

Full transcript for Dr. Annette Henry's talk for the Carleton University EDI Speaker Series

"There's no racism in our department": A discussion of anti-Black racism initiatives in Canadian universities

February 27, 2023

IKRAM JAMA:

Good morning everyone! Welcome! My name is Ikram Jama. My pronouns are she/her/hers, I work at the Department of equity and inclusive communities. My role in the department of Equity and Inclusive Communities is the director of human rights and equity.

(Land acknowledgement)

I want to welcome you all and thank you for joining us today. For the first session of the EDI speaker series. The objectives of the EDI speaker series are to create spaces and opportunities to discuss, reflect, learn, unlearn, and perhaps gather tools to further dismantle the inequitable systemic systems in our recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotional practices. As we continue to implement the EDI Action plan and start our work on black inclusion we look forward to more engagement with you all.

I hope you all find the session engaging, fruitful, and beneficial for our future work and again I really welcome you. I know it is a busy time. It shows with 160 registrations that this is an important topic to many of you and that is very gratifying.

Now I would like to pass the mic to my colleague Krista Craven the EDI learning specialist at EIC.

KRISTA CRAVEN:

Thank you so much. Thank you everyone for joining us today. We are happy that you are here. My name is Krista Craven my pronoun is she/her. The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion speaker series is an initiative of the Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities here at Carleton. But it is funded by the Canada research chair program and specifically the EDI stipend that they have.

The speaker series will take place this year in 2023 in both the winter and upcoming fall semester. With four speakers in total coming to Carleton either virtually or in person to discuss issues of equity, inclusion, antiracism, anti-oppression in the context of higher education.

Today we are so happy to have Doctor Annette Henry for our inaugural session of our speaker series to discuss the initiative to address antiblack racism in Canadian universities and some caveats regarding their implementation.

So please feel free to submit questions for Doctor Henry at any time during the talk and we will use those questions to guide the Q&A session after her talk concludes.

We also want to recognize that we may not be able to get to every question directed towards us particularly because there are lots of folks joining us today. Also all questions that are submitted will only be visible to the session moderators so we just want to let you know that.

So thank you so much again to everyone for being here and I will now pass it on over to Eunice Oladejo our EDI Speaker series coordinate to introduce Doctor Henry.

EUNICE OLADEJO:

Thank you Krista and again thank you to everybody who is joining us today. It is my pleasure to introduce Doctor Annette Henry who will be giving us our talk for today. Doctor Annette Henry is a professor in the Department of language which and literacy education and cross appointment to the Institute for race, gender, and sexuality and social studies.

She was a former department head and held the David Lam Chair in multicultural education and the faculty of education. Her scholarship examines race, class, language, gender, and culture in socio cultural contexts of teaching and learning in the lives of black students, black oral histories, and black women teachers practices in Canada, the US, and the Caribbean.

She has written extensively about equity in the Academy, black feminism, and conceptual and methodological research issues, especially in culturally specific contexts. She is the recipient of several academic awards including the Canadian Association of University teachers equity award, outstanding contributions to gender equity award from the American educational research Association, as well as awards from the community such as the Legacy Award for the National Congress of Black Women's Foundation and 100 black women honorer in 2022.

Dr. ANNETTE HENRY:

Thank you very much Eunice and thank you everyone for inviting me to be your first speaker for your series. I am very grateful for that. I am speaking to you today from my home office and I live and work on the traditional ancestral unceded territories of the Musqueam People.

(Land acknowledgement)

Dr. ANNETTE HENRY:

As you may have noticed I changed my title a little bit but the content is about the same. I liked the way that Ikram talked about the series because when I first was invited to be the speaker I thought about it and I went to your website and I looked at the types of things you are doing and I tried to find out as much as I could about your series.

And about your university and what you are doing in terms of antiblack racism and I said to myself "well, they seem to be on the right track, they seem to be doing all the right things. What could I say? What could I tell them? I am not a guru, so to speak."

But I think as Ikram said it is important for us to come together and discuss these issues and I know some things and you know some things and the exchange we have is meaningful and can be meaningful and insightful and we are all struggling with the same issues on our university campuses.

We are all trying to make it a place where people can feel like they belong, people feel that they are acknowledged. That their work is acknowledged and it is a place that they want to get up in the morning and come to.

So that is something that I think I am looking forward to- the questions that you might have or the comments that you might have. Very, very important.

This on the right is my mother, I have to say on the right because people used to say "which one of you is older?" Which is so annoying.

This is my beautiful mom who is no longer with us. And most of how I understand the world is because of my mother. I do remember something that she told me when I was just about 10 or 11. I think about it often. She said "racism will not disappear in my lifetime or yours."

