

At the November 5, 2005 UCLGBTIA Steering Committee meeting, we held a series of Caucus meetings, including: QPOC, white allies, students, and staff. Below are notes from all 4 break-out discussions. **Please note that comments to do not reflect a consensus of all caucus members, but rather record what individuals shared within the caucus spaces.**

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Notes from QPOC Caucus

Submitted by Narinda Heng

- It is important that allies challenge each other versus POC challenging them
- It is also allies' responsibility to educate themselves, with POC guidance
- Improving relations is a two-step process, with both groups understanding their own needs, then sharing and reflecting with the entire group
- Differences between the two groups:
 - o huge differences in culture and values
 - experience of double and triple marginalization
 - o the QPOC group consists mostly of students while the Allies group is composed of more staff members
 - o the values and issues at hand, "Gay Agenda" v. "QPOC Gay Agenda"
- The choice of leaders in positions of power, e.g. a resource center, are crucial to the vision and space that students experience
 - o Such leaders should "help us help ourselves" in our movement, and mentor QPOC in the skills needed to be effective activists and leaders
- The QPOC community needs to inform POC groups that there is a space available for them in a queer resource center, perhaps also offer Allies training to POC groups to address cultural homophobia
- Allies must be recognized and encouraged as they are crucial to growth
- The need for QPOC groups must be recognized and respected, not deemed separatist or exclusionary

Notes from Breakout Session II: Students

- Communication between staff members of Multi-/Cross Cultural Centers is crucial
- Again, the choice of staff members is important in being relevant to student needs
 - o Joint training of interns and other members of Cross Cultural Centers and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Centers is necessary in creating a cohesive community
- "Closed" QPOC groups such as Asian Pacific Islander Queers and La Familia are important as they create safe spaces for discussion
 - o the presence of "difference" can make things difficult when discussing culturally-relevant or sensitive issues

- Even closed groups may hold open sessions in which anyone is welcome, with members given the choice to speak or not to speak
 - Closed groups must communicate to ensure that common goals are not lost
- Students must be vocal in calling out people on their racism, be it a student or staff member
- The difference between the student agenda and the staff agenda must be addressed, whether it is cultural or generational, and both must be respected
- Staff needs to be more engaging in both informing students of resources that may be available, but in how to attain those resources
 - Open doors don't always translate to invitations
 - The presence of dominance can be discouraging to students
- Staff/White Allies need to be trained on how to deal with flak from standing up for SOC issues
- The term "don't know what racism is" is not productive, it is important to stay positive and educate
 - use a different perspective
 - privilege may be explained by saying that it is not necessarily receiving a benefit because of race/status, it is not being disadvantaged by them
- More QPOC staff members are needed to maintain a Resource Center's relevance to students

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Notes from Staff Break-out Session

Submitted by Jami Grosser

Noon – 2pm Staff Break-out Notes

Our discussion about the needs of students of color got onto a discussion about needs of staff of color, and the overall role that staff play in creating anti-racist environments.

- We still have a ways to go
- Everyone is at a different level of awareness (white and POC folks)
- Director staff is predominantly white
- There are some asst. directors/program coordinators of color, but it's a complicated hiring process (i.e. whether a master's degree is required and what that means in terms of who has a master's or who has access to one)
- In addition to the hiring process, we must look at support for existing staff of color
- The idea of "cohort hiring," which brings in a group of folks at the same time in different positions to help with support
- Mentoring/intern higher ed students into these position.
- Yet, not all higher ed programs provide support for students of color and/or cover multicultural topics
- Consider counseling programs, as they often cover multicultural competencies
- We need to provide opportunities and support for staff of color
- Since we're probably not going to change the student affairs structure and process for hiring right away, we need to look at practical ways to be more inclusive
- Make sure to have students of color on hiring committees so they can ask specific questions of candidates (especially white candidates) about their commitment and knowledge of social justice
- Most LGBT center staff have student affairs backgrounds and/or lgbt activism
- We need to be aware of requiring multiply things from queer women of color
- Students of color are often asked to do a lot and get burned out easily
- We must remember student academic obligations, and need for balance otherwise we risk loosing them at the university
- The UC system is still one of the only communities able to even have these conversations in the first place.
- Are all the queer staff of color on campus actually out? What are we doing to support our faculty of color? Be aware of their tenure requirements and therefore lack of time to devote to community outreach..

