

# diversityWORKS!



## Blind to Color?

Each year we spend time as a university examining diversity and inclusive practices not only on campus but also on a local, national and global scale. This fall is

no different. I am excited that, together, we will address a set of issues that many think we have resolved around racial oppression.

It is not uncommon to hear people say they believe they are “color blind,” meaning they do not notice ethnic or racial identity. However, the reality is when we say this, what we mean is we see the world from a position that does not include people different from the perceived norm.

For this reason, the conference planning committee has worked to develop sessions with a variety of panelists and presenters who will share current research, ideas and information that will challenge, stretch and in many cases make us uncomfortable by moving us outside our comfort zones.

I encourage you to spend a bit of time in that uncomfortable space, for that space requires us to consider our assumptions, where our values come from, how we articulate power and who holds it versus who does not. Additionally, that space accords us a moment to consider the weight of words, what they mean, where they come from and how they can hurt or help us in building an inclusive community. So please, join us as we seek positive intent while learning from and with each other at this year’s annual diversity conference.

Adrienne Andrews  
Chief Diversity Officer

## Equality is the Goal, But Not the Reality

Injustice prevails when society allows a group of citizens to lag behind and then benefits from their exploitation.

The 17th annual Diversity Conference returns to issues of race with the theme “So You Think You’re Blind to Color? Questioning Interpersonal, Institutional and Structural Systems of Racial Oppression.”

Barry Gomberg, a longtime conference organizer, said the theme was chosen because racial injustice is still prevalent, corrosive and insidious.

“This year’s conference will be particularly important because it will focus on the most intransigent aspect of inequality and injustice in our society — one that makes us so uncomfortable to talk about, or even think about, that we try desperately to believe we’ve solved that problem and don’t need to work on it anymore,” said Gomberg, WSU’s Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action officer. “Racial inequality still affects us powerfully and in ways that deny basic human rights.”

Some social justice indicators that Gomberg cited include poverty rates, incarceration rates, insensitive language, unfair housing practices and percentage of students of color attending college.

This diversity conference will delve into “colorblindness” — where individuals don’t “see” the color of another’s skin.

However, Gomberg said, those who do not see color may not value difference and appreciate cultural richness.

“If colorblindness follows only one culturally acceptable model, when we say

colorblindness, what we’re really talking about is everybody acting white,” Gomberg said. “That’s obviously unequal, unfair and unaccommodating.”

The conference begins the evening of Oct. 8 at Weber State University Davis. Good Company Theatre will present the play *Race* as a readers’ theater, with a panel discussion to follow. (Read more on page 4.)

Events continue Oct. 9 and include keynote speaker Michael Eric Dyson, an award-winning author and Georgetown University sociology professor. He will discuss “Social Capital and Privilege: The Pedagogy of Unlearning Prejudice and Redefining Practice and Inclusion.”

Dyson’s speech will be the culmination of the day’s nine breakout sessions. All events are free, but lunch requires registration.

Education professor Forrest Crawford has helped plan the annual conference since its inception. After 17 years, he said, there is still much to accomplish.

“I am mixed about how I’ve seen racial issues evolve as part of humanity,” Crawford said. “There are powerful indicators that we have reached a new level of consciousness and engagement over the years. Equal to that, there are forces compelling us to hang on to particular tribalistic type rhetoric and idealism. I do think conferences like this help to move the conversation along. The worst thing that can happen is that you stop talking, that you get so frustrated, you end the discourse.”