I definitely have to agree with my mom on that. But we can say that we can make some progress in some areas even though we have a long way to go. And indeed racism is ubiquitous.

It is like the air we breathe as some people have said.

I just thought I would put up a definition here of antiblack racism. It is not so much a definition, I think it is more that I wanted to emphasize that this is deeply entrenched in our institutions, policies, and practices. As Morgan and Bullen say that it is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger white society.

Quite frankly I would not even say the larger white society because sometimes policies and practices are just so normalized that people of all races and backgrounds do not question them or do not think about them.

So, for example I was thinking about this the other day where it is just normalized that, and this affects more than just black students quite frankly, but that students who do not pay full tuition are penalized.

I remember a student had come to me about three years ago and said "can I see my grades because I do not pay full tuition so I do not get to see my grades." And I said "what are you talking about?"

It was obviously my ignorance but I had no idea. On the basis of economics people are marginalized and very often they would be black students, indigenous students, working class students, Who cannot pay full tuition and therefore there are a lot of the privileges of being at UBC or any university are being denied them.

I wanted to put that out there because it did not seem to me, and I could be wrong, when I read the charter I did not see a definition of antiblack racism even though it is talked about all the time. I might be wrong on that.

In the wake of George Floyd's murder universities across the country and the globe we could say have made poignant pledges towards equity and anti-racism.

They vowed to address racism and make stronger links with racialized communities. Most universities have had taskforces on anti-racism, senior administration -- senior administrative positions were created on race and inclusion. Millions have been committed towards financial support for black students.

Commitments have been made to hire black faculty, often cluster hires, and that is meant mostly where I am focusing today, by the way. Black focused advertising has been the latest

thing, if you like. It has actually been quite interesting to see the kinds of advertising that is going on.

Black studies is something that is talked about across the country and there is a number of places that are thinking about or have created institutes, programs, and even centers.

And of course the Scarborough charter on antiblack racism is the roadmap for all of us. Even though I think there are some universities who have been doing this, for example I am thinking of Dalhousie and York, who definitely have been thinking about black studies for quite some time.

And since about 2016 Dalhousie has had a program. So it's a time of promise and a time of hope. Though exciting opportunities for the creation of new curricula as we hire new Black faculty, its also a taxing time for all Black faculty, both old and new.

Faculty who have been in these higher education institutions all along, and even relatively new faculty, are expected, excuse me, to spearhead these Black hiring initiatives and make the University a more equitable and diverse space. Or at least if not spearhead, to participate in these initiatives. And of course, we want to as well.

I don't know whether you read the first-person account of someone who was recently hired at McMaster. He wrote in University affairs in February 2022, I'm just going to read part of this. (Reads)

I've been a faculty member at three universities, and there's always been a moment, where someone has said, basically, "You are here now, or this is why we hired you." This reminds me of the questions posed by (unknown name) in The Atlantic, they asked the question, "Do diversity and inclusion initiatives take into consideration how minorities placed in those environments feel?"

How can policies create, not just more equitable hiring processes, but address the emotional toll of being in a racial minority in a professional work setting? We might want to talk about this in the question period.

All the wonderful initiatives mentioned means that someone has to do the work. Hopefully, collectively, we can reach these anticipated goals. We feel obligated because, as one colleague said to me when we were debating on whether to join a task force, "Well, Annette, we can't have people talking about Black lives with no Black lives the table."

At the other end, it's an exhilarating moment, as I said earlier. Personally, I no longer feel like that one black person on the campus waving the flag to think about racism or Canadian black scholarship, rethinking courses to include Black content. Things are different now.

We hired 12 Black faculty last year, and we will hire 12 more in the following year. This move to Black inclusion is exciting and overdue. I'm so sorry. I just couldn't take a moment here and see what's going on with my voice. As my grandmother would say, this is the work of the devil, you know? That I can't speak today.

The move to Black inclusion is exciting and overdue, and also contributes to what (unknown name) calls "The burden of diversity." People have had other names for this, haven't they? Like Hirschfeld, the cultural taxation for example. Many Black faculty are necessary in doing equity diversity and inclusion work, whether or not in a formal EDI position.

In their daily lives, even through their curricula choices, in their faculty interactions, standing up in the department meeting around an issue, even negotiating their positionally in the classroom.

Now in the near future, with preponderance of search committees, it's actually an interesting time in universities because, I don't think my university is unique in this, but there are so many people retiring as well, so it's a time for renewal and it's interesting to see how universities are going to look in the not-too-distant future. A lot of people retiring, maybe those lines might not be renewed, but also we are really thinking about literally changing the face of the University. So it is an interesting time.

