

Monday, Oct. 16 | 3:30 – 4:45pm Sessions

Track #1 – Transforming Institutions with a Commitment to Diversity

- Title: Critical Race Theory and Christian Theology in Conversation
 - Speaker: Timothy Westbrook
 - Session 13
 - Room: Soderquist 110
 - Description: In light of the highly publicized criticism of Critical Race Theory, this presentation highlights the tenets of CRT as developed by the movement's founder Derrick Bell and compares these tenets with theological anthropology from the Christian tradition. The purpose of this presentation is to invite dialogue concerning social justice, diversity, and righteousness with a concern for honoring human dignity inherent with the biblical teachings of the imago Dei.

- Title: Affirmative Action - What the SCOTUS Ruling Got Right and Wrong: Building Christian Institutions' Capacity to Pursue Biblically Based Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - Speaker: Tamara Malone
 - Session 66
 - Room: SGH C
 - Description: University leaders within the U.S. must regularly navigate an increasingly polarizing political climate that impacts the constituents on our campuses. The most recent ruling by SCOTUS sent a lightning bolt to our campus communities and our nation. What can we learn from the recent ruling? As Christian universities, our response must be grounded in the Word of God and our deep convictions as believers; our mission and values are not dictated by external pressures or laws.

- Title: Interfaith Engagement: Case Studies of CCCU Campus Grant Opportunities
 - Speaker: John Osborne
 - Co-presenters: Lisa Ishihara and Jason Fikes
 - Session 14
 - Room: Soderquist 241/242
 - Description: CCCU institutions with a commitment to diversity and inclusion are learning how interfaith engagement can contribute to their mission. Through the Interfaith America and CCCU grant opportunities, faith-based institutions have been invited to consider and bring funded initiatives which cultivate partnerships, both internal and external, that catalyze action and transformation on our campuses.

Exploring the interaction of interfaith engagement and racial reconciliation from a Christian perspective builds students' understanding of religious literacy. It can stretch their capacity for inclusion and friendship in order to engage diverse others, workplaces, and faith communities in transformative ways.

In this session we will explore case studies of multiple campuses which range from interfaith expressions, panel conversations, racial and communal reconciliation work,

and student leadership development. Research has shown that bringing this work to our campuses has the potential to strengthen the faith journeys of our current students. We will also explore the work of the John Perkins Center and the Christian Community Development (CCD) principles of reconciliation, redistribution, and relocation which can be the foundation to engage students in racial and communal reconciliation.

- Title: Who Belongs Here? A Typology of Institutional Diversity
 - Speaker: Ruthie Wienk
 - Session 56
 - Room: Walker 233
 - Description: While many primarily white institutions (PWIs) pursue a goal of inclusion, equity, access, and belonging for racially and ethnically diverse people in their organizations, they differ in the level to which those goals are realized. This presentation will introduce a typology of institutional diversity that outlines and explains different institutional practices, policies, and outcomes along a continuum. The typological continuum begins with institutional procedures and discourses that construct racial and ethnic diversity as a problem. Institutions characterized this way erect barriers for BIPOC and send implicit and explicit messages communicating hostility towards diverse people groups in the organization. The typology moves through different stages towards a position where BIPOC people are indispensable and beneficial to the identity and operations of the organization. Institutions that are characterized in this way demonstrate complete structural integration of multiple racially and ethnically diverse people across every level of institutional hierarchy, resource distribution, and decision-making positions. While the typology being presented is descriptive and theoretical in nature, specific examples and practices will be used to illustrate and structure the different stages along the continuum. This model was developed with the goal of being operationalized as a tool to assess and describe where an institution currently fits along the continuum and provide reasonable suggestions to help the institution develop towards true racial reconciliation. While the model has not been conceptualized exclusively for Christian PWIs, it will include discussion of the unique structural and discursive challenges faced by Christian PWIs in the pursuit of racial justice.

- Title: Cultivating Inclusive Faith-Based Communities: Strategies for Building Belonging
 - Speaker: Dr. Kathyanne Goodridge Purnell
 - Co-Presenter: Dionne Felix
 - Session 57
 - Room: Walker 233
 - Description: This session will explore innovative approaches, including collective storytelling, World Cafe methodology, stakeholder engagement, and data analysis, as components of a comprehensive strategy to foster belonging within faith-based institutions.

The session will be led by Kathy G. Purnell, Special Advisor to the President for Diversity and Strategic Planning, and Dionne Felix, Associate Vice President for Academic

Administration, at Southern Adventist University. Southern Adventist University, ranked number two in diversity among 136 regional universities in the South by U.S. News and World Report, also holds the distinction of being the only Hispanic-Serving Institution in Tennessee.

This session will focus on real-world examples with interactive and innovative activities to facilitate engagement and knowledge-sharing among participants. Attendees will gain practical insights and actionable strategies to navigate the complexities of creating inclusive faith-based communities that celebrate diversity and promote a sense of belonging. Moreover, the session will demonstrate how a model can guide the diversity strategic planning process, highlighting its effectiveness in aligning initiatives with the institution's goals. This model will serve as a framework for attendees to develop strategic plans tailored to their unique faith-based contexts. Attendees will also gain valuable knowledge on utilizing these strategies within their faith-based institutions to drive positive change and offer a professional and enlightening experience that empowers attendees to cultivate inclusive faith-based communities.

