

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

Reflection: Perspective Towards Greater Change



By Portia Anderson,
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Education

(Poem)

The discourse on
language is powerful,
much needed, and
pivotal in this day and
age
Words can help,
motivate, build up, break
down, cause heartache,
and pain
Insane how some are
afforded more
opportunities than others

Some grow up wishing to be different than their fathers, mothers,
sisters and brothers

It's a vicious cycle, a part of life, though they never ask to go
through struggle and strife
Society just tells them to grow up, work hard, and gain some pride
The strides it takes for some to finally make; seems more like a
dream
Like fighting the currents while swimming upstream
The discourse on language is powerful, much needed, and pivotal
in this day and age

Having good intentions, not to mention a sense of care in the heart
Our actions; though we mean well can tear this world apart
A world of young adults whom we should inspire
Create opportunities so they have desire
Motivation to go out into the world and make a positive impact on
others
Yet understanding to embrace our differences seems further and
further

The discourse on language is powerful, much needed, and pivotal
in this day and age
We cannot begin to understand until we consider where we have
been

Power and privilege are afforded to some
While others have been automatically written off as angry,
helpless, and dumb
This "bootstrap" mentality devalues how far some people have
come
This paradigm on blurring lines that defines our students as
sameness
Ignores true differences, barriers, systems in place that maintain
injustice is shameless
Education is key to building understanding of you and me; bridging
the gap
That's a fact, but we cannot do this until we acknowledge our
words and the impact they have on others
The discourse on language is powerful, much needed, and pivotal
in this day and age
Reflect that the true meaning of diversity, multiculturalism, social
justice, inclusivity, and equity are not one in the same
The discourse on language is powerful, much needed, and pivotal
in this day and age

(Rationale)

Participating and attending the Student Affairs Diversity Council
seminars and attending campus events have impacted my work
with students in a multitude of ways. One specific example that I
have considered in my practice and experiences by defining my
personal working definition of diversity and social justice and how
that impacts different spaces on campus for students. I have
developed a different thought on student leadership and whom we
automatically label as leaders and those that get overlooked. I
think that this can happen easily for students of color at a
predominantly white campus. We need to have critical
conversations about the impact that the word "leader" has on all
students. There are populations of students that we can easily see
as great leaders on a college campus or those that have potential,
but in the end it comes down to whom we are willing to work with
to create avenues of opportunity to gain leadership skills.

Moreover, it is more important to consider the qualities of
leadership and capital (both social and cultural) that students bring
with them upon entering higher education. It is because of issues
such as these that I have become more aware of how our practices
and language can exclude some students from open access to
opportunities to build on their potential.

Reflection: Engaging in Difficult Conversations



By Nick Robbins, Assistant Director, Office of Admissions

I found the Student Affairs Diversity Seminars to be beneficial in many ways, both personally and professionally. The information I take from this experience will impact how I work with students and my own increased personal awareness. Through this, I hope to continue to foster my own ability and willingness to engage in sometimes difficult conversations in an effort to support inclusion and a safe environment on campus.

The majority of students I work with are at a significantly pivotal point in their lives. For many, they are living away from home for the first time. They are meeting new and different people. They are learning about and discussing topics that are new and sometimes foreign than anything they've learned before. They are curious to learn about the people and the world around them but for many, don't understand how to approach these issues. The discussions that follow many of the SADC seminars remind me that even as adults and professionals, there is still an air of trepidation when discussing issues of diversity. This helps guide me as I recognize that these conversations can be even harder for students developing their identities and place among those around them. The reminder of the conversations I've been involved in help support me as I guide students in difficult conversations. In order to promote a culture of openness, I reached out to a few members of SADC to guide my students in Module 1 of the SADC workshops. Students were excited to talk about themselves as well as discuss the similarities

and differences they had with one another. It was a great way to begin the year and let students know that our office encourages and supports diversity and inclusion and the sometimes difficult conversations surrounding those topics. It also helped our students to understand that the guests they work with in our office will assuredly come from different backgrounds, experiences, cultures and ideas and to be cognizant of this potential, even if unknown.

Through my own experiences and formal education, I have done quite a bit of research on white privilege. For many

years I held guilt for what I viewed as the inherent privilege I had. I have come to a place in my life where I no longer feel guilt but understand that the privilege I possess gave me opportunities to work hard in different areas of my personal, professional and academic careers. I also understand that this privilege puts me in a place of responsibility to help those around me gain those opportunities to showcase their own hard work and abilities. The SADC seminars reaffirmed this knowledge and reminded me that we all come from different starting places and arrive at different paces and points on our journey. The seminars and workshops gave me an opportunity to openly discuss, question and learn more about this from colleagues from all different areas of this spectrum.