I want us to just consider the ways in which the burden of diversity and the like can include race and gender, as well as other dimensions. I put the quote by Audrey Lorde there because we are dealing with a system of power. We can't forget that. It's not just a question of including people from different racial backgrounds, we are talking about an institution and a system of power.

So when one is to consider the ways we are positioned differently in a university or any institution, it's astounding to me that when I respond to someone and I say, "I cannot do something," And suggest a Black man, and I say, "Why don't you ask Neville or Kevin or Abraham or somebody?" The response is that he is really busy.

Where does the perception come from that I'm not busy? I'm just hanging around the campus? (Laughs) no. As we move toward our goal of inclusive communities, we have to examine the ways in which people are positioned differently in the institution.

Black women are scrutinized differently by other faculty, staff, and students. I've written about this elsewhere, I won't talk about it unless you want to talk about it later. I want to put that out there a little bit.

Also, when we think about, we're going to be hiring Black faculty, we can't think about this amorphous Black people. So, Black people have all kinds of different identity's and backgrounds, and I thought this was really an interesting study. It's actually a study that is really talking to leaders, as you can see from the title. Some of the data in it is very interesting, thinking about how... Issues of marginality along dimensions of skin tone, colour-ism, along the lines of queer sexuality, so thinking about trans and queer Black women's experiences, for example.

So we have to take all of those things into consideration. An intersectional analysis allows us to pry apart the complex system of panel relations in which we are all embroiled. We don't really want to talk about colourism or texturism, even. I certainly remember going to my job interview in Chicago, years ago, I worked in Chicago for 13 years.

Once I got to know the office assistance, which were all Black, by the way, once I got to know the office assistance, one of them said to me, "Girl, when we saw you came into your interview, we said, this girl is brave." I said "Why?" She said "You didn't straighten your hair for the interview." This is one example of the ways in which whiteness makes us want to conform and also, the ways in which we are judged.

We think about all the ways, and people talk about unconscious bias and things like that, what's going on when we see a candidate? What are the judgements we are making? And also, what are the pressures on the candidate to conform to whiteness, if you like? I think we don't talk about that enough, and I know we have equity training, and I don't know how deeply those things, one would even go in equity training.

I think today, we are also more comfortable talking about sexuality and equity than disability or colourism. There's a lot of layers to unpack, when we think about equity training and also, in terms of the equity training that happens when we are in a search committee situation. I'm not sure how happens at Carleton, but certainly at UBC, we have someone who comes and talks to us about issues of equity if we are on a search committee.

So this article was in The Catalyst, you can find on catalyst.org, it was geared towards senior leaders and trying to encourage senior leaders to display more curiosity and ally ship, and how that affects the institution. Actually, this is an example of a bad slide, because you probably

can't read it. But on the right, I just did a screenshot of Malinda Smith's diversity graph info data that she used to publish on an annual basis, wish it would show how board chairs, chancellors, presidents, deans, and MVPs, she would break down the male-female visible minority male, visible minority female, and indigenous numbers.

So the grey blue turquoise is white men, and the brown one is white women, visible minority men is the blue, and the oranges visible minority women. You can't even see the indigenous there, so that something to talk about, too. We are seeing Black people in a number of senior EDI positions across the country, and that's great, and I wonder whether we also shouldn't look at who is in which senior positions.

I would love to see more Black people, especially Black women, at the academic table meeting executive level. It provosts, Crow and Pitt's 2020 article mentioned this in University Affairs article at the top on the left. I've been asking myself this question, for quite some time.

In 2002, when I was in Chicago, I took a leadership course in a program for the so-called Big Ten universities. We went to different universities, we met with presidents and senior officials, talked about how universities are organized, some of the issues that universities have.

I noticed at that time that every Black person in the program was a director of multiculturalism, because that's what we talked about in those days, multiculturalism rather than equity. It was a director of multiculturalism, a director of diversity, and that was 21 years ago. I would hope that things have changed, but they really haven't.

Please don't misunderstand me, I think these positions are useful and important, and can bring a lot of meaning not only to the person doing the work, but to the community. But as new administrative EDI positions are being created, and I must say, they are not easy jobs at all, we have to remember that they can also contribute to tokenism. And cultural taxation mentioned earlier.

Incidentally on a Recent episode of the American television program "to the contrary" Donna Edwards former Democratic Congressman showed research, American research, that showed that EDI positions were being created after George Floyd but have quote "slowed to a crawl or even reversed."

