

**The Seventh Annual Graduate Education Symposium  
in Peace and Conflict Resolution:**

**Enhancing Diversity and Inclusion in  
Peace and Conflict Resolution**



Alliance for  
Peacebuilding



Middlebury Institute of  
International Studies at Monterey  
*Center for Conflict Studies*

**October 10th 2017**

**Center for Conflict Studies  
Middlebury Institute of International Studies  
1400 K Street, Washington, DC<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> This report was prepared by Ron Fisher based on notes from Molly Tepper and Necla Tschirgi. Please address any inquiries to [rfisher@american.edu](mailto:rfisher@american.edu)

## *Introduction and Summary*

The seventh annual Graduate Education Symposium in Peace and Conflict Resolution was held on Tuesday, October 10, 2017, in conjunction with the Annual Conference of the Alliance for Peacebuilding (October 11-13) in Washington, DC. This continuing event offers an annual opportunity to bring together faculty, staff and administrators of graduate programs in peace and conflict resolution to discuss the challenges and opportunities that programs face in responding to an evolving field and a rapidly changing world. The symposium has covered a variety of topics designed to assist participants in successfully educating the next generation of peacebuilding professionals and to increase the chances of their gaining suitable employment. The symposium has attracted a significant number of graduate programs in the field, particularly ones that focus more on ethnopolitical and international conflicts along with domestic issues. The symposia have been hosted by various peace and conflict resolution programs, primarily in the Washington DC area, and have received ongoing support from the United States Institute of Peace and the Alliance for Peacebuilding.

The symposium thus provides an ongoing forum for the educators of graduate programs to discuss how they are training the next generation of peacebuilders in terms of innovations in curriculum, skills building and program development as well as to foster collaborative learning and cooperation among programs. The symposium has usually been divided into two sessions: the first designed for Program Directors or designates, faculty and administrators to discuss program specific topics and issues; and the second to bring in participants including practitioners and students from the wider peacebuilding community to hear about challenges, issues and developments in the field from an educational and training perspective. The development and holding of the symposium has therefore been aligned and coordinated with the existence and functioning of the Education and Training Affinity Group of the Alliance for Peacebuilding: (<http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/our-work/affinity-groups/education-and-training/>).

The 2017 symposium was hosted by the Center for Conflict Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Affairs in Washington, DC, and focused on the topic of enhancing racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion in graduate programming and in the field in general. The morning session was by invitation and brought together approximately 15 program directors, faculty and administrators from approximately 10 graduate programs to focus on diversity issues. This number and representation was only about one half that of recent years, and appears to be attributable (based on feedback) to the date of the symposium falling mid week in a busy teaching semester compared to previous years when the event was held in May. Scheduling a working week day for the symposium prior to the AfP Annual Conference as opposed to the Saturday following, may have also made it more difficult for academics to attend. The afternoon session open to the wider public was attended by approximately 20 people, most of whom were present in the morning and only two of whom were students. Thus, the overall attendance was in strong contrast to previous years when approximately 50 to 60 participants came, many of whom were students. In 2018, the symposium will be held on the Saturday following the AfP Annual Conference in the hope that a larger number of academics and students will be able to attend.

Following a welcome and an introduction, a panel presentation brought together administrators directly engaged in diversity work from three different universities to share their experiences and

aspirations in enhancing diversity and inclusion. Breakout groups then allowed for more focused discussion of a number of challenges and issues in addressing the diversity issue on campuses and in conflict resolution programs. The public session in the afternoon began with a keynote address by Imani Michelle Scott who is a graduate of the doctoral program in conflict resolution at Nova Southeastern University and a faculty member in communications at the Savannah College of Art and Design. Her keynote address was entitled “*Walking on eggshells: “Why is she so hostile?”*” A roundtable discussion then engaged the participants in a fishbowl design where four speakers participated in the inner circle and provided comments in response to a facilitator’s questions. Following a Q & A session, three messages were identified to be taken to the wider community. A final wrap up session identified possible action items and future plans to work on the diversity and inclusions agenda. Overall, the symposium demonstrated a high degree of engagement and enthusiasm and affirmed the importance of having an ongoing forum to discuss graduate education in the context of an evolving field and a challenging global context.