It is through my professional and personal growth and continued journey that I hope to create a campus that supports diversity and inclusion. I recognize that I am one person but the impact I can have in my office, with my students and those I interact with will hopefully infiltrate the campus community and the communities they are part of. My future plans to support this are to have my students participate in all three SADC Modules and encourage them to attend the seminars throughout the next year. I have also created a Student Diversity Board within the University Ambassador program to continue to encourage conversations and learning on areas of inclusion among students, by students, for students.

Reflection: Diversity Enriches the Educational Experience



By Ann House, Coordinator,
Personal Money Management Center

I started to appreciate diversity at a young age. My parents were very inclusive and broad-minded. I was born and raised in a large urban eastern city which by its very nature was diverse. My parents had an assorted bunch of friends of many religions, sexual preferences, political leanings, etc. However, while appreciation is a start, I've got to say that experiencing and learning about people and cultures different from mine is an on-going and life-long process.

For example, I now enjoy learning about people and their lives on a deeper level than just valuing their uniqueness. What I am finding is that we all are more alike on a basic level than we are different from each other. Everyone wants and needs love, acceptance, validation and support. We all just go about it in our own manner. Life would be truly dreary if we were all carbon copies. As our campus and our

cities grow increasingly diverse, there has never been a better opportunity for us to learn to live respectfully together and benefit from one another.

In last November's SADC newsletter I wrote about my experience here at the Personal Money Management Center with students and staff. Each comes into counseling with their perspective, values, traditions and behaviors about money. My goal at the Center is to be sensitive to these cultural differences while teaching how to be money-wise. I try to come to a "cultural compromise" where the student is respected while I educate about being financially savvy and financially successful, while noting that being financially successful means different things to different people! While I enjoy assisting students with taking the right direction, I also can learn from them on a deeper level about others' beliefs, values, and financial habits.

I welcome the opportunities that we have working on campus and being able to participate in so many seminars, forums, and workshops. Taking advantage of these resources is continuing my education much in the same way as earning my degrees. Diversity enriches the educational experience. I appreciate how the diversity council offers this particular path with learning modules, events, and the certificate program.

I do have to admit that I was taking this for granted, as I expect to always be learning, until my recent hire refused to attend not only the diversity events but other workshops. Again, we are all diverse, and I need to appreciate where we all are in our learning process. I learn from those whose experiences, beliefs, and perspectives are different from my own.

Reflection: Navigating The Demographic Identity Boxes

By Maggie Roque, Residential Education Coordinator, Housing and Residential Education

In social justice work, it is easy to see ourselves as more than the demographic-identifying boxes that we check off when we apply to a job, to a program, to a school. In life, it is even easier to see ourselves this way. We know ourselves well, I know myself better than anyone else knows me—I know how I identify, I know what boxes I should fit in, but likewise, I also know what boxes I'm assumed to be in based off of societal expectations or how I'm perceived. An example of this can easily be seen with my race—I am mixed race, Asian and White. And I am proud of my racial heritage, but I also know that for a

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long time, there wasn't a box for me to fully explain this—and still today I'm placed in boxes by my peers, by colleagues, by strangers who don't fully understand my racial identity and assume my identity for me. I could, and have, spoken at length about the impact that this can have for multiracial individuals—oftentimes in order to fit into societal constructs and to feel a sense of mattering, it means eschewing part of our racial identity, which gives the appearance of wholeness to outsiders, but leaves only a half-checked-box feeling for us. A sense of sort-of, but not quite fitting in. A battle between belongingness and ownership. It's not easy to navigate.

Being in the box is just as okay as being outside of it—so long as I'm the one choosing to be here.

But what I am often reminded of in social justice trainings, dialogues, and application is that this feeling is not unique to multiracial individuals. We can all turn to times of feeling marginalized and we all share experiences of having to give up a sense of internal wholeness in order to feel like a part of the community. And for me, it comes back to boxes. As much as we seek to see a person as the individual, we also have been taught, both passively and actively, to categorize a person on basic traits. The human brain is conditioned to categorize. And it's not always a bad thing—it's how we make sense of the world, how we use logic, how we synthesize material. But it has also dictated how we treat people based on boxes, as well as how we treat people who

don't fit into the boxes that we've determined are "correct" or "real" or "normal." And it's this misuse of categorization that creates marginalization.

It's easy to say that we should ignore the box and see the person for who they truly are. But being multiracial, which is a box for me, is a true part of who I am. But I think the true test to social justice, and what I've learned and continued to be reminded of in our training modules, seminars, and

programs, is to find the balance between acknowledging the boxes, but allowing people to place themselves in or between or nowhere near them without fear of social, emotional, or physical repercussions. It's not easy to do—we've been taught for a long time to ostracize or judge or hurt people who don't fit into boxes—or even who don't fit into the "right" or privileged boxes. But valuing

an individual isn't ignoring their identities—box or no box—it's about celebrating these identities in a way that is real and genuine to yourself, as well as to the individual. This can be tough—it's easy to live in a box, but it's also easy to attempt to ignore the box completely. It's acknowledging that the box exists and navigating where an individual sees themselves in relation to the box that is difficult, because it requires vulnerability, trust, and the reality that you will likely make mistakes. But throughout these trainings and program, I've been reminded time and time again that being vulnerable and making mistakes is where I've learned the most—and where others have learned the most about me.

