

LUC Town hall meeting 1 - minutes

Details

- 10 June 2020
- Microsoft Teams
- Moderated by Jasmin Nordien- conflict resolution expert and peacebuilding, issues of race, gender and faith.
- Attended by College Board, staff, student life counselors, and students
- Up to 200 attended

Three main goals for agenda:

- Deeper understanding of how racism affects the lives of our students and staff
- Transparency and clarity on what is being done at an administrative level
- Concrete action to move forward in the future

Jasmin:

They want to regain the trust as a sustained effort in order to move forward in efforts of anti-racism. Not on a fact finding mission, not here to judge, but to help our community.

Proposed structure of the meeting:

- Introduction
- Larger discussions of the issues
- Concrete action
- Ending and conclusion (summary)

Ground rules:

1. To listen at three levels: ears, heart, and mind.
2. Focus on issues and not to personalize issues
3. To be aware of the talk time
4. Keep it short and sweet
5. Respect other people
6. Prioritize voices of POC and black students

Remarks from Judi about what has taken place since the letter was released in February:

- Apology for lack of proper response towards racism within LUC and commitment to cultural and institutional change
- Staff meeting with POC staff
- Staff wide meeting with task groups in order to write down how to respond.
- Newsletter from Judi highlighting that there were things happening and these are things that are going to follow
- **First draft** was then written with all the information of the meetings.
- Racism is not an easy subject: everyone had different ways of needing to respond to the letter
- **Second draft** also did not have a unanimous response
- Too focused on staff unity, and focus on staff cohesion took away from the needs of the student community.

Current steps being taken by CB:

- Last year Judi received a diversity grant to develop better recruitment programs and also make it so that there is a more inclusive environment, this project is ongoing
- Building a program for first years that will also focus on anti-racism
- Decolonization of the curriculum group, what steps are to be taken in particular classes. More need for student involvement
- Arrangements being made for implicit bias and anti-racism training for staff.
- More transparent procedure of where to go when one experiences racism
- Transparent social media policies where jurisdiction starts and ends which is not clear to anyone for the moment.
- Need for sound legal backing and more active push central level.
- LUC will be updated through a newsletter each week on progress.

1) Issues raised prioritized by students:

Handling of and dealing with discriminatory posts and comments made on Facebook towards students of color

Ideas & concerns that were brought up by the students:

- No existing guidelines concerning Facebook which is a huge part of the reality of students' lives at LUC
- Concern about lack of political and ideological stance towards racism, reverse racism and microaggression.
- Concern about POC student who has been excluded based off social media
 - Can private social media be monitored by the university?
- What is the college board doing to acknowledge issues of racism that have already happened? More need for accountability and action
- Need for a commitment to actually taking anti-racist action
- How do we trust that the university will be better in the future?
- BIPOC students have to choose what classes based on who the professor is, their past racist actions and how they teach.
 - Apologies professors who have been racist and students have been mediated by the dean, but were largely unsuccessful
- Lack of sufficient care for black students because the counselors are white and there is a false promise of diversity
- Framework and implementation has been promised for a very long time. It has been 7 years and every year there is a promise of framework.
 - How are these promises different from the promises that have been made in the last seven years.
- Implementation of cultural change at LUC cannot only be done by BIPOC who are the minority, but needs to be supported by the institution

Suggestions and responses from staff and moderator:

- Acknowledgement of failure as a College Board
- No existing framework for social media and it needs to be created with legal team
- More time needed to look at the discourse of anti-racism and decide what LUC will commit to as an institution
- Framework needs to be developed with input from staff and students for social media
- Case of student who was denied mid-year re-enrollment did not only include social media, and cannot be discussed on a public platform
- Need for shared understanding of what racism is as well as words in the discourse, especially at the institutional level.
 - Proper context around actions is needed
- Politics of Diversity course will be taught by Jacqueline Hylkema, and students who would like to be involved with its restructuring can reach out to her.
- Beyond apologizing, the new policies and procedures need to focus strongly on students of color and how they can be given support
- New framework and policies will be created and put in place by September

Active support from the university towards helping BIPOC within LUC navigate life in the Hague

Ideas brought up by the students:

- Lack of communication when international students had visa issues
- Lack of response for support for finding housing in the Hague due to housing discrimination
- Not enough BIPOC in faculty and counselors
- Non-EU students can't be hired by the university
- Issue with being barred from data collection for capstone in certain regions

Suggestions and responses from staff and moderator:

- Issue about housing assistance did not reach the College Board and it will be investigated
- BIPOC are not being weeded out in the admissions process, they are not applying
 - Recruitment project and research currently underway
- Staff recruitment of people from different backgrounds is a very high priority and they will be questioned about racism issues during interviews.
- Training on racism needs to take place during staff orientation
- Leiden University gives LUC counselors but they have only recently started to hire them, themselves.
 - Open to hiring BIPOC counselors or having collaboration with services that provide counselors of concern.
 - Actively looking for BIPOC counselors
- SLO is available if students want to talk
- Current SLCs try their best to stay educated on bias and racism
- Existence of financial support and current work towards building the foundation for fundraising for scholarships.

- Events such as Pantomime and Dies are funded by the university but they are open to redirecting this money, in dialogue with the College Council and student community
- Kai Hebel will be convener of World Politics next year and is open to suggestions and criticisms on the courses in the major.
- Non-EU students can now be hired since the end of 2019 but with a lot of conditions.
 - Job vacancy texts will be amended accordingly
- Need to bring up issue on data collection in certain countries such as Kurdistan and Yemen with the central university

Jasmin's Summary:

- Social media policies: a central framework policy needs to be developed with input from students
- Issues of racism/reverse-racism: common understanding, common discourse to be able to share what is happening on campus. A commitment to develop policy and have that in place by

September

- Issue around consequences: clear consequences need to be outlined, education is one mechanism but also needs consequence policies
- Culture change, value change and daily practice: training for new students coming in and awareness raising and education for staff
- Issue of BIPOC representation in staff, faculty and psychologists: commitments been made to improve on this
- Support to students regarding issues about visas and housing
- Jobs to non-Europeans now available