# 2015-16 DIVERSITY EVENTS

## OCTOBER

- Oct. 6 **Hispanic Heritage Activism and Action Workshop**  
noon | Shepherd Union 404
- Oct. 6 **Sessions on the Ledge**  
noon | Shepherd Union Atrium Ledge
- Oct. 6 **MLK Day of Service**  
The Power of Nonviolent Protests: Are We Following MLK's Dream?  
6 p.m. | WSU Davis
- Oct. 8-9 **Annual Diversity Conference**  
See back page
- Oct. 12 **Common Grounds (Taboo Talks)**  
Should We Rename Columbus Day?  
10:30 a.m. | Shepherd Union 232
- Oct. 12-16 **Pride Week**
- Oct. 13 **Sessions on the Ledge**  
noon | Shepherd Union Atrium Ledge
- Oct. 14 **Advances in LGBTQ Health Care Research**  
11:30 a.m. | Shepherd Union 232
- Oct. 15 **Hispanic Heritage: A Call to Action**  
10:30 a.m. | Shepherd Union Wildcat Theater
- Oct. 15 **Stop the Hate**  
Exploring the Truth About Undocumented Citizens  
6 p.m. | WSU Davis
- Oct. 16 **It's a Drag World: Drag and LGBT History Workshop and Show**  
6 p.m. | WSU Davis

- Oct. 19 **Wealth is Health: The Relationship Between Income and Health Care**  
6 p.m. | WSU Davis
- Oct. 20 **Sessions on the Ledge**  
noon | Shepherd Union Atrium Ledge
- Oct. 27 **Sessions on the Ledge**  
noon | Shepherd Union Atrium Ledge

## NOVEMBER

- Nov. 3 **Sessions on the Ledge**  
noon | Shepherd Union Atrium Ledge
- Nov. 4 **American Indian Land and Water: Confronting Many Challenges**  
12:30 p.m. | Elizabeth Hall 229
- Nov. 10 **Respecting Sacred Land: Conversations on Water, Waste and Sustainability**  
7 a.m., 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m. and noon (Lunch-RSVP) | Shepherd Union Ballrooms
- Nov. 10 **Sessions on the Ledge**  
noon | Shepherd Union Atrium Ledge
- Nov. 11 **Common Grounds (Taboo Talks)**  
A Modern Civil War: The Confederate Flag  
6 p.m. | WSU Davis
- Nov. 16 **Understanding the Homeless Population in Ogden**  
12:30 p.m. | Shepherd Union 232
- Nov. 17 **Sessions on the Ledge**  
noon | Shepherd Union Atrium Ledge

- Nov. 18 **MLK Day of Service**  
Behind Closed Doors: Violence Against Women  
10:30 a.m. | Shepherd Union 232
- Nov. 19 **Stop the Hate**  
The Reality of Obesity  
10 a.m. | Shepherd Union 232
- Nov. 19 **UEN Television, "The Activist"**  
10 a.m. and 6 p.m. | Shepherd Union Wildcat Theater
- Nov. 19 **What's the "T" in LGBT? Trans Day of Remembrance Vigil and Panel**  
1:30 p.m. | Shepherd Union 232
- Nov. 24 **Sessions on the Ledge**  
noon | Shepherd Union Atrium Ledge

## DECEMBER

- Dec. 1 **Sessions on the Ledge**  
noon | Shepherd Union Atrium Ledge

## JANUARY

- Jan. 18 **MLK Freedom Breakfast & March**  
9 a.m. | Marshall White Center
- Jan. 22 **Gospel Music Festival**  
7 p.m. | Val A. Browning Center

## FEBRUARY

- All Month **Black History Month**

## MARCH

- All Month **Women's History Month**

## APRIL/MAY

- All April **Gaypril**
- TBA **Holocaust Remembrance Week**

## Diversity & Education Resources

WSU	
Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity	801-626-6239 <a href="http://weber.edu/aaeo">weber.edu/aaeo</a>
Center for Diversity & Unity	801-626-7243 <a href="http://weber.edu/diversity">weber.edu/diversity</a>
Access & Outreach	801-626-7006 <a href="http://weber.edu/access">weber.edu/access</a>
Center for Multicultural Excellence	801-626-7330 <a href="http://weber.edu/multicultural">weber.edu/multicultural</a>
Chief Diversity Officer	801-626-6338 <a href="http://weber.edu/diversityoffice">weber.edu/diversityoffice</a>
LGBT Resource Center	801-626-7271 <a href="http://weber.edu/lgbtresourcecenter">weber.edu/lgbtresourcecenter</a>

