

Sharing Lessons Learned: From Antiracist Programming to Antiracist Conferences

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In designing and implementing antiracist practices within the context of first-year writing programs and conferences regarding pedagogy in higher education, we we have learned the three lessons below and offer them to you as inspiration for your own work dismantling systemic injustice.

Intersectional collaboration.

Intersectional collaboration in the context of antiracist conferences means that in planning and hosting conferences, conference committees must prioritize participation from BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders.

One concrete way to achieve this is when conference organizers leverage whatever privilege they have to ensure that the labor of BIPOC and LGTBQ+ collaborators are compensated financially.

Collective accountability. To sustain intersectional collaboration, conference committees must be grounded in collective accountability: a shared responsibility for reflecting on how the committee is living up to its vision of antiracism, especially when that may mean calling out instances or patterns of racism occurring within the committee.

One concrete action is the public archiving of conference committee proceedings and notes to ensure transparency and accountability.

Radical care. This is the daily work of humanizing ourselves and each other in antiracist spaces. Humanizing ourselves and each other means that we regard one another as complex people working within hierarchical institutions who are navigating interrelated systems of domination. Radical care means that we actively make space to share these realities and to integrate them into the work of antiracism.

In other words, conference schedules must be creatively organized to allow as many people as possible to participate.