

## greetings from the SADC

We continue to be excited about the Understanding Diversity Series! Your feedback is important to us and we thank you for sharing your thoughts and ideas for future speakers and topics. Keep it coming! We will not have a speaker in December due to the Student Affairs Holiday Luncheon (please plan on joining us!) and Exempt Staff Retreat, but hope you'll plan on attending in January. January also brings a celebration of the life and work of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as the beginning of our 2011 legislative session. There will be important issues addressed and debated during this session—the Dream Act and Affirmative Action. We will provide updates and information in the upcoming newsletter. If you have any questions about what appears in the newsletter or about the Diversity Council in general, please contact Debra Daniels or Kari Ellingson, Co-Chairs of the SADC.

## mission statement

The Student Affairs Diversity Counsel (SADC) strives to cultivate an environment that embraces and promotes the broad scope of diversity within the division.

## it's hard to hate someone whose story you know: stories of growth and change

*This column features stories by Student Affairs professionals who are willing to share an experience (event, book, speaker, etc) which promoted growth, a change in perspective, an awareness of another, or when some knowledge that was previously missing slipped into place.*

### when did I first know I was white?

**Lindy K. Nielsen**, Assistant Director for First Year Experience & Student Conduct

When did I first know I was white? It is a simple question that, given a significant experience, should be easy to recall. But the reality was that I had not seriously thought about my own racial identity until I was charged with this question in a large group setting. I

was familiar with the fact that Whites are 45 percent more likely to get a job than people of color. Whites have an easier time receiving loans and mortgages. Whites are likely to live longer than people of color and that health care and educational opportunities are more abundant for white people. But when did I know I am white? I had never considered it, but admitting I had never thoughtfully considered my own race would mean I could not distance myself from the statistics above. Admitting I had not ever been in a place where I had to think about

being white would make me sound like the other white people in room. Surely I'm different. I get it. Hadn't I been in a setting where I was the minority? Come on. Didn't I have the classic tale of a friend who is a person of color who challenged me with that question early on in a dramatic way? I scrambled for an answer, but my mind was blank. The lens that I had always looked through began to change because of this single experience as I sat and listened to the answers from my peers and observed these responses from the room.



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## calendar

Dec. 1, 2010

### World AIDS Day

Events throughout the day. Sponsored by the LGBT Resource Center. Learn more at <http://www.events.utah.edu/webevent.cgi?cmd=listmonth&template&cal=cal135>

Dec. 2, 2010

2:00pm, ART Bldg, Rm 158  
CLCA 4975/ARTH 4510: Utopia and Dystopia (Open to the public). **Anti-Anti Utopias: Digital Zapatismo and the New Imagery.**

Richardo Dominguez, Associate Professor, Dept of Visual Arts, University of California, San Diego

Dec. 4, 2010

11:00am-3:00pm  
**Queer Sex Education Conf**  
CRCC R215 C. Roland Christensen Center, David Eccles School of Business.  
Contact Lilian Rodriguez at 801.539.8800 x23 with questions.

Oct. 21, 2010-Feb. 17, 2011

Art Exhibition  
**Trevor Southey: Reconciliation**  
Utah Museum of Fine Arts  
410 Campus Center Drive  
Learn more by visiting <http://umfa.utah.edu>

### “I’m White? Oh, I don’t see color.”

This approach is convenient for white culture because it allows individuals to be blind to inequalities. A white person who claims to be color blind is—at the very least—attempting to exclude themselves as being considered a culprit, a bad person, or even a racist. Some white people practice color blindness in order to avoid issues of race or escape expressing their personal views on race. Throughout our culture, Whiteness is portrayed as normal and implicit unless otherwise clarified, which assumes that non-white is not normal. Long lesson, short: I, as a white woman, need to admit to seeing color, even my own—especially my own.

### “I’m from a really small, predominately white community.”

Having been unexposed to topics of race and equity is not an excuse or free pass from difficult conversations. The Homestead Act of 1862 (which did not allow people of color to own land), the Social Security Act of 1935 (which excluded income after retirement for positions held mostly by people of color) and the Wagner Act in 1935 (which denied people of color entry into unions) all played a part in positioning my family, for generations, in a place of unearned power. Long lesson, short: Institutionalized racism gained momentum via several events

throughout history, all of which elevated white power and privilege everywhere—even my small hometown in Northern Wyoming.

### “That was then, this is now. Let’s focus on all the good things.”

There are common claims that affirmative action has evened things out or that the worst is over.

Jim Crow laws and outward profanities including hostility towards people of color may no longer be overtly socially acceptable, but we are far from an equitable society. Some white people may tend to point out progress instead of focusing on brutal inequities that still exist every single day. In fact, Tim Wise reports in his book “Speaking Treason

*The reality was that I had not seriously thought about my own racial identity until I was charged with this question... I found myself... uncomfortable that figuring out a response was so difficult.*

Fluently”, that a poll from 1963—when racism was rampant in the United States—nearly two-thirds of whites said they believed blacks were treated the same as whites in their communities. Almost the same number as say this now—forty five years later. Long Lesson, Short: Ultimately, I perpetuate racism when I refuse to own that I, as a white woman, unjustly benefit from living in a society established and run by people who look like me—regardless of the race of our current President.

### “...It’s not over until the white lady cries...”

It is not beneficial for Whites to hate themselves because of their own skin color. In fact; in a moment of shared dialogue it can be damaging for everyone involved if the attention

shifts to refocus on a person crying in the room. While it may be a nice gesture to show the sincere impact a story or experience of someone else is having on you, it is important not to expect that individual to stop their story to comfort your emotional reaction to it. Long Lesson, short: If I am moved to tears, ask myself why am I impacted by this story? If the content that is being shared is new to me, remember it is not new to the person sharing and it is inappropriate to expect someone else to be my personal guide through a topic.