### ***2017 Symposium Planning Committee***

Ron Fisher (Co-Chair), American University  
Pushpa Iyer (Co-Chair), Middlebury Institute  
Tom Matyok, University of North Carolina, Greensboro  
Agnieszka Paczynska, George Mason University  
Molly Tepper, George Mason University  
Necla Tschirgi, University of San Diego  
Adam Wolf, Alliance for Peacebuilding  
Craig Zelizer, Peace and Collaborative Development Network

## *Symposium Agenda*

### *Morning*

- 8:30 Registration and Gathering, Center for Conflict Studies, Middlebury Institute.
- 9:00 Welcome and Introduction: Pushpa Iyer, *Director of the Center for Conflict Studies, Middlebury Institute of International Studies*
- 9:15 Opening Panel: Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives at Area Universities
- Chair: Craig Zelizer, *Founder, Peace and Collaborative Development Network*  
Rosemary Kilkenny, *Vice-President for Institutional Diversity & Equity, Georgetown University*  
Julian Williams, *Vice-President of Compliance, Diversity and Ethics, George Mason University*  
Rebecca Coughlin, *Director of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives, School of International Service, American University*
- 10:15 Refreshment Break
- 10:30 Small Group Breakout Sessions with Group Reports and Discussion
- 12:30 Lunch Break

### *Afternoon*

- 1:30 Keynote Address: Imani Michelle Scott, *Savannah College of Art and Design*, “Walking on eggshells: Exploring the causes and consequences of PACS’ timidity in addressing social injustices related to race and power in the U.S.
- 2:45 Refreshment Break
- 3:00 Roundtable Discussion
- Facilitator: Necla Tschirgi, *Professor of Practice in Human Security and Peacebuilding, Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, University of San Diego*  
Adina Friedman, *Adjunct Faculty, School of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University*  
Sherrill Hayes, *Professor of Conflict Management, Kennesaw State University*  
Pushpa Iyer, *Director, Center for Conflict Studies, Middlebury Institute of International Studies*  
Mary Hope Schwoebel, *Assistant Professor, Department of Conflict Resolution Studies, Nova Southeastern University*
- 5:00 Action Plan and Wrap Up

### *Opening Panel on Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives*

The opening panel was chaired by Craig Zelizer and included presenters from DC area universities that have graduate programs in the peace and conflict resolution field. Rosemary Kilkenny from Georgetown University noted that the mandate of her office is to integrate diversity into all aspects of the University, including curriculum, recruitment and hiring, and especially in relation to contributing to the education and well-being to children in underserved communities in the District of Columbia. This latter commitment is realized through the work of the University's Center for Social Justice. She noted that inclusion needs to be achieved in conjunction with diversity to attain the goals of affirmative action wherein all feel included. Given that Georgetown is a Catholic and Jesuit University, there is a particular concern about recognizing students of all faiths and no faith. There is frequent engagement in interreligious dialogue with religious leaders of different faiths and from around the globe. Julian Williams of George Mason University noted that GMU's student body is the most diverse in Virginia, including approximately 50% students of color. At the same time, diversity among faculty and staff is low, and therefore provides the main focus for his work. Given that GMU is a young University, there is a good deal of experimentation, but not a lot of experience to draw on. His assessment is that the university administration is really serious about diversity and inclusion. Rebecca Coughlin recounted that diversity and inclusion initiatives began in the School of International Service when she was Program Coordinator for the International Peace and Conflict Resolution Program and Ron Fisher was the Director. With an initial focus on student recruitment and retention, a growing coalition in the school was able to create a dedicated staff position and a Dean's Council on diversity and inclusion. Her position allows for devoting approximately 50% of her time to diversity and inclusion initiatives, and also enables a programming focus in a campus wide manner. With training in conflict resolution, Rebecca sees relationship building at the core of diversity work, whether that is with individuals or institutions. Another important element involves creating spaces for authentic dialogues and conversations among different groupings in ways that serve the larger goals of the University.

Following the initial presentations, Craig indicated that he had three questions for the panelists to be followed by open discussion. The first question asked how the presenters make the case that diversity and inclusion are essential, not only in terms of the moral argument but also possibly an economic argument based on data that shows a more inclusive and diverse perspective leads to more satisfied students and better retention. Julian indicated that the GMU President made a practical case to the Board of Visitors that an incoming cohort of over 50% students of color will be asking whether the diversity on campus reflects what they thought they were purchasing with their tuition. This demand requires not only student diversity but increasing faculty diversity, which will be more satisfying to faculty as well as students. The President has focused on the university being access orientated so that GMU is accessible to students on various ends of the economic spectrum. Retention then becomes very important, and a welcoming faculty plays a very important role in this regard. Rebecca finds that because of strong support for diversity and inclusion in her school, she does not have to do a lot of convincing, but more providing of data and resources to advocate for more initiatives. SIS currently has about one third students of color in its graduate programs, and does better than most similar schools in attracting domestic students of color. The moral and economic argument is that more than ever, multiple perspectives at the table are important in order to make responsible decisions and to work effectively on the problems of our time. She also works to publicize and connect the initiatives