She continued that data showed that EDI offices are stepping down because they are realizing there is not a real commitment beyond a title and -- inculcating EDI into the workforce. The message here is there must be a willingness to put in the work to change the culture from the bottom up.

Also it is our work. It is the work of all of us. We all have to be doing the work. It is not enough that we have EDI. I do not want to use the word vice president of equity, for example, those are important jobs, but we also in our departments, from the Dean downwards everyone has to be doing the work.

Despite the fact that university search committees undergo some kind of equity training it is still quite astounding how often departments and units reproduce themselves. So this is a quote, well not a quote, this is something I heard in one of the places that I have worked where we were debating on a candidate of color.

This is my humble opinion but it seemed to me we were finding excuses not to hire the person. These are the ways in which we perpetuate the status quo. We hire people who keep the whiteness intact.

We find reasons not to hire qualified candidates, be it black or racialized, and sometimes, and this happens a lot in tenure and promotion meetings might I say, its that people do not understand the work of racialized candidates.

I am spilling the beans here but it does happen. We might publish in journals that are not mainstream. "Who ever heard of that journal? I never heard of that journal. Is that a good journal?" These are the ways in which whiteness is kept intact.

Another thing is talking about fit. Which is a very slippery term. The professor would not fit in our department. What does that even mean?

So there is really good news. I enjoy going to university affairs and seeing the kinds of positions that are being advertised. To me it is just marvelous to see. Job advertisements are calling for research agendas with anti-oppressive, anticolonial perspectives and work that focuses specifically on black people.

So good things are happening. I noticed that Carleton just posted an assistant professor position in antiblack racism. SFU just posted a history position focusing on the black Americas. It is really a beautiful time to see what happens with these searches.

This affects our students, doesn't it? All things are connected. The black hiring strategies have the potential to positively affect students who look like them, Validate their backgrounds and understand the work that graduate students want to study.

I do not know who said in the audience but I am sure I am not the only person who has been an internal or external examiner and wondered how that black students dissertation might look if that student had the guidance of a black supervisor.

I did a black graduate students study in the faculty along with a saber opennee (unknown name) and (unknown name) and these were just two quotes of many quotes where the students were really demoralized by the curriculum.

The student says "there needs to be more black curriculum overall especially for a faculty that prides itself with equity and social justice." Ouch! There is really nothing in the curriculum that speaks to us, it is all Eurocentric.

We cannot take the curriculum lightly. And I think you probably remember several years ago when the students movement curriculum was so white. Students want a curriculum that reflects the society they live in and reflects their realities.

So let us talk about cluster hiring. This is a beautiful picture from Queens. Cluster hiring is only one of many ways that universities can address the complex epistemic and curricular gaps. I was part of a cluster higher of the University of Washington.

I was at the University of Washington Tacoma campus for five years. So at the time it was a very small campus working its way to be a full campus. It was only a third and fourth year campus so we were building a campus.

And it had to four-year and master's programs and we hired, there was one of us in every faculty. And so we were not clustered in the same programs and faculty. However, even so, we kind of were like a little cohort.

I still have those friendships to this day. There is ample research to show the challenges and the benefits of cluster hires In a single department or across faculties.

With the presence of a range of junior and senior faculty, hypothetically anyway, there is more bodies to take on the service work that often falls to black faculty. There is also an opportunity for more support, a greater opportunity for black mentorship, cultural understandings, depending on who is hired of course, and sociality and a higher likelihood of satisfaction.

I spoke to somebody who was hired in our university about two weeks ago and I said "how are you finding Vancouver? Because Vancouver, you know it is very white."

It took me about three years to get used to Vancouver. I was very surprised. She said "it is not so much Vancouver, you know, we all live close, there is a group of us that live close to each other, our kids play together so we are doing well." This is a group of black hires. That was actually a beautiful thing to hear.

They did not have such a sense of isolation in their private and social lives and they did not feel so alone and sometimes it can be very lonely moving to a place like Vancouver from the United States. As a black person.

I have certainly had students in my office ? black American students in a little bit of a shock after a few months.

Let's talk about the campus environment. What kind of environment are we bringing faculty members to? I remember asking this question, we were trying to hire an indigenous scholar, this is when I was a department head. And I asked this question and I tried to get a discussion in the department and nobody responded, and then after the meeting was over, somebody said, "Annette, that was important."

And I said "Why didn't you say something?" We have to be willing to talk about these issues. How are we preparing for our new hires? Do we have an environment in which people want to stay? Are departments and faculties willing to undergo a cultural change? Are we willing to invest the time to mentor people, because that is time. Are we willing to invest the time and resources?

