

Monday, Oct. 16 | 11am – 12:15pm Sessions

Track #1 – Transforming Institutions with a Commitment to Diversity

- Title: Navigating Theological Diversity on Christian College Campuses
 - Speaker: Julie Elliott
 - Co-Presenter: D. Nathan Phinney
 - Session 45
 - Room: SGH A
 - Description: CCCU institutions have made strides in their commitment to ethnic and cultural diversity in many ways: by publishing diversity statements, hiring chief diversity officers, appointing diversity committees, establishing student scholarships, and more. But rarely does this public diversity work address an underlying and influential form of diversity present on CCCU campuses: theological diversity. Competing theological beliefs reveal themselves in conversations about human sexuality, origins, and racial justice, but rarely are they addressed head-on. Even more rarely are the limits of this diversity clearly established, leaving administrators unsure about hiring and evaluation decisions and leaving faculty and staff wondering what beliefs are truly welcome at their institution.

Recently cabinet leaders at Northwestern College (IA) led a six-part employee education series on human sexuality and institutional mission that attempted to name the diversity of conviction present in the Christian church and on campus, to clarify the limits of disagreement on this topic, and to identify whether sexuality constituted a core, privileged, or neutral belief at the college.

Northwestern's VPAA and VPSL will share information from this series as a way of prompting reflection from the audience on theological diversity on their own campuses. They will provide categories and questions that will enable attendees to lead sensitive conversations on their campuses about freedom and boundaries when it comes to key Christian beliefs.

- Title: Creating the Environment for Constructive Conversations about Diversity
 - Speaker: Arnita Willis Taylor
 - Co-Presenter: Wayne Jacobsen, Robert L. Prater
 - Session 20
 - Room: Soderquist 241/242
 - Description: In a nation polarized over our differences, how can Christian institutions implement meaningful policies centered around diversity and inclusion? The rhetoric surrounding cancel culture, critical race theory, and Christian nationalism make this effort seem daunting. That's why cultivating an environment of mutual respect and appreciation for other people's stories can be a critical component in the formulation and implementation of policies regarding diversity, inclusion, and racial reconciliation.

Let the co-authors of *A Language of Healing for a Polarized Nation*, Wayne Jacobsen, Arnita Taylor, and Bob Prater, show you how to create the kind of conversations that can mitigate the outside voices of conflict and provide opportunities for conversations that can change the climate in your institution. This work includes an internal look at our

own biases, our interpersonal connections that can expand our cultural intelligence, and keys to interacting with people to build consensus across our deepest differences.

Learning to speak a language that heals our divides rather than exploits them for political gain can help your institution flip the conversation and open doors to build a more peaceful society one conversation at a time.

- Title: Faithful Dialogue: Embracing Political Diversity within Christian Communities
 - Speaker: Olga Dietlin
 - Session 46
 - Room: SGH A
 - Description: This session will explore the urgent need for meaningful dialogue and understanding amidst political divisions in the United States. The nation's increasing affective polarization has made it challenging for individuals to engage in constructive conversations, hindered by echo chambers amplified by social media. This polarization has also permeated college campuses, with evidence of heightened political polarization among incoming college students.

This session will present two parts in response to this pressing issue. First, it will report the findings from an empirical investigation into the interplay of faith and politics among evangelical college students, shedding light on their religious beliefs, political views, and the impact of political divisions. These findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of the political identity development of Christian college students, challenging simplistic narratives. Secondly, this session will seek to offer a theologically informed approach to political engagement for Christian college students. By integrating theological reflection, the inquiry explores how the Christian faith can guide students in approaching political diversity faithfully and constructively in the public sphere.

The research and theological reflection presented in this inquiry aim to support the work of higher education and student development professionals in fostering respectful dialogue across political differences within Christian communities. By creating learning environments that are safe, brave, and resilient, professionals can equip students to navigate political diversity with grace and understanding. Christian individuals and institutions can play a vital role in focusing on the common good and bridging the political divides by engaging in these crucial conversations.