and supporting data within the school to the wider campus, partly through a good relationship with the Vice-President of Campus Life who is a huge advocate for diversity and inclusion. Rosemary noted that given Georgetown is a Catholic and Jesuit institution, it is founded on the principles of care of the whole person, social justice, men and women for others and community in diversity. Thus, she does not have to do a lot to convince members of the community about the importance of diversity and inclusion. She noted examples of members of the Board providing large sums to support diversity initiatives. She also noted that the faculty does not reflect the rich diversity of the students, and resources have been dedicated to educating faculty on how to manage controversial topics and how to teach students with different learning styles. Another challenge is in the area of traditional graduate programs where the representation of minority graduate students is not as high as at the undergraduate level. However, there are some successes, such as in the law school and medical school, where the representation of women students is at 51% and 52% respectively. The university has also established the Center of Racial Justice and a Department of African-American Studies, both of which are contributing to faculty diversity. In this effort, her office works with white faculty in support of diversity and inclusion to help build positive relationships and create a strong community where all can thrive and do their best work.

Craig's next intervention consisted of a series of questions, starting with how the panelists' universities have dealt with questions of slavery and their own racist history, noting for example, that it was recently revealed that Georgetown at one point in its history had to sell slaves whom the Jesuits owned in order to save the university financially. Another question asked how graduate programs are dealing with the high costs of their education, which is a barrier to increasing diversity and inclusion. Finally, he queried the panelists' main recommendations about where to start and where not to start in working to improve diversity and inclusion based on their experience.

Rebecca noted that American University has recently experienced a number of racist incidents, including Confederate posters on campus and harassment of a new student body president who was the first black woman to hold that office. Among other responses to these incidents, university personnel concerned with diversity and inclusion met with the Anti-Defamation League to discuss training that ADL could provide and recommendations they could make to the university. Realizing that the university needed to increase its internal resources for dealing with racist incidents, Rebecca developed a program in which graduate students are trained as dialogue facilitators to help others have difficult conversations around race and ethnicity and in response to racist incidents. In the fall of 2017, a training weekend was held for 26 facilitators from six graduate programs on campus, including IPCR, as well as university staff who were known to have some dialogue capacity. The incident with Confederate posters happened right after the training and so the program was able to provide facilitators for immediate requests that came in, including one on how faculty can respond to such events in the classroom. The program, called [\*AU Connects\*](#), also intends to provide facilitators for conversations not related to specific incidents, but to assist various segments of the campus community in discussing race relations in terms of everyday experiences.

Julian asserted that a large public university such as GMU has an important role to play to keep the costs of education to a minimum, while at the same time educating as many people as possible. GMU has a very diverse student body, including 4% that are Pell Grant recipients, and

at the same time an extremely low student loan default rate. He also noted that there was zero disparity between minority and majority student graduation rates, and with links to the region's community college, GMU is also able to maintain high access. The large number of nontraditional students on campus creates a great synergy among students and also pushes GMU to keep costs as low as possible. People working in conflict resolution can help push conversations forward among different groups on campus, who have stopped listening to each other and have dug into their point of view. Conflict resolution folks can think about how to be deployed more on campuses, and how to work with the various groups, including faculty and students, in order to push them toward a higher state of learning about the world as well as themselves.

Rosemary brought forward the challenge of access and affordability, noting that Georgetown wants to make sure that its quality education is available to anyone regardless of financial circumstances. Thus, admission is not tied to finances, and admitted students receive financial aid to meet full need primarily through the Georgetown Scholars Program. . The university also recognizes the importance of having the student population reflect the demographic changes taking place in the larger society. Although the University receives no federal funds through Congress for the education of medical students, the medical school has been able to attract high levels of women and minority students. In response to Craig's point about the history of slavery at Georgetown, Rosemary indicated that in 1838 the Jesuits had several plantations in the Maryland province, and since the university fell on hard times during that era, the proceeds from the sale of 272 enslaved people were used to finance the continuation of Georgetown College, which was in severe debt. This fact was not a secret, but was not talked about much on campus, and the vast majority of our community on campus did not know this history. Many decades ago, a former Jesuit residence was named for the President who approved the sale of the enslaved people. That building was recently renovated to be occupied by students and most of our community objected to the retention of the former President's name on that building. Dr. John DeGioia, President of the University, decided to establish a Working Group on Slavery, Memory and Reconciliation to not only address the name of the aforementioned newly renovated dormitory, but also to wrestle with how best to address the University's history of slaveholding. The University's archives had excellent records of the enslaved people who were sold and though collaborations with genealogists, many descendants were identified. It was also realized that there were several alumni and employees who were descendants of the enslaved people who were sold. Through the efforts of the Working Group, a process of dialogue was initiated, and the dormitory was renamed Isaac Hawkins Residence Hall in honor of a former enslaved person whose name was the first name on the bill of slaves. A descendant of this individual, a woman in her 60s, is now an undergraduate student at Georgetown. This shows Georgetown's commitment to doing the right thing by providing educational and employment opportunities to qualified descendants,

Craig thanked the panel members for their amazing insights and stories, and noted that it is an incredibly challenging time in the United States dealing with all these issues. He invited the audience to engage in a question-and-answer session with the panelists.