Are we just going to assume that new faculty will fit in to our culture? Rather than think about, what are the kinds of ways in which our culture needs to be more inclusive? How much preparatory work has been done to examine the climate in which we hope to invite Black faculty members and the potential support if any at all? How do we understand cultural differences? Black ethnicities, as we hire Black people from across the globe?

It's wonderful to know that universities are spearheading Black postdoctoral programs, and even pre-doctoral programs, this is from Queen's University as you can see. I think they are doing lovely things there as well as Carleton. These are critical for us as Canadians to help mentor the next generation of Black Canadian scholars. One of my goals since arriving to UBC has been to emphasize the rich tradition of critical black Canadian scholarship in a series that I called race literacies, in which I invited Black Canadian scholars.

We are in great proximity to the United States, and given the historical significance of black Americans throughout the Black Diaspora, we have to acknowledge, as Renaldo Walcott has written, that Black Canadian life takes its formation, its politics, its intellectual traditions, its cultural expressions, its contributions in consciousness in concert with other forms of global blackness.

However, I am concerned that the production of knowledge concerning Black lives and Black research is often predominantly American. I'm sure that some of you have had the same experience of working with students, especially undergraduate students, who despite instructions to cite Canadian resources, inevitably cite US resources. There are many reasons for this, from the abundance of US data, to not making distinctions.

As we strategize about what we want our students to learn, we need to think and plan ahead, for example, about what Black studies will include on our campuses.

As we continue to hire Black faculty and as several universities are contemplating Black studies centres, institutes, certificates, and programs, we can't ignore the importance of the United States as we talk about Black studies. After all, Black studies originated in the United States. In the 1960s, out of a time of turbulence and student movements and protests, and precipitated a curricula of Black studies.

So as we fulfil our goals to higher Black faculty, we need to think through the long-term strategic vision of what Black studies will look like on our campuses. I think of repeating myself a little bit there, aren't I? And what Black studies will look like. Don't misunderstand me, the University is a place where ideas should be expansive and global. And I look forward to Canada producing more Black faculty.

It's an overwhelming time, it's a dizzying time, it's an exciting time. We can all take part in it. A colleague of mine years ago gave me some very good advice, when she said "I will do only what I can do. Let someone else do what they can do." I think this is simply another way of saying many things. The way I interpret it is to know your gifts, know your talents, know your purpose, know where you are going to put your energy, if you like.

Don't spread yourself too thin in the goal to make the University a more equitable and inclusive place. When there's much to do, so much service work, if you like, to do, it behooves us to really think about what we are going to focus on and put ahead your protection around yourself, because I think we are asked to do, especially as racialized people, we are asked to do a lot, especially as Black people.

And we can't reply in the affirmative to every request, but the important thing is to be involved, is to do something, whether it is on the search committee or mentoring or a number of other initiatives to foster an inclusive institution.

I think, in the- let's just call it the intermission- there were some things that I didn't say that I realized I wanted to say around hiring and recruitment. Forgive me, because I'm going to go back and I realize I didn't say those things.

So with cluster hiring, speaking of environments, if you like, we also have to think about our colleagues and not everybody is going to be on board. Not everybody understands, and there can even be resentment, misunderstanding.

Like "Why are we hiring all these Black people?" And we don't like to talk about this, but it's a reality. And maybe, as racialized people, we don't really hear it as much. But it's a possibility and a reality. This is part of creating that possible future, helping faculty understand the importance of hiring strategies. We have to ask ourselves questions such as what kind of professional development do search committees undergo to be able to respond to candidates questions.

How are faculty being recruited? I'm not sure we do a great job, maybe I'm wrong, but it seems to me we don't really go out of the way to recruit here, I'm saying here in Canada, how could I know with the whole country is doing? How are we ensuring the experience for Black candidates, racialized candidates in general, is as humanizing as possible.

When I left Boise, when I graduated with my PhD, I had six interviews- three in Canada and three in the United States. I can truly say, three of them were very dehumanizing in one way or another. I'm going to share a couple of examples that I really like, that show the ways in which the recruiting process can be interesting, let's just say. I've written about these before.

There was a department chair at a research intensive university in the United States and it was actually in a very rural campus in Illinois. It was much harder for people to want to go to a rural campus, they would rather come to Chicago, the campus were I was at.

He took advantage of a program called a targeted opportunity program. It afforded him the possibility of hiring when there was no search, so a target of opportunity programs were used to hire women in STEM, and underrepresented minorities, so to speak, in the US.

One of the things that he did, he relentlessly pursued high quality Black candidates, to the extent that if a Black candidate whom he tried to recruit had turned down the offer, he would call them six months later and asked, "Are you happy with the decision you made? Would you like to reconsider?"

