to conservative pundit Ben Shapiro, it is the Left’s focus on intersectional politics that won President Trump the White House, and the continued emphasis on intersectionality could win Trump the seat again in 2020.

And James Huffman, a member of the Federalist Society Property and Environment Practice Group, [notes](#) that colleges are exacerbating race problems because they “have made race and racial differences central to almost everything they do.” He adds, “And to make matters worse, those who accredit our universities make attention to race in admissions and programming a condition of accreditation.”

Huffman notes ironically that the campus campaigns for “diversity” are in themselves examples of “microaggressions,” because these programs indicate simply that “campus officials believe students of color need extra help to succeed.”

Furthermore, advancing the notion that whiteness is a privilege hurts relations between white students and minority students and invites students and staff to marginalize the white students:

When they apply to colleges, white students know that they have a disadvantage in the admissions process. Once they arrive on campus, they witness university-sponsored and -endorsed programming directed at students of color. Now they are learning that they need to shelve their “white privilege,” notwithstanding that many of their minority classmates may have come from economic or family circumstances far better than theirs.

Whatever privilege students may have before they arrive at college, the reality of American higher education today is that students of color have been privileged by their institutions in ways that invite segregation and differential treatment, whether done in the name of reparations for past discrimination, as affirmative action to overcome societally imposed disadvantages, or in the belief that celebrating and encouraging differences improves education for everyone.

And while colleges are hell-bent on dismantling white privilege, they are failing to adequately prepare students for the real world. Not only are graduating students incapable of engaging in healthy, intellectual debates because they have been sheltered by college safe spaces, but according to a 2016 PayScale survey, 60 percent of managers report that recent graduates within their organizations do not possess the critical-thinking and problem-solving skills they feel are necessary for the job.

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