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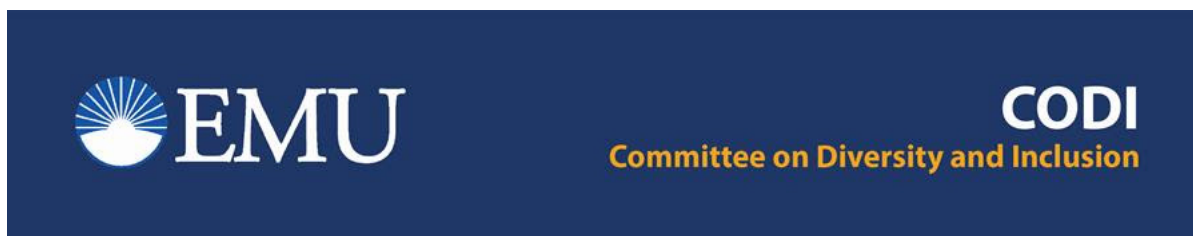
CODI Newsletter | February 2020

Committee on Diversity and Inclusion <codi@emu.edu>

Fri, Feb 21, 2020 at 9:21 AM

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February 2020



Upcoming Events

February 1

Black History Month
begins!

February 19

Spanish Language Film
Series (Suter 106,
6:30pm)

CIE Spring Film

Series (Seminary 123,
7pm)

February 20

BSA Town Hall "How to
Talk about Race"
(Common Grounds, 7pm)

February 23

BHM Church Service

Do The Right Thing

In Erick's column in the [December 2019 CODI Newsletter](#), he challenged all of us to "Do the Right Thing" – referring to Spike Lee's 1989 film by the same name. Erick noted that we all have to ask ourselves every day,

"What do I stand for, what is important to me, how will my decisions and actions impact others, am I doing this because of what others may think or do I really care?" Each of us has "an opportunity and responsibility to create an environment where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and safe. Change is uncomfortable, it challenges and threatens people, and comes at a cost financially, emotionally, and structurally. Is that cost worth it to you, and can you afford it?"

In this February 2020 CODI Newsletter, I would like to respond to Erick's charge with an opportunity for us at EMU to consider what it means for us to Do the Right

(Main Stage, 1:30pm)

February 24

Convocation and talk-back with Cornell Brooks
(Lehman Chapel, 10:10am)

February 25

Green Dot Student Bystander Training
(Library 121, 6pm)

February 26

CODI (UC 211/212, 8:30am)

SGA (UC 212, 8pm)

February 28

LSA Meeting (UC 211/212, 3:30pm)

March 1 - 8

SPRING BREAK!

Poetry Corner

"On Stripping Bark from Myself (for Jane, who said trees die from it)

Because women are expected to keep silent about their close escapes I will not keep silent and if I am destroyed (naked tree!) someone will please mark the spot where I fall and know I could not live silent in my own lies, hearing their 'how nice she is!' whose adoration of the retouched image I so despise.

Thing. Take a moment and reflect on the following questions:

- What do you stand for? What is important to you?
- How do your decisions and actions impact others?
- Do we really care about what happens to others and to the culture at EMU or are we primarily motivated by what others think about us?
- What can we do at EMU to create an environment where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and safe?

For the last question, I initially created a list of things that EMU should do – it was a big list and included things like: creating a VP position at EMU that strategically focuses on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in order to advocate and promote decisions on behalf of marginalized students, staff, and faculty; developing more just policies around campus events, housing, and financial aid; and providing more scholarships for students representing marginalized communities, including people who are indigenous to the land currently named Virginia.

But I decided instead to think more from a personal level – what are the things that you and I can do, every day, to promote a stronger sense of belonging for all students. I bet with a little thought, you can easily list 10 things that could contribute to such a school environment.