In this way, he was able to develop a nationally renowned faculty of education with outstanding black faculty who were not satisfied with where they were, and spent their entire careers at the institution because they had a critical mass of Black faculty. By contrast, my campus, part of the same university system, was located in Chicago, which is a large, vibrant, urban centre.

I would occasionally meet graduate students who would teach all day, students often teach in the daytime at the faculty of education and take courses at nighttime, and they would opt to drive the 200 km for their evening class because they felt that it was a more Black friendly campus with more Black professors and they felt more of a sense of belonging.

Even though things have changed since then at the Chicago campus, that is an interesting phenomenon and it shows that who is in your faculty really matters for the students. Another example that I talked about before is when I went for an interview at the University of Cincinnati. I met with the Dean who was a Black man himself. And I felt very much that I was an individual. I was not just the candidate coming in on Thursday or candidate number two.

He sat me down, he realized that I was unfamiliar with the United States and he told me about neighborhoods where I might consider living, which is pretty standard, of course. He suggested salons where I could get my hair done, churches where I might go to, places where I might meet like-minded people.

He ensured that I would meet with the black caucus. After the interview, upon returning to Canada, the Dean himself went out to call along with other faculty members to respond to any questions.

So those two, the Dean and the department chair afforded a vision of what is possible in terms of job interviews and feeling that you are seen as an individual. In both cases a deliberate focused commitment to hiring black faculty was evident.

And so those memories have stayed with me. Search committees need to be ready for the kinds of questions that black candidates might have. And we do not always ask them because we do not feel comfortable.

Imagine asking an all-white committee "could you recommend a black hair salon?" Racialized candidates might have questions that a white candidate does not need to ask and often do not deem relevant to constructing the interview process.

Consider this personal example: before being hired at UBC I made a telephone call to the equity office to find out if I would be the sole black female professor that ran the department head at the University and find out about the demographics more generally.

It was clear that I would be the only black woman in the faculty and at that time one of two black women in the entire University. Luckily I had a frank 45 minute conversation with the person who answered the phone and actually later became a dear friend.

I appreciated the time she took, her honesty, and actually understanding of the racial climate and the challenges, and she was from Ontario, also perhaps as a queer woman and also someone worked in the equity office she would be sensitive to these issues.

So that was very helpful. Her frankness really helped me and it was a 45 minute conversation which I was not expecting. I was expecting the equity officer to say "yes or no, here is the deal." Being treated as an individual is so important when considering hiring.

I am not telling you anything you do not know, really, but sometimes we forget. Despite equity training certain committee members might still must understand equity and treat each candidate the same way. Communicating the same information in the same order in the name of an equitable process.

You know how we say "Jeff, you will ask you question number six and Sally you will ask question number five?" By contrast I communicated the request of a Latina candidate to the search committee chairperson at a former University. She wondered whether she might meet with Latin X faculty and I asked the chair of the search committee if she could meet with Latin next faculty and he said no. And I asked why and he said "none of the other candidates met

with Latin X faculty" Because none of the others were Latin X! So It was highly unlikely they would want to meet with Latin X faculty.

So actually I talked about this a bit before just in terms of campus climate so we really have to think about those things. So I am going to go back to where I was when I realized I had forgotten some things.

As I was saying it is actually a lovely time and I was saying to know what it is you are going to be involved in whether it is on a search committee or mentoring a new person, even those very soft touches of going for coffee with a new faculty member.

Because they are going to have a lot of questions once they come to campus. Indeed, as my mother said, racism will not disappear in your lifetime or mine. But we have a lot of work to do. Consider how wonderful it will be for our students to see more black representation and have more curricular options.

What will it mean when students can see themselves represented? You know I remember when I first took on the job at UBC and students would make appointments to see me from across the campus. Especially black women. They would make the points to come and see me and they just said "I could not believe there was a black woman department head here, I just could not believe it."

We take those things for granted. Students need to see a reflection of themselves. And also with all of the new hirings and course offerings and job descriptions that are being posted, to understand what Vivian Clark calls diaspora literacy, to understand the black diaspora from their own informed perspectives.

So I am going to stop here and I really look forward to a discussion and questions. Thank you very much.

EUNICE OLADEJO:

Thank you so much for that talk. We will now move to the question and answer period. If anyone in our audience has any questions feel free to place them in the Q&A portion and I will be asking those to Doctor Henry but I guess starting off as the questions role in, a really key point that you brought up that stuck with me was talking about the culture of mass commitments that are often made post tragedy and I remember -- I am in my Masters program but I did my undergrad in a different institution and I saw that firsthand when we had the murder of George Floyd and all of the commitments that were made by the institution which were a lot of commitments that have

been called on by student union groups and student associations and black student associations at the University.