COMMUNITY	
The American Indian Education Foundation (AIEF)	<a href="http://nrcprograms.org">nrcprograms.org</a>
The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles	<a href="http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu">civilrightsproject.ucla.edu</a>
The Idea Partnerships	<a href="http://ideapartnership.org">ideapartnership.org</a>
National Center for Cultural Competence	<a href="http://nccc.georgetown.edu">nccc.georgetown.edu</a>
Social Justice Training Institute	<a href="http://sji.org">sji.org</a>
Teaching Tolerance	<a href="http://tolerance.org">tolerance.org</a>

# Recognizing and Respecting Our Many Layers

In the modern American classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus Finch, a white attorney working tirelessly to prove the innocence of a black man unjustly accused of raping and beating a white woman in the 1930s South, says to his daughter, Scout ...

“If you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you’ll get along better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

It’s wise advice. Now, let’s look at it in terms of a theory called intersectionality, which is defined as “the study of intersections between forms or systems of oppression, domination or discrimination.”

Take Tom Robinson, Atticus’ client. He was a husband, a father, a laborer, a religious man, a person with a disability (he hadn’t been able to use his left hand for years, a physical trait that should have proven his inability to commit the crimes of which he was accused). All of these were aspects of Tom’s identity, but what most people saw was what was most noticeable — Tom was black and, therefore, guilty of the crime.

“Sometimes people look at you and notice what is most salient,” said WSU psychology instructor Maria Parrilla de Kokal. “Based on that they make assumptions and relate to you or do not relate to you based on what they see. What we should strive to do is recognize that there are many parts to our identity, that they are all important, and they all add to the whole person.”

Parrilla de Kokal recalls a women’s studies workshop where she heard a speaker say, “I don’t see color. I just see people.”

That statement resulted in a woman asking, “Tell me, what do you see when you look in the mirror,” to which the speaker replied, “I just see a woman. I just see myself.”

The woman in the audience then commented, “That would be the difference between us because when I look in the mirror, I see a black woman.”

You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view.

That is one of the key tenets of intersectionality, explained Adrienne Gillespie Andrews, WSU’s chief diversity officer — that we cannot be defined by only one category.

“I’m not just a black person,” Andrews said. “I’m also a gender, and the gender I identify with is female. I’m middle-class. Those are three aspects of my identity. They’re interlinked. I am not just one.

“We all come to the table with some commonality — we’re members of the

human race, but we all have different identities, experiences and histories that impact how we operate in the world.”

To find power in intersectionality, one must be a good listener and be open to dialogue, Parrilla de Kokal said.

“These conversations are difficult to have sometimes,” Parrilla de Kokal said. “We have to remember it’s a two-way street. If you’re on the receiving end of oppression, you must assume others aren’t always just being difficult when they’ve asked you a question that is painful for you to answer. If you are the person asking the question, you must be a good listener.”

For more, attend the Intersectionality 101 workshop Oct. 9 at 9:30 a.m. in Shepherd Union Room 316.

## TRUE/FALSE

**T/F** African-Americans comprise 14 percent of regular drug users but are 37 percent of those arrested for drug offenses.

**T/F** Following release from prison, wages grow 21 percent faster for white ex-convicts than for black former inmates.

**T/F** While one in every 106 white men is incarcerated, one in every 15 African-American men and one in every 36 Hispanic men are incarcerated.

**T/F** Of the 338,000 students in the U.S. who were arrested or referred to law enforcement by schools during the 2009–10 school year, more than 70 percent are African-American or Hispanic.

**T/F** African-Americans are 21 percent more likely to receive mandatory minimum sentences than white defendants and are 20 percent more likely to be sentenced to prison.

From the article *The Top 10 Most Startling Facts About People of Color and Criminal Justice in the US.* | [bit.ly/10colorblind](http://bit.ly/10colorblind)

All statements are true.

### Diversity Works!

is published by the Office of Marketing & Communications. We welcome story ideas and feedback from faculty, staff and readers.