A question was asked as to how a pipeline can be created for people of color to move from being students to faculty and how support can be found to build faculty of color and the programs that support this? Julian responded that the pipeline might already exist within the university, and

gave an example of GMU recently piloting two full scholarships for PhD students of color following a cohort model that will hopefully advance them to being on faculty. Work is underway on an endowment to increase the number of scholarships. Julian stressed the importance of looking internally, getting creative and thinking about what we can do fiscally to assist our students moving forward, while at the same time realizing it's not just about the money, but it's also building a supportive community. Rosemary described a mentoring program established by a faculty member of the English department over two decades ago. This program identified African-American undergraduates and provided guidance on how to prepare for graduate school to facilitate an academic career path. Two of the alumni of this program acquired doctoral degrees from two reputable universities, and are now tenured faculty members at Georgetown at the Associate and Full Professor levels respectively. Both faculty are also now Chairs of their departments. Rosemary agreed that there is a critical mass of Black, Latino and Asian students who can be cultivated to consider embarking on an academic career. She also proposed that universities should overcome the traditional restriction of not hiring their own graduates, and gave examples of Georgetown hiring their own PhD graduates of color, thus increasing faculty diversity. Rebecca addressed the sustainability question with respect to the *AU Connects* program, noting that it is a partnership between her office in the school, AU Human Resources, and the campus-wide Center for Diversity and Inclusion. Thus, a number of staff around campus are tied to the infrastructure of the program, and the request form for dialogue facilitators is on the Center's webpage along with requests for other services such as training workshops. Rebecca thus recommended that in starting an initiative, you need to make sure that you are talking to all the people you need to in order to connect all the relevant parts. A faculty member from AU noted that Rebecca has been involved in many other dialogue initiatives on that campus, including between civilian and military and with the LGBTQ community. She noted that a strength of the conflict resolution community in that it is not afraid of conflict and see it as a way of moving societies forward and stopping extremists from turning people against each other. She also asked the panel to what extent the wisdom of students is tapped on the question of diversity in order to help design programs on recruitment and retention. Julian responded that the students are ahead of us, because they've interacted and conceptualized very differently with the world than a lot of decision-makers on our campuses, and therefore we need to catch up with them.

Questions were also asked on how to retain faculty and staff, and what initiatives other than dialogues are being taken. Rosemary described the Lead Program for students at Georgetown, which engages them in a series of dialogues touching on every aspect of diversity and intersectionality. The students then go on to train other students on diversity. Another initiative, the Center for New Designs & Learning Systems (CNDLS) works with faculty to create syllabi reflecting the many dimensions of diversity in content and the persons they are teaching. For example, in a class on mid-century American literature, the syllabi would include the work of women and minority authors. Julian stressed the importance of university leadership in responding to racial incidents, and described a situation in which the GMU President was very active in making an immediate address to the campus following a racist drawing appearing in a dormitory. Rebecca described how she has met with prospective students following racist incidents on campus and connected them with students of color to get their perspectives on the incident. She also noted that AU has a long history of sustained intergroup dialogues held over several weeks, but that she is now interested in how dialogue principles can be applied in one-off



conversations like *AU Connects* and in a program on exploring identities that focuses on various intergroup relations.

On the question of faculty retention, Julian noted that faculty of color often leave the university after getting tenure, and he stressed that this outcome was not just do to a lack of money but due to the department or school not creating a collaborative, inclusive and supportive environment for the faculty. Rosemary indicated that it's a real challenge to retain faculty of color, because they get recruited to higher positions. Thus, Georgetown creates retention packages for faculty who aspire to administration and hopes that creating a climate with a sense of purpose will make them want to stay. In closing the session, Craig recommended that if participants have any resources on any of the issues discussed to forward them to Pushpa to be consolidated.

### ***Small Group Breakout Sessions***

The participants were divided into two groups and were asked to address the following four questions as possible and then report back to the plenary:

- 1) What is the current state of diversity and inclusion in the field?
- 2) What our programs are doing well?
- 3) What challenges our programs are facing?
- 4) What are key resources or funders that may be helpful?

#### ***Group One***

Over the course of the discussion, faculty shared the extent of diversity in their programs with respect to both domestic and international students, and these levels showed a high degree of variation depending on location. Faculty diversity likewise showed a considerable degree of variation over different institutions. Where there is a lack of diversity, students of color face challenges, such as a lack of support and being drawn into a culture of tokenism. Some universities are paying close attention to the diversity issue in appointing faculty and administrators who are from minorities, and these schools are also concerned about inclusion. Within universities, particular schools and departments are demonstrating much greater diversity than others.