So it was really frustrating to see that things we have been calling on for years which a major call was increase black faculty on campus, things that had been ignored for years -- for years were made into nice documents and they said these are our EDI commitments.

The question to you is "what do you think are the most crucial structures and practices that must be in place at the departmental and institutional level to have a proactive rather than reactive set of measures that support black faculty in the recruitment and hiring process?"

Dr. ANNETTE HENRY:

That is a long question, is it not? At the department level? Well, they are so multilayered and interconnected. At the department level I do think that people need to- the department needs to do work on itself to be able to embrace that person rather than saying "this is how we do things here." Or "we do not do that here" because someone will come and with new ideas and what to change things in a sense because they are bringing new understandings.

We have to do some work on ourselves to allow that person to have the latitude to do her or his work or their work. I think so much is attitude. We become this little group of insiders in our department. So then the new person is in essence an outsider.

I have seen that and been in that situation and I am in that situation. So the new person, really, is bringing new understandings but you are told "this is the way we do things here. Or we tried that before." So I think we really have to do some work on ourselves in the department.

That question was large, I do not know if I really helped there.

EUNICE OLADEJO:

I think you did. It was looking at the departmental and also the institutional level and what can be done. I think also because we got another question which kind of relates this and we tied them all together but somebody asked specifically about the role of faculty associations within fostering a more inclusive campus so what practical ways of doing that have you seen from unions that have helped?

Dr. ANNETTE HENRY:

Yeah, I am not sure. Definitely I must say I have gone to the union for some personal issues that have been very helpful. I mean, I think sometimes it is definitely important to have them there and be able to feel like I am actually going to the faculty Association on this issue.

I think they have helped me and they are very important but I am thinking about how do we really get to the nitty-gritty of dismantling racism so it is good to have the policies in place.

But how do you really change people's attitudes ? how do we dismantle white supremacy is basically what I would like to say. That, I do not know if the union can do that. But it is good to have the faculty Association there so we can go and they can help us move from point a to point B.

EUNICE OLADEJO:

Yeah, exactly. I think we also have gotten a question specifically from faculty members but this has more to do with science faculty. Someone is saying that they come from a science faculty member perspective and they have seen that the faculty of sciences tend to believe in meritocracy and objectivity but this person is aware that these illusions from their experience as a scientist from an underrepresented group.

They are asking if you have any strategies to engage these folks in EDI activities throughout their activities, so kind of being in a culture where EDI initiatives are not as prevalent, what activities they can enforce to engage these groups in that?

Dr. ANNETTE HENRY:

I do not really understand? So you are saying that because they see the world in such an objective way? Is that what you are saying? That EDI is not as relevant?

EUNICE OLADEJO:

That is what I am understanding. Because of the culture they have seen within the science realm is more of that objective way, things like EDI practices or maybe not as relevant but not as prevalent and not as pushed forward so what they could do?

DR. ANNETTE HENRY:

They should probably talk to the Black scientists about that, but also, what we are talking about, we are talking about is social justice. So if you are doing your experiments, let's say, there's all

kinds of scientists and not all scientists do experiments, but that's one thing. You're saying, this is how I understand the world works and I see the world in eclectic ways.

Fine, see the world and objective ways, but we are talking about how we relate as human beings. So I don't understand how we relate as human beings, that's a subjective experience, the way I relate to you in the way you relate to me is subjective. I also... I don't see the mismatch because we are talking about human relations. How we relate to each other.

EUNICE OLADEJO:

Yeah, I think maybe the follow-up --

DR. ANNETTE HENRY:

Sorry, you said something about meritocracy! Yeah, yeah, meritocracy... So this person's question, what has that got to do with, what is the issue here with meritocracy? We don't live in a meritocracy, so is this person thinking we do?

EUNICE OLADEJO:

No, I think in the culture of science.

DR. ANNETTE HENRY:

Oh yes, yes, well, in academia generally, there is this idea of meritocracy and I think really, what we need to look at is privilege rather than meritocracy. We definitely come in very late terms, talk about the haves and have-nots.

Certain people, let's just say, your parents were professors, this person's parents were professors in this person's parents worked in a factory and the person whose parents are professors, they will come into the universe with more understandings. They are going to be a step ahead, just because of their privileges. I think, when we talk about meritocracy with Black people, I think it's very dangerous, I'm not saying that this person is saying this, but there's a kind of idea which has been said to me, of you were hired because you are Black, rather than you are hired because you are good at what you do because you were the best candidate.