Here's my list:

1. Doing the right thing means that as a professor, I work to create safe and inclusive learning environments for all of my students, which might include screening textbooks and other resources for cultural bias; inviting students to share their gender pronouns and discussing why that's important; or setting aside time for developing, discussing, and practicing shared expectations for our class.
2. Doing the right thing means that as a professor, I show up for athletic events, and other student-led events (BSA, LSA, ISO, Safe Space, etc.), to

No. I am finished with
living

demonstrate care and attention to the non-academic
things that our students are involved in.

for what my mother
believes

3. Doing the right thing means encouraging EMU to
provide more dedicated student-centered spaces –
spaces that are familiar and comfortable for more
students, particularly underrepresented students.

for what my brother and
father defend

4. Doing the right thing means working with EMU
search committees and hiring practices to hire more
faculty and staff who represent marginalized
communities.

for what my lover
elevates

5. Doing the right thing means attending anti-bias
training, listening well to those impacted by
marginalization and discrimination, and reflecting
deeply on my own assumptions about others. It
means reading books written by authors who
represent marginalized communities – black authors,
queer authors, indigenous authors and following their
leadership in the work of anti-oppression.

for what my sister,
blushing, denies or
rushes to embrace.

I find my own small
person a standing self
against the world an
equality of wills I finally
understand.

Besides: My struggle
was always against an
inner darkness: I carry
within myself the only
known keys to my
death - to unlock life, or
close it shut forever. A
woman who loves
wood grains, the color
yellow and the sun, I
am happy to fight all
outside murderers as I
see I must."

6. Doing the right thing means that as a member of the
Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, I work to
review and challenge current policies and propose
policies that promote more justice and equity on
campus.

7. Doing the right thing means that as a white person, I
resist serving on committees, being a part of
advisory groups, or serving in any other type of
leadership role where there are no people of color
represented at the table and that I work to ensure
that marginalized groups are represented in the
rooms where decisions are being made.

- Alice Walker, Her Blue
Body Everything We
Know: Earthling Poems
1965-1990 Complete

8. Doing the right thing means that when I witness
incidents of bias, discrimination, harm, or bullying, I
don't sit comfortably by, but that I find my "Green
Dot" and do something about what I'm seeing. It
means that I push myself into uncomfortable places
by actively confronting injustice.

9. Doing the right thing means consistently showing up
for conversations – sometimes uncomfortable
conversations – about race, sexuality, gender, and



For a deeper dive into Sankofa, see:

[Christel N. Temple](#),
["The emergence of Sankofa practice in the United States: a modern history,"](#) *Journal of Black studies* 41:1 (2010), 127-150

[William S. Cook](#),
["Social justice applications and the African American liberation tradition,"](#) *Journal of Black studies* 50:7 (2019), 651-681

[Jennifer Slater](#),
["Sankofa—the need to turn back to move forward: addressing reconstruction challenges that face Africa and South Africa today,"](#) *Studia historiae ecclesiasticae* 45:1 (2019), 1-24.

More Resources

other discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion and that I don't let fear silence me from engaging.

Erick reminded us that change can be super uncomfortable and many times, it comes at a cost. What are some of the costs we might pay financially, emotionally, and structurally if we were to go all in on our commitment to diversity and inclusion? Is it worth it? Will we do the right thing? Because it is the right thing?

CODI is really interested in your "10 Things list." If you'd like to share your ideas with us, feel free to email us at codi@emu.edu.

Thanks!

Kathy Evans

On behalf of CODI

Raising Our Collective Consciousness

Sankofa is a word in the Twi language of Ghana that translates as "go back and get it," but this translation does not do justice to the concept. Sankofa includes the hope that whatever may have been taken from us, or lost, or forgotten, is not irretrievable. By practicing Sankofa, we reclaim the past in service of the future, as symbolized by the bird whose feet face forward while its head is turned back and in its beak or on its back is an egg (symbolizing the future).

Sankofa expresses the conviction that moving forward without looking back is a way of willed forgetting that leaves us unmoored and unhealthy. No person is, without community. Bringing broken pieces of life and history (re-mem-bering) is inseparable from our healing as communities. What remembering looks like depends on one's community, and during Black History Month we remember the African diaspora created by enslavement and the past of today's vibrant African American communities.

[Kathy Evans](#) - co-chair, faculty -
education

[Stefano Colafrancesci](#), faculty - computer
science

[Deanna Durham](#), faculty - applied social
sciences

[Scott Eyre](#), staff - lead residence director,
housing and res life

[Emily Forrer](#), staff, operations coordinator
of student life (recorder)

[Christen Peters](#), staff, program associate,
CJP

[Celeste Thomas](#), staff - director
multicultural student services and senior
adviser to the president for diversity and
inclusion

[Tim Seidel](#), faculty - applied social
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[Marci Frederick](#), faculty - director of
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[Forward](#)

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