- Title: Institutional Assumptions of Family Privilege and the Impact on Students with a History of Foster Care Attending Christian Universities
 - Speaker: Kizzy Lopez
 - Co-presenter: Sara I. Gamez, Ed.D
 - Session 43
 - Room: Walker 204
 - Description: This presentation will provide an overview of a recent study on the lived experiences of students with foster care histories who are attending Christian colleges and universities and the institutional assumptions of family privilege that can create barriers for students. There are nearly 1,000 religious based institutions (Encyclopedia

of Education, 2019), and 150 campuses are part of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU) in the United States and Canada (Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, n.d.). However, little to no attention has been given to the experiences of students with foster care histories attending Christian universities. In-depth interviews were conducted with seven participants attending three Christian universities in two states. Four key themes emerged from the study. The presentation will provide recommendations and implications for Christian higher education professionals. Seita (2001) defines family privilege as “an invisible package of assets and pathways that provide us with a sense of belonging, safety, and unconditional love and spiritual values” (p. 131). During the interviews, we learned about the institutional assumptions of family privilege built into Christian universities and the barriers and challenges they can cause for students from foster care. The Bible calls Christians to care for the orphan. In our work, we use the definition that “a child may be considered an orphan because of the death or disappearance of, abandonment or desertion by, or separation or loss from, both parents” (Legal definitions, n.d.).

- Title: Jude 3 Project: What African American Students Need to Know About the Gospel Today
 - Speaker: Lisa Fields
 - Session: 80
 - Room: Soderquist 241/242
 - Description: The primary mission of the Jude 3 Project is to help the Christian community know what they believe and why they believe it. Distinctive in its strong emphasis in equipping those of African descent in the United States and abroad. The vision of the Ministry encompasses apologetics that address current issues and the intellectual struggles of Christians of African descent in the United States and abroad. We are committed to equipping the local Church that the mandate of Jude 1:3 might be fulfilled – contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people. Through the Jude 3 Project, the speaker has hosted 4 Courageous Conversations conferences featuring prominent Black scholars from different theological perspectives, developed two apologetic curricula for churches and laypeople, curated a YouTube series called “Why I Don’t Go” addressing the pain points millennials have with the Church, led a historically black college and university tour answering the question “Is Christianity a White Man’s Religion?,” and curated a popular podcast covering everything from mental health to the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Track #2 – Curricular/Co-Curricular Initiatives

- Title: Imagining Our Neighbors as Ourselves: Classroom Strategies for Difficult Conversations on “Hot Button” Issues
 - Speaker: Mary McCampbell
 - Session 64
 - Room: SGH C
 - Description: In her reflection on the parable of the Good Samaritan, philosopher Simone Weil writes that “Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.” In our present deeply divided political and racial climate, the classroom is a key place to practice

attentiveness that leads to empathy and the ability to honor and value the imago Dei in one another. This session will discuss several ways of creating a safe space for discussion of diversity issues—including difficult current “hot button” news items—in large, general education core classes. One key text that can serve as an entryway to working past socialization that leads to what MLK called a “spiritual myopia” is Frederick Douglass’s “Appendix” to *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. Douglass’s text makes a vital distinction between biblical and cultural Christianity. In doing so, he has also created a primer for much-needed discernment for Christians when talking about difficult issues related to race, justice, and diversity. This approach to Douglass’s text will be discussed as a model that can be related to many other texts (such as Baldwin, Shakespeare, and MLK). This workshop will draw from the presenter’s recent book, *Imagining Our Neighbors as Ourselves: How Art Shapes Empathy* (Fortress Press, 2022), while discussing pedagogical and curricular strategies.

- Title: Conversations on Race: A Transformative Course Co-Taught by Greg Dyson and Nate Chu
 - Speaker: Nate Chu
 - Co-presenter: Rev. Greg Dyson
 - Session 30
 - Room: SGH C
 - Description: This course, co-taught by Greg Dyson, VP of Intercultural Leadership and Church Relations, and Nate Chu, director of International Student Programs, aims to facilitate meaningful dialogue and understanding of race dynamics while empowering students to engage in difficult conversations. The presentation will outline the course structure, pedagogical approaches, and student outcomes, inspiring educators and administrators to develop similar transformative courses.

This session will delve into the development and implementation of the "Conversations on Race" course, which has garnered recognition and positive feedback on campus. The presenters will emphasize the significance of addressing race-related conversations in higher education and highlight the course's role in cultivating culturally competent graduates. Greg Dyson and Nate Chu will discuss their co-teaching approach, incorporating diverse perspectives, narratives, and expertise in intercultural leadership and international student experiences.