I listened to these responses and had stalled long enough. It was time to for me to answer the question. When did I first know

I was white? The truth is I didn't notice when I purchased nude nylons which conveniently were the color of my skin, or when I saw my face on products at the store. It was not because everywhere I am there are people who look like me—on television, at work, and on the bus. This changing moment came out of massive stress to “say the right thing” and “respond the right way.” Because I struggled to find an appropriate answer, I found myself in a vulnerable place; uncomfortable that figuring out a response was so difficult for me. From this awareness has come growing pains, but it is a start to understanding and consequently effecting change.

Two resources that were particularly impactful for me were: *Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* by Peggy McIntosh.

## the NASPA undergraduate fellows program (NUFP)

“The mission of the NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program is to increase the number of historically disenfranchised and underrepresented professionals in student affairs and/or higher education, including but not limited to those of racial and ethnic-minority background; those having a disability; and those identifying as LGBTQ.” (NASPA Website, 2010)



In Fall 2009, the University of Utah began its participation in the NUFP program with four outstanding Fellows. Although in the past, we had hosted NUFP summer interns from University of Arkansas, Vanderbilt University and University of Vermont, we had not established our own program until last year. With the help of two graduating seniors, Richard Diaz and Pablo Martinez, we were able to select students interested

in Student Affairs as a career. As part of the application process, the Fellows select a mentor from among the University of Utah NASPA members and, with the help of this mentor, explore the field through various opportunities. This year, we have six Fellows: Jose Hernandez, Yamila Martinez, Jonathan Ng, Mikaela Mokofisi, Mariana Ramiro, and Alonso Reyna. Recently, five of these Fellows were able to attend

the NASPA 2010 Western Regional Conference. Martina, Jose and Alonso were awarded NASPA Region V Scholarships to help subsidize the cost!

If you know of a student who has an interest in Student Affairs and might benefit from participation as a NUFP, please have them contact Kari Ellingson (kellingson@sa.utah.edu) for more information. This is a wonderful way to help students from groups traditionally underrepresented in our field learn more about what many of us have found a rewarding career!

## no december “understanding diversity” seminar

Due to the Student Affairs Holiday Luncheon on Wednesday, December 15 at 12:00, the “Understanding Diversity” Seminar will not be held in December. Please join us when the Series continues on Wednesday, January 19 at 12:00 for Part 2 of Theresa Martinez’ “Threads of Social Justice in American Music”.

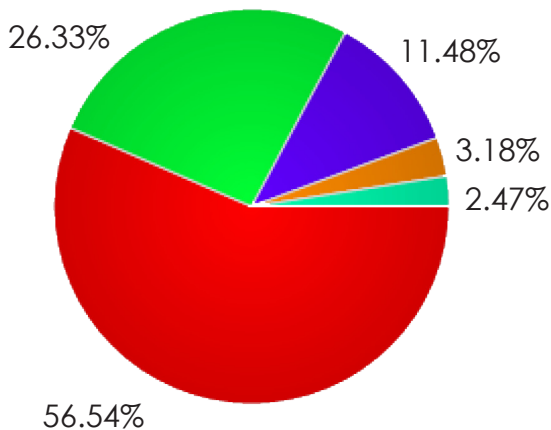
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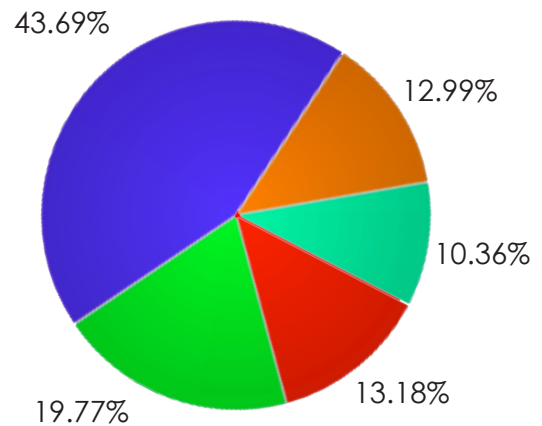
did you know...

**NOTE:** While 83% of students surveyed agreed that interacting with individuals of diverse backgrounds would help them after college, only 33% believed that greater efforts should be made to recruit and retain these students.

I believe that being able to interact with individuals of diverse backgrounds will help me after college.



This college/university should make a greater effort to recruit and retain students from diverse backgrounds.



Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neutral Somewhat disagree Strongly Disagree

University of Utah NASPA Consortium: Diversity/Multiculturalism/Inclusivity Benchmark (Spring, 2009). The n=571.

## student affairs diversity council

Debra Daniels, Co-chair	Women's Resource Center
Kari Ellingson, Co-chair	Student Affairs, Student Development
Maria Baldwin	Educational Opportunity Programs
Michael Bard	Registrar's Office
Arlyn Bradshaw	Dean of Students Office
Karen Cone-Uemura	Counseling Center
Holly M. Cox	Student Recruitment & High School Services
Branden Dalley	Union
Christoph Dressler	International Center
Gwen Fears	Orientation/Leadership Development
Adrienne Howell	Educational Opportunity Programs
Scott Jensen	Housing & Residential Education
Suzanne Jones	Registrar's Office

Carol MacNicholl	Center for Disability Services
Cathy Martinez	LGBT Center
Susan Miller	Campus Recreation
Nicole Miranda	Student Recruitment & High School Services
Sana Muller	ASUU
Casy Poe	Study Abroad
Cynthia Powell	Student Health Center
Erica Rojas	Financial Aid & Scholarships
Nick Rothacher	Bennion Center
Claudia Snow	Network Support
Nancy Trevino	Admissions Office
Jim White	Career Services