A need was expressed to better understand where we are as programs and as a field from the student's perspective, especially because we attract an older cohort than average. It was noted that students of color can act as ambassadors for our programs. In universities that have established offices for diversity and inclusion, it is important for programs to connect to these resources. If there is no institutional leadership, is difficult for those concerned to connect and to gain legitimacy for their concerns. It is important that diversity be combined with inclusion in order to build support for minority students and faculty.

#### ***Group Two***

There was a general sense that even though peace and conflict studies (PACS) works with divided societies, this has not translated into dealing with difficult issues like racial inequality and diversity in the U.S. There was some discussion of the definition/framing of "diversity" not

simply as racial diversity, but also other types of diversity as well. It was argued that PACS has a definite ideological bent toward homogeneity, and that its commitment to being bridge builders worked against its practitioners from being "good parties to conflict." In other words, PACS practitioners generally work on other's conflicts, rather than on conflicts where we are parties to the conflict. This lack of advocacy also connects to the observation that the field itself is not diverse and represents a Western and primarily a white perspective.

It was noted that our students are generally far ahead of the faculty in their understanding of the need and demand for diversity. In particular, they are asking for diverse faculty. In addition to recruiting more diverse faculty, programs have started providing training in diversity and inclusion for colleagues. Other innovations include working with related departments, such as Ethnic Studies and Race Studies, as well as incorporating expanded resources on diversity and inclusion from other fields. It was noted that leadership on these issues is essential for progress.

In terms of challenges, was noted that universities are increasingly becoming arenas for conflict--reflecting the conflicts in the community: between right and left, libertarians, conservatives, liberals, veterans, etc. Thus, it is particularly important to create a range of platforms to address diversity and inclusion. Dialogue is important, but these platforms need to be sustained and aim at raising awareness of the issues and create opportunities for collaboration and action. For example, unregulated spaces for free speech on one campus did not go well and the university had to bring in the Dialogue Network to train students, faculty and staff. Another challenge was identified as reaching out to the larger community and offering public platforms around issues of diversity and inclusion. It was suggested that it would be useful to create a one-semester webinar/blog on innovations in teaching around diversity and inclusion.

### ***Keynote Address: Imani Michelle Scott***

Craig Zelizer welcomed the participants who had joined for the afternoon, and provided a brief overview of the morning's sessions. He then introduced the keynote speaker and the title of her talk: *Walking on eggshells: Exploring the causes and consequences of PACS' timidity in addressing social injustices related to race and power in the U.S.*

Imani began her comments by sharing the title of her recent book: *Crimes Against Humanity in the Land of the Free: Can a Truth and Reconciliation Process Heal Racial Conflict in America?*, and recounting her experience following a 2015 presentation to a conference of international peace educators on the topic of police killings of unarmed blacks in the U.S. She noted that during the post-presentation Q & A session, two participants from other countries asked why African-Americans do not enter into dialogue and other peaceful methods, rather than engaging in protests, marches and demonstrations. Imani felt that they did not have an appreciation of the depths and breadth of the African-American struggle. Feeling frustrated, she responded by querying those participants on their knowledge and understanding of the centuries of pain that blacks in the U.S. have lived through. (She noted that some time later, she would learn from a friend that her response was perceived as "hostile" by a member of the audience. And that although it was not her intent, she has come to embrace her "hostility" about the issue of police killings of blacks in the U.S.).

At the end of the Q & A session , one participant in particular approached to shake her hand, and say with much sincerity, “I hear you.” She asked that in this same vein, the audience before her this afternoon try to “hear her” before judging her.

In introducing her talk, Imani indicated that Pushpa had encouraged her to go beyond cultural diversity and its impacts, to address social justice, racial conflict and the collective position and role of peace and conflict studies (PACS) in the era of *Black Lives Matter*. She asked for all to take an unabashed look at the choices, opportunities and responsibilities that PACS has not just for a favored few and for Third World countries. Along these lines, she proposed that PACS has: 1. Benignly neglected opportunities to critique *all* socially oppressive processes and structures, and to support the development of a critical consciousness and the emancipation of *all* who are oppressed, and 2. Chosen to target mainstream conflict issues involving the dominant white culture as well as conflicts elsewhere. On the other hand, she suggested that PACS has not focused on the school to prison pipeline and the persistent economic disparities in the African-American community.

Imani noted that PACS is positioned to be an interdisciplinary powerhouse, whose proponents could be conduits of change and instigators of emancipatory action, following Paulo Freire. She suggested that maybe, despite its academic program descriptions and proclamations, PACS does not know who or what it wants to be.