Attendees will gain insights into the course structure, which integrates practical theories and experiential learning methods. They will learn about the impact of the course on students, including enhanced self-awareness, intercultural competence, and a commitment to biblical justice. Practical strategies for developing similar courses will be shared, along with collaborative teaching models and suggestions for building partnerships with campus resources.

Through storytelling, interactive exercises, and multimedia elements, the presenters will engage participants in discussions, reflection, and knowledge exchange. Attendees will leave the session inspired and equipped to foster courageous conversations, empathy, and advocacy for racial conversations within their own educational institutions.

Track #3: Voices of Our Friends

- Title: Towards Inclusive Communities: Leveraging Bridge-Building for Transformation in Christian Higher Education
 - Speaker: Kourtney Bradshaw-Clay
 - Session 61
 - Room: Walker 233
 - Description: Our current era is marked by deep social, cultural, and political divides; thus, fostering mutual understanding within diverse communities is critical. This holds especially true for Christian colleges and universities, where leaders strive to uphold diversity through the lens of Christ's message of love and acceptance for all. Christian leaders can strive to counter divisions through bridge-building. At the Constructive Dialogue Institute, bridge-building highlights shared humanity, helps people find common ground, creates spaces for people to listen to those with differing views, and encourages people to reflect on the roots of their own worldviews.

- Title: Using Positionality with Purpose: How the Doctrine of Vocation Transforms the Power of Your Platform for Allyship
 - Speaker: Eugene Kim
 - Co-presenter: Jill Swisher
 - Session 48
 - Room: Walker 233
 - Description: The Protestant doctrine of vocation “transforms asymmetric relations” by grounding the authority of the more powerful party upon God's calling and gifts and viewing any imbalance of power as an impetus for symmetry and mutuality. Through the lens of Schuurman's (1994) four prescriptions of vocation, the presenters offer concrete examples for using our callings—specifically our positions of power, privilege, and leadership—for serving our neighbors through allyship. The purpose of this presentation is to show that caring for our fellow human beings whose needs confront us in the specific roles we inhabit is a “divinely granted privilege” (Loy, 2021, p. 62) that is rooted in role-based action. This framing is empowering as it opens up space for all faculty and staff to do their part regardless of their institutional context.

- Title: Embracing Diversity in Christian Higher Education: Serving International Students, MKs, and Third Culture Kids with Inclusivity and Support
 - Speaker: Mordecai Njoroge
 - Session 3
 - Room: Walker 204
 - Description: This session will address the importance of embracing diversity and fostering an inclusive environment in Christian higher education, particularly focusing on serving international students, missionary kids (MKs), and third culture kids (TCKs). The

objective is to share key lessons and strategies that can enhance the educational experience for these unique student populations and promote a sense of belonging within the campus community.

Track #4: Resiliency & Leadership

- Title: Women of Faith in Leadership: Intentional Mentoring Frameworks
 - Speaker: Shelley Webb
 - Co-Presenter: Karen Dowling
 - Session 69
 - Room: Soderquist 110
 - Description: As leaders in a predominately white institution and with past experiences void of representation regarding women of color in leadership, our strategic objectives in various contexts include providing mentoring and sponsorship for others. We are self-described as resilient women who have not changed our aim of building representation and who can redefine what strategic and intentional building of inclusive representation looks like for our peers and students. As leaders and mentors to others, we have created frameworks for working with the following groups of people in our academic community including residential and online modalities: adjunct faculty members, full-time faculty and administrative faculty; non-traditional students; doctoral candidates, staff of color; and traditional campus students. The foundational element and rationale for building mentoring frameworks for ourselves and others includes Kingdom-focused diversity and the power of affinity and representation in the learning and lives of scholars of color, women, and all in the academic community.

Track #5: Emerging Leaders and Career Paths

- Title: A Critical Phenomenological Conversation with Female Asian American Leaders in Higher Education
 - Speaker: Dr. Jenny Elsey
 - Co-presenter: Lisa Ishihara, Shino Simmons
 - Session 37
 - Room: Soderquist 110
 - Description: According to the American Council on Education's last full report on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education, released in 2019, Asian/Asian American students make up 5.7% of the undergraduate student population and 6.3% of graduate students. While this is the second-fastest growing group of students, Asians only comprise roughly 2% of senior-level administrators. Yet, studies have shown that students persist at higher rates when they have opportunities to interact with administrators with whom they share a common identity (Fincher et al., 2010, Maramba, 2011).