Send comments to mailcode 4025, email [ahess@weber.edu](mailto:ahess@weber.edu) or call ext. 7948.

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17th Annual Diversity Conference

## So You Think You're Blind to Color?

Questioning Interpersonal, Institutional and Structural Systems of Racial Oppression

Oct. 8–9, 2015

### THURSDAY, OCT. 8

WSU Davis, Building 3 Ballrooms

**5:30 – 6 p.m.**

Opening reception

**6 p.m.**

Reader's theater performance of the David Mamet play "Race"  
By Good Company Theatre  
Followed by panel discussion

**7:50 p.m.**

Brief remarks, Michael Eric Dyson  
Sociology Professor, Georgetown University

### FRIDAY, OCT. 9

Shepherd Union Building

Concurrent Panel Sessions and Presentations

**8:30 – 9:20 a.m.**

SU 321 Forms of Social Oppression  
SU 312 The School to Prison Pipeline  
SU 316 The Cost of Racism and Exclusion:  
Political and Business Implications

**9:30 - 10:20 a.m.**

SU 321 Building Inclusivity in STEM:  
Welcoming Women and Minorities to Stay  
SU 312 Looking at Henrietta Lacks: Race,  
Medicine and the Use of Identity  
SU 316 Intersectionality 101

**10:30 – 11:20 a.m.**

SU 321 Understanding Racial  
Microaggressions and Mundane Extreme  
Environmental Stress for Students of Color  
SU 312 Is Biology Destiny? What the  
Genome Tells Us about Race  
SU 316 Weber County Libraries as "Third  
Place" Community Hubs: Restructuring  
Library Spaces and Philosophies

**11:30 – 12:20 p.m.**

Conference keynote speaker  
Michael Eric Dyson

**12:30 – 1:30 p.m.**

Roundtable discussion and luncheon

All events are free and open to the public.  
Luncheon requires registration. RSVP to Teresa  
Holt – [weber.edu/diversity](http://weber.edu/diversity) or 801-626-6957.

## 'Race' kicks off this year's Diversity Conference

As Alicia Washington purchased her ticket for playwright David Mamet's *Race* on Broadway, she had no idea how powerful the performance would be.

A WSU musical theater graduate, Washington was in New York City in the spring of 2010 to audition for the national tour of *Dreamgirls* when she caught Mamet's play.

Strong performances from actors Kerry Washington, David Alan Grier, James Spader and Richard Thomas brought outbursts from theatergoers. "The audience was so moved, they had to say something during the piece,"

Washington said. "You really look at each character and their stance and see their arc over the whole play and how it bubbles over into real life."

*Race* tackles racial and sexual politics as three attorneys, two black and one white, are asked to defend an older wealthy white man accused of sexually assaulting a young black woman.

Now, Washington is set to direct a readers' theater version of

*Race* for WSU's 17th annual Diversity Conference on Oct. 8.

"It was such a big honor to be asked to participate in this," said Washington, who said her experiences as a WSU student helped prepare her for her current role as artistic director at Good Company Theatre in Ogden. "I learned my craft inside and out at Weber."

Catherine Zublin, interim dean for WSU's Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities, recommended Washington and the theater company for the conference. While Zublin hasn't seen *Race* on stage yet, she said Mamet's plays are known for hitting a nerve with audiences.

"You can't be a passive audience member at a David Mamet play," Zublin said.

Last year, Washington brought her first production of *Race* to Good Company Theatre. "We had people stay after for close to an hour to talk to the actors about it," she said.

Good Company's original cast will return for the readers' theater version at WSU, including David Boice, Lonzo Liggins, Malinda Money and Allen Smith.

Following the performance, a panel discussion on *Race*'s themes will be held, featuring Washington and additional panelists.

### **Race, readers' theater**

Thursday, Oct. 8, WSU Davis

5:30 p.m. reception, 6 p.m. performance



[weber.edu/DiversityOffice/conference.html](http://weber.edu/DiversityOffice/conference.html)