Track #2 – Curricular/Co-Curricular Initiatives

- Title: Conversations About Culture and Race: Creating A Culture of Genuine Friendship Through Hard Discourse from a Biblical Perspective
 - Speaker: Nesha Evans
 - Session 44
 - Room: SGH A
 - Description: In an age of intolerance, bitterness, and distrust, We the People feel threatened by hard discourse. We must learn to love and fight for each other. Christians know that Jesus came to reconcile us to God and to each other by removing the root of our hostility (2 Corinthians 5:15-21, Ephesians 2:16). We experience reconciliation by talking and listening to each other, allowing the past's hidden beauty and painful truths to be exposed. Equitable mutual agreement enables us to walk forward together in unity.

Track #3: Voices of Our Friends

- Title: Engaging Admissions Allies in Diversity Efforts
 - Speaker: Molly Smith
 - Session 35
 - Room: SGH C
 - Description: Admissions staff often find themselves at the forefront of the diversity conversation. When asked to increase enrollment without the proper training to recruit diverse populations, some may not be aware of how they set expectations for the campus experience or communicate belonging to prospective students. Often feeling frustrated about being pushed into the diversity conversation without resources, the admissions team is a likely potential ally in diversity work.

- Title: “But You Don’t Look Indian...”
 - Speaker: Bobby Martin

- Session: 79
 - Room: SGH A
 - Description: This presentation will address the well-meaning but uneducated views that often arise in interactions with Native people. This ‘sincere insensitivity’ occurs for a multitude of reasons but is mostly rooted in a lack of knowledge of the history of Indigenous North American peoples and cultures, often coupled with preconceived notions born of Hollywood stereotypes. One of the goals of this presentation is to dispel the myths of a monolithic view of Indigenous peoples, and celebrate the varieties of cultures that comprise the Native population in the U.S.
- Title: From the Classroom to the World: Opening Pathways for Students of Color to Serve Internationally
 - Speaker: Rebecca Hernandez
 - Co-Speaker: Jenny Elsey
 - Session 74
 - Room: Soderquist 241/242
 - Description: In Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus commends those who cared for “the least of these, my brothers and sisters” as having provided for him. This passage underlies the work of many faith-based international relief organizations (INGOs). Organizations like Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), which is “a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches” whose mission is to share “God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice” (mcc.org/mission).
- Title: Creatively Engaging in Conversations About Race & Cross-Cultural Awareness
 - Speaker: Larissa Lam
 - Co-Presenter: Marcus Robinson
 - Session 12
 - Room: Soderquist 110
 - Description: This session will provide examples of initiatives and creative on-campus programming to foster better allyship and relationship-building between diverse groups. Presenters will also share about their experiences and collaborations with bringing together African Americans and Asian Americans, in particular. Part of the presentation will include video clips from the award-winning PBS World documentary *Far East Deep South* to illustrate the interconnected history between Asian Americans and African Americans in the Jim Crow South and the importance of lessons of the past to strengthen allyship today. Furthermore, understanding and recognizing the role Christianity has played in various communities will create a greater sense of belonging in the body of Christ for all communities and help further racial reconciliation.

Track #4: Resiliency & Leadership

- Title: Rated R (for Resiliency) or Resilient Leadership Is a Superpower

- Speaker: Cokiesha Bailey Robinson
 - Session 32
 - Room: Walker 204
 - Description: A superhero in our favorite movies has two choices: Submit to their fears and foes or rise above them and fight back for the greater good. DEI officers and all that are called to do good work with a DEI lens in their unique roles on campus are called to do the same. Learn how to tap into your superpower in leadership. Is your life reflecting the necessary R's to "fight back"? Resiliency has many parts and looks different for every leader. Come hear stories and strategies that promote and encourage personal, professional, mental, and holistic health as you are building the plane while you fly.
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- Title: Soul Care Is Self-Care!
 - Speaker: Michele Wells
 - Session 47
 - Room: Walker 204
 - Description: Self-care requires an intentional pursuit that engages necessary activities to assist the person to continue to function and thrive well in the work environment with and among others (Moore, E., Bledsoe, K., Perry, A., Robinson, M., 2011). In caring for the emotional, mental, and physical self, care for the soul is grounded in spiritual practices that help a person discern the activity of God in their life (Peacock, B. L., 2020). Diversity professionals and leaders benefit from having a rhythm of soul care as a means of self-care, reaffirming God as the center of their calling. This presentation will discuss the challenges of the work environment and considerations to be able to navigate spaces with greater clarity. Practices of spiritual discipline can be a foundational to preventing burnout and having positive supportive relationships in the workspace that enhance the productivity of all.

Track #5: Emerging Leaders and Career Paths

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