Being an African American woman, Imani explained that during her graduate studies, she felt early pangs of disconnect from PACS, a field she had presumed would welcome scholarship targeted at addressing endemic racial conflict.. She explained that the first article she published was on identity conflict and the trans-generational transmission of trauma within the African-American community, and this was exciting because it focused on what she perceived to be “the granddaddy of all conflicts” (racial conflict in the United States). However, she explained that her next manuscript entitled, “*Identity Conflict and the Root of Anger in African-American Women*” was rejected by numerous journals. Despite having the support of her professors, she felt further disillusioned after organizing a panel on racial conflict for her Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution, because those in attendance seemed content to focus on periphery issues instead of the serious issues impacting race in America. In light of her growing disconnect with the field, Imani took “the easy way out,” and focused on mainstream topics like school violence, international police violence and terrorism and survivors of September 11<sup>th</sup>. However, when Trayvon Martin was killed, her life changed and she committed again to be a conduit of change and an instigator of emancipatory action for her people. Thus, she began work on her book (*Crimes Against Humanity in the Land of the Free*) and contacted potential contributors, but was initially surprised and disappointed when a dear colleague rejected her thesis that a truth and reconciliation process would be productive. Nonetheless she redoubled her efforts, published the book, and proposed to do a workshop or panel at an ACR conference, but was again disappointed when a poster presentation was all that was offered. In contrast, Imani was delighted when the United Nations in September 2016 condemned the United States for what was happening in race relations that was equivalent to a human rights crisis. This should encourage PACS to hear what she is saying.

Imani summarized the African-American historical experiences as follows: “Racist hatred, fear, violence and terrorism in this country have existed for hundreds of years. From Charleston, the

shootings in Charleston, through Charlottesville, through to the ‘Charlatan,’ as I call him, who is in the White House down the street. Any refutation of the continually oppressive America for blacks is a lie. I am talking about African-Americans whose history, whose heritage, is my heritage. So that black male in that meeting from Nigeria, when he raised his hand, his experience is different than mine. So of course he cannot relate and he cannot connect. And so when PACS calls itself diverse, with people of color, and those people don’t have my historical heritage, there is always going to be this disconnect. Race is the true four letter word. That’s why we prefer to use terms like ‘people of color,’ or ‘cultural diversity.’ Sounds nicer.“

Imani spoke of a history of perpetual decay with regard to race, wherein the legacy of slavery has spread like a cancer in American society. She listed numerous injustices including the slave trade, Jim Crow, lynchings, medical experimentation and structural racism that African-Americans have endured and that have never been addressed, and that lead her to be hostile. In this situation, PACS is inaudible, engaging in the politics of distraction that leads us to focus on other countries. She expressed anger at government that allows her people to be killed by police after already having endured so much trauma.

Imani went on to describe numerous experiences involving police violence against African-Americans and others, demonstrating a dual standard in the justice system that discriminates against them and in favor of whites. At the same time that white Christians ignore the blatant immortality of the racist system, they tell African-Americans to simply “get over it.” After enduring so much hurt, it is important to confront the wickedness of this nation’s legalized inhumanity, and to identify the continual failure of PACs to address the granddaddy of all conflicts and the history of police violence, founded in slavery, that is a manifestation of systemic racism.

In preparation for her keynote address, Imani examined the descriptions provided by a large sample of PACS programs in different locations, and saw many phrases touting professional skills training, issues related to violence and social justice, and making a difference in the lives of vulnerable people. However, she identified a disconnect between what PACS do for others and what they do for her people. Thus, PACS is a microcosm of the larger racist system. Imani identified four causes for this outcome. First, PACS has been ‘whitewashed’ by the thinking of the colonialist project that continues to dominate the world. Second, PACS has been ‘gaslighted’ into believing the rhetoric of American exceptionalism, that sees crimes against humanity happening in other parts of the world but not in the United States, when there are zones of conflict here the same as elsewhere. Third, PACS reflects those with cultural capital, so that everything European, everything Anglo-Saxon is normalized, and there is no focus on American communities. Fourth, Imani wondered whether PACS are equipped to handle the granddaddy of all conflicts, in that we see no win-win here and thus pretend it doesn’t exist. However, the struggle continues as many incidents she noted over time demonstrate, with the consequence that silence perpetuates violence, and thus we are contributing to and are partakers of the violence. She proposed that PACS acknowledge that white privilege exists and not to remain silent about it, but to actively work on the difficult conflict that makes us feel uncomfortable.

Imani then recounted how her daughter got her graduate degree in conflict analysis and resolution, partly because it was Imani’s field. Part of Imani wanted to say to her , “Baby, it’s not really what it says it is,” but her daughter is a lawyer and finds that she can use some of the skills

and interventions in her legal work. However, she has not been able to apply any of the concepts to conflict experiences of African-Americans. This question of integrity for PACS programs is huge and asks “are you who you say you are?” So when we say our programs address social justice, do we really address it for all--for all vulnerable people? Imani asserted that we have not done that.