Suggestions Brainstormed

- Doing student panels with folks from common ethnic/racial backgrounds so they don't feel tokenized or like they are the only voice
- Look at similar visions in the people we do hire (regardless of ethnic backgrounds)

- Look for queer people of color to mentor students and staff
- Don't be afraid to call someone out for inappropriate comments
- Find other white people to respond to issues/discussions of white guilt (not POC)
- Support existing staff of color
- Find supportive staff in other departments around campus (e.g. create your own kitchen cabinet of people you can turn to for different issues)
- Many of the staff of color are also young, so create lunches or other opportunities for these folks to get together and compare notes and find support
- We need to do social justice training across the board for ourselves and for students. We need to bring it into each program we do.

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Notes from White Ally Caucus

Submitted by Emily Nalven

Oppression is the use of power to make someone feel small and it can be systemic.

Privilege is getting things that all people can't get as a result of an aspect taken for granted or thinking it applies to everyone else. It is a sense of entitlement. Privilege can be different from country to country but there are some similarities of expression. It requires a conscious effort to recognize privilege.

We must be proactive to stop oppression. Sometimes the Eureka principle applies when recognizing a circumstance of racism. That's when we need to take direct action.

What can we do above privilege? – We need to learn to share privilege.

How do we deal with systemic privilege? – On an institutional level, allies must be present and deal with it internally as well as taking direct action. Be careful when addressing racism, don't be patronizing. Understand why we're allies and whom we are fighting for.

As White people, our voice can be heard and will have an institutional effect. We need to learn to strike a balance, our voice versus a person of color's voice. We need to understand that there are shades of gray and that institutions will try to divide us by acceding to one minority and not helping another. We must understand it's not us versus them. This is why queer people of color sometimes feel they have to choose one community over another.

Someone observed that racism seemed more prevalent in the queer community than the community at large. It could be related to the us versus them principle.

What Actions Can Allies Take to Combat Racism, Classism, Sexism?

1. On some campuses, White folks are in the minority.
2. At OP, the people in power are predominantly white men.
3. QPOC don't tend to go to LGBTQ centers. It may be because they feel they have to leave their class and/or race identities at the door.
4. On some campuses, where QPOC are more active at LGBTQ centers, White queers complain about programs not being "inclusive" enough.
5. There needs to be a place to work out the isms and create a more wider and inclusive community; sort of an enriched conversation room.
6. Continue to recognize and fight privilege.
7. Take responsibility for your own isms and do something about them.

8. Allies don't need to prove they are allies. Just be one and you will get the recognition. If you need to ask for it, check yourself.
9. Allies need to create safe spaces for QPOC in their lives and activities.
10. Allies need to develop direct actions when encountering racism or intervening a racist comment/action. Use it as either a learning opportunity for the people involved and make sure it is understood that you don't tolerate racism.
11. An instance of institutional racism occurred at UCD. The police sent a survey around about racial profiling. POC didn't feel it was safe to tell the truth because there was no anonymity permitted in the survey. The results were not accurate. When an informal survey of a collection of anonymous anecdotes was conducted, the results were different from the formal survey. The police would not accept the informal survey because they wanted names and dates.
12. At UCI, there is a concerted effort to stop racial profiling by the police. Contact the Orange County Human Rights Commission. They hold a hate crimes meeting.
13. Be a real resource when part of the struggle against institutional racism.
14. Since people are at different levels of consciousness, we need to create a safe space for students to work out their mis-education.
15. Find commonalities of experience when you're participating in an activity and you're the minority. We need to learn to invite ourselves to these experiences, especially if we don't know anyone personally involved.

What can QPOC do for Allies?

1. Allies asked QPOC to help by being patient with us. We are on a journey and working very hard to struggle against personal and institutional racism.
2. A lot of people find it hard to attend a group meeting alone, regardless of privilege. So if there is an opportunity for an ally to attend an event or group meeting involving an important issue around racism or in general an important issue; drag them along with you. Queer people bring straight allies to meetings a lot.
3. There are not too many spaces where White people are pointed out where and when they are being racist. Take the opportunity to do this in a growth situation (if you feel safe enough to do it.)