I think we have to be careful when we are talking about race and meritocracy.

EUNICE OLADEJO:

Thank you for that answer. I will move on to our next question, so this person says, as you mentioned earlier, racism is often systemic and can be perpetuated through unconscious biases and practices that may not be readily apparent. So in the context of Canadian universities, what specific strategies or methods do you recommend for identifying and addressing such practices in order to eliminate barriers that disproportionately affect Black faculty and other marginalized groups?

DR. ANNETTE HENRY:

That's one of the reasons why I think it's important to have a quote on quote, diverse faculty. Because some people will notice things, just from background and experience, so to be able to point out some things. I think that's the beauty, if you like, of having a diverse faculty because that disrupt the status quo.

That disrupt things happening the way they have always been. We also have to be careful that the racialized faculty feel comfortable enough to speak up and speak out about things. We also don't want to leave it to just the racialized faculty to do those things.

So one of the things that is happening in my department, actually, and I should give them credit for this, they have been meeting for about two years, they used to be called antiracist luncheons, but now they are called antiracist caucus. They meet on a monthly basis and discuss multiple issues, so they might discuss job ads, they might discuss issues at the University, there is always a theme, where they may take somebody's readings and discuss it as a group.

They have lunch, and its optional, its faculty, staff and students, everybody wants to come. When things are from the bottom up, it's really good rather than imposed upon them. Quite frankly, it really was imposed in the beginning, but I think they turned around and made something good. Actually, you know what, it came out of me being in a faculty, being in a department meeting, and I had said, maybe a little bit on the route said, but I said quite bluntly, "Are we going to continue to hire white people?"

Then the department head gave me a job of having brown bags and I said, "No," Because I felt like I am always doing events and most people in my department don't come to them. The most junior person in the department got the job, but she turned around and has done a marvellous job stop then other people took it on after, and I really have to applaud my department because they have kept it up for two years now. They are taking it very seriously and they have notes and minutes and they log it, she can see what other people talked about.

EUNICE OLADEJO:

This transitions well into our next question, because you talked about tokenism and cultural taxation that can often come with EDI roles or hiring Black staff and so on. How can groups on campus balance this effective and diverse recruitment while ensuring this is not a tokenistic environment?

DR. ANNETTE HENRY:

I think being aware that tokenism does happen, that you aren't placing Black people in a particular position. However, I do think that when you hire Black faculty, there is a sense of, there is more people to call you on it. I think the Black faculty will feel stronger to say, "Hey, wait a minute, you are always asking me to do this."

It takes a bit of education, and I don't know if everyone is going to get there, to really be able to have the analysis to see what is happening. I was in a meeting recently with somebody, -- where somebody made fun of an African name, I don't think she realized it was an African name. These are the small things, what some call micro-regressions, that happen on a daily basis.

For the most part, quite frankly, Eunice, I'm sure you have had this happen, you don't even want to be bothered to call the person on this, I've got bigger fish to fry. So it's a challenge, this whole notion of how we work together on a campus in everyday interactions is a challenge. There's the big issues like hiring and student scholarships and... Job ads and things of that, but then there's the really everyday things where a student decides, "I don't trust you because you are Black and you are my professor- so I don't think you graded my paper well, so I will ask your department head to grade my paper." Those everyday things that happen that are part of working together as a community.

EUNICE OLADEJO:

Yeah, I think those small things that you mentioned and the big things are so interconnected and interwoven that one thing a lot of the times does lead to another in perpetuating a certain type of culture on campus, so I think you definitely raise a good point that at a certain point, it's not just the job of the Black faculty or the Black staff or the black student to carry this weight.

A lot of the times, it is exhausting. I'm just not going to correct you on how to say my name or what not. I think it's a community effort and, sometimes, it's important as faculty and staff to take that step with other Black staff and students to make sure that culture of acceptance and inclusivity is really promoted on campus.

DR. ANNETTE HENRY:

And actually, I think the notion of collective is important. I've seen it happen on the Seattle Washington campus. I am seeing it happen on this campus, and actually, in Chicago, we did this a little bit where there's an issue, and several people of colour, racialized people if you like, go to the dean or department head together and say, "These are the things that are happening or these are the things we are seeing, can we talk about these things?"

The other thing, not to put the department head or the dean or whoever in a position of weakness, let's just say, but sometimes you need a witness. It is nice to have a witness with you sometimes when you have these issues and you go to the Dean and you're not alone, or you want to talk about, or even a faculty Association, you go to a faculty