Imani began to close by reading a section from the book *Two Nations: Black and White Still Hostile*, by Andrew Hacker, in which an official visits a white student announcing that the person will become black on the outside, but remain who they are on the inside. The official offers whatever monetary compensation the student would like for this change, and in Hacker’s experience, most white students relating to this parable ask for \$1 million a year. Imani’s interpretation was that the students know that different skin color means different treatment in this society and that racism is real and immoral. Imani then asked the audience that if you hear me, can you do anything to help change this? Can you begin to steer your students to study in this area, rather than about what’s happening outside the United States?<sup>2</sup>

In opening the question and answer session, a graduate student in conflict analysis and resolution thanked Imani for being the first PACS scholar to articulate what that person had been trying to articulate. The student noted the lack of different racial lenses in the field, and asked where is critical race theory from a conflict analysis and resolution perspective, and why there was not a focus on racial tensions in the United States as conflict? The student also noted the phenomenon of ‘whitesplaining’ in which white scholars presume to explain the experience of African-Americans and other minorities. Imani noted that there is not the pipeline for African-American students to become professors, and that there is pushback in African-American communities against being not understood by academics, thus dampening interest in the field.

A wide ranging discussion ensued in which participants shared varying experiences from their programs, raised challenges and questions, and speculated on some possible remedies to the lack of attention to racial conflict in the field. Some programs have a good representation of African-American students and do discuss race relations as a conflict focus. Other programs have predominantly international students, and the lens provided from the field tends to be that of the American/European majority. It was pointed out, however, that the field was largely started by social activists who had concerns about social justice and a supportive value base. Nonetheless, it was acknowledged that PACS tends not to focus on domestic issues, including racial conflict.

A question was asked about how PACS might attract more African-American students, and Imani’s response was to recruit from Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Another participant pointed out that this would be effective if programs could send black faculty to do the recruiting. Another question asked how PACS could partner with other fields and departments in order to encompass multiple lenses to better address racial conflict. It was suggested that PACS programs work with African American Studies departments, and a number of ways were shared for doing this, for example, by holding joint courses. One PACS department noted that it had a cooperative relationship with an African American Studies department. These types of linkages would help provide a spectrum of lenses for viewing racial conflict that was called for.

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<sup>2</sup> Note that a podcast of Imani’s Keynote Address is available on the web page of the AfP Affinity Group on Education and Training noted previously on page 1.

In terms of other remedies, it was noted that conflict resolution programs need to provide a deep structural analysis of race relations, rather than just offering skills and interventions to help communities overcome problems. It was also suggested that the field needs to cooperate with social movement and criminal justice scholars who focus domestically. Imani emphasized the need for having a diverse group in order to have a diverse conversation in which each one stands in a different place but can hear all voices.

### ***Roundtable Discussion: Experience and Issues with Diversity and Inclusion***

Necla Tschirgi provided an introduction to the session that involved four invited participants (see agenda for names and affiliations) sharing their experiences and perspectives in a fishbowl design. She facilitated an initial discussion to elicit participants' experience either personally or at their institution with diversity and inclusion, and to identify any related issues. Participants spoke about their identity and background in coming to the diversity issue in their programs and in the field of peace and conflict resolution. It appeared that the extent and nature of the focus on diversity and inclusion depended on each program's location in terms of the demographic mix and financial requirements of students. Thus, program cohorts varied from being highly diverse to being majority white and middle class. It was noted that international students add diversity, but not in terms of domestic diversity. Participants noted a number of realities that impinge on the issue. The importance of power and privilege in race and ethnic relations was acknowledged as was the pull and the balance between domestic and international emphases in programs. A comment was made that there is a disconnect between our field and people's everyday lives. As noted in the opening panel, the degree of institutional and administrative commitment to increasing diversity and inclusion was seen as critical. There was a call to focus more domestically than internationally on issues of intergroup relations, and to deal proactively with racial issues rather than just reacting to incidents.

Necla then introduced a second round of discussion eliciting ways and strategies of responding to some of the diversity and inclusion challenges that participants were facing in their contexts. A participant from a diverse program and institution identified the problem of their administration saying there was no need to do anything about diversity, and yet people there are uncomfortable to talk about race. It was noted that given the field is disconnected from everyday reality, programs need to try and live between these two worlds and give students the space to say what they want. It was also deemed important to acknowledge that racial inequality exists on campuses, and to take a race lens and use critical race theory to understand intersectionality and all forms of subordination. In terms of responses, it was deemed important for students to learn about domestic issues and to take ownership for their learning, supported by experiential methods. One participant had worked to move their Master's program from an executive style, high priced offering to being more accessible and diverse. Another participant initiated a dialogue on diversity to bring out differences to a point of mutual respect, but found it hard to get groups other than white liberals to take part. Another participant created a collaborative program to focus on dialogue, surveys, curriculum review and other initiatives, as well as sponsoring conferences on race and offering trainings on sensitivity to the campus community.