Reflection: Every Student has Their Unique Own Story

By Kelly Dries, Program Manager,
Student Programs and Development,

There are an estimated 25,000 refugees who have been resettled in Utah. Let me say it again: 25,000. This is a statistic I learned about at a Diversity Council Seminar I attended last year, and it was a student population I never personally learned much about in the past. If I am being 100% honest, it is a student population I did not think much about until that day. Little did I know, it was the initial domino that would start a chain effect in my life.

A few months later, this was a topic that would surface again when a refugee student walked in to see me during my walk-in counseling hours. This student had some questions about his resume and job search, which I helped him with. He continued asking me questions, and as I sat and listened to his experiences, I learned that he is a refugee student who recently graduated



from the University of Utah. He shared his experiences with me, and reminded me that every student we encounter has their own unique story.

As I listened to him speak, I felt compelled to do more to help students like him, who may not have the resources that many students might. Upon leaving work that night, I could not get this student's experience out of my mind, and could not help feeling like there is more I need to do. In that moment, I was reminded of another seminar I

attended, where Dr. Roderic Land shared an article written by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and something that was written struck a chord within me. Dr. King writes, "It is

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alright to tell a man to lift himself by his own bootstraps, but it is a cruel jest to say to a bootless man that he ought to lift himself by his own bootstraps." (King, 1968, para. 25-26). Reading this article and participating in this discussion with Dr. Roderic Land allowed me the opportunity to reflect, and reminded me that every student who comes into my office, walks in with different needs, different access to resources, vast experiences, and a diverse outset on how they see the world. It caused me to reflect further on what I can do to help each student where they are. I became cognizant of the fact that equality and equity truly are not synonymous, and I was filled with a desire to do more to help our refugee students.

It was not long after these experiences that I became a volunteer with the International Rescue Commission, and not long after that until I began helping with a presentation program for the New American Academic Network with a colleague from the International Center, where twice a month we present on topics to help this student population. This is not something I am required to participate in. However, in working at the University of Utah and participating in the Diversity Council Certificate Program, I now know that we have a large refugee student population, and that more can be done to help this growing population of students be as successful as possible at the U.

The Diversity Council Certificate Program has not only helped me to recognize the unique stories we each bring to the table, but it has also made me think about how I am creating a safe and inclusive campus environment for all students in the work each day.

Upcoming Campus and Community Events

Fri., May 9

Free Film Screening, A screening of an investigative look at the life and mysterious death of Ruben Salazar, followed by a panel discussion. Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, 7-9pm

Thurs., May 15

Picturing the Past: Exploring Past Images of Japan with Professor Lennox Tierney, reception with light refreshments & exhibit showcase, 4:30-6pm, Level 1, Marriott Library

May 16-18

Living Traditions Festival, Washington Square, Salt Lake City [[more info](#)]

June 5-8

Utah Pride Festival, Washington Square, Salt Lake City [[more info](#)]

July 24

Native American Celebration in the Park Powwow, Liberty Park, Salt Lake City [[more info](#)]

Diversity Seminar



"An Introduction to Antidiscrimination Response Training"

Wednesday, May 21
12:00-1:30pm
Union Panorama East

For more Info, visit: sadc.utah.edu

Upcoming Diversity Modules

Module 1: May 7, 9am-12pm
Module 2: May 8, 9am-12pm
Module 3: May 9, 9am-12pm

For more information, visit:
<http://sadc.utah.edu/trainings.php>

For information about these and other events, please visit:
www.events.utah.edu.



For more information and recourses, please visit:

sadc.utah.edu

Debra Daniels, Co-chair Women's Resource Center
Kari Ellingson, Co-chair Student Development
Michael Bard, Registrar's Office
Karen Cone-Uemura, Counseling Center
Branden Dalley, Union Administration
Kris Fenn, Bennion Center
Marcie Healy, Conference & Guest Services
Scott Jensen, Housing & Residential Education
Trisha Jensen, Orientation & Leadership Development
Suzanne Jones, Registrar's Office
Chris Macias, TRIO

Carol MacNicholl, Center for Disability Services
Pablo Martinez, Office of Admissions
Kai Medina-Martinez, LGBT Center
Susan Miller, Campus Recreation
Sana Muller, ASUU
Rachana Patel, Office of Admissions
Cynthia Powell, Student Health Center
Valery Pozo, Career Services
Erica Rojas, Financial Aid & Scholarships
Belinda Otukolo Saltiban, Diversity & Inclusion
Adam Sibenaller, HRE, AREC