In the last go round of the Roundtable, Necla asked participants what challenges they see for the field in moving forward on the diversity and inclusion agenda. A question was raised as to how you can have a dialogue between white supremacists and racial minorities where one party is

telling the other that they are not equal and don't have a right to be here. It's important to understand these grievances, but 'aggrieved entitlement' is really the problem and it is difficult to deal with. Perhaps through storytelling an understanding can be realized. Another participant noted that their university has many offices to deal with issues of diversity, but they do not know how to bring about racial and ethnic dialogue. In addition, the same faculty members tend to be involved in all the diversity initiatives, and there is a challenge bringing in new participants.

Another participant supported the importance of storytelling, and the importance of 'counter storytelling' to change narratives as recommended by critical race theory. However, being involved in diversity initiatives is risky and takes courage, because you can be criticized or punished for taking initiatives. There is also the problem of white liberals who focus on their own image, deny the existence of privilege, or are unable to deal with racial stress, a condition known as 'white fragility.' A final participant comment noted that the kinds of conversations at the symposium needed to be held with students and colleagues. In our teaching, it's important to help students see all sides and not just their previous conclusion. In our programs, students need common foundation classes, so that when they come to integration classes, their learning is mutually supported. Overall, faculty need to have difficult conversations among themselves to deal with issues of diversity and inclusion

The Q & A session that followed the Roundtable proper was a very rich and honest discussion about how to support and enhance diversity and inclusion in PACS programs and in their host institutions. An initial question was asked whether diversity needed to be considered in tenure decisions, and a problem was identified in that minority faculty are typically asked to play so many representational roles that they have trouble advancing in the system.

Most of the discussion focused on how to deal with white privilege and white supremacy in any discussion of racial issues in the classroom and other program settings. Although whiteness as a system was identified as the problem, white students are typically intimidated when the topic is raised. While the importance of voice was acknowledged, as was the need to hear all grievances, there must be a moral right and wrong, which is incongruent with putting black and white experiences on the same level. While there is a need for storytelling, it is important to address the system, even though disadvantaged whites may not care.

In terms of the field's response, it was pointed out that PACS is not a third party in this situation who can be in the middle, but is in fact a party who needs to be engaged in the truth telling process. Nonetheless, the question was asked whether conflict resolution methods can be transferred to this problem in order to provide and maintain the listening space through ground rules and other techniques? It was suggested that listening fully to each group separately before engaging can be a useful start. The conclusion was that PACS programs have trouble enabling students to think about racial conflict and the trauma associated with it, and it would be ideal if supports and spaces to do so were simply there in the university setting.

In closing the Roundtable session, Necla identified three messages from the symposium that would be taken to the Education and Training Affinity Group meeting at the AfP Annual Conference later in the week:

1. PACS programs are not engaged with the biggest conflict in this country, i.e. racial conflict, and we need to be.

2. There are general issues of diversity and inclusion in our universities, and although some PACS programs are trying to help deal with the issues, their efforts tend to be marginalized.
3. How can we draw lessons from our field to apply to this issue in our institutions and our country in the context of a very difficult climate?

Necla then turned the agenda over to Craig to elicit any ideas on future plans and action items, either personally or institutionally. A number of ideas came forward immediately, including a website, a blog post, and a core working group on the issues. There was a request for access to detailed resources on some of the practices and trainings that were covered in the opening panel, so these could be incorporated into participants' institutions. Questions were raised about what financial support might be available or could be sought to support student research on the issue. It was noted that the funders in the peace and security area are all focused internationally, and that there is no dedicated funding for peace and conflict resolution programs as there once was through the Hewlett Foundation. Participants shared some examples of possible funding at their host institutions. Craig indicated that he, Pushpa and Sheherazade were interested in working on the issue, perhaps developing resources, convening meetings, or doing research, and he ask if there were any research projects or questions among the participants. One response indicated that pushback tends to come from faculty, and so dialogue or training for them would be helpful. It was noted that the Kroc Institute at Notre Dame holds an annual one-week retreat for faculty and staff of PACS programs. Other participants talked about presentations at conferences, the development of courses, and the importance of partnering within their universities.

In closing, thanks were expressed to Pushpa as the primary organizer of the symposium, and she in turn thanked all of the facilitators and presenters for their contributions and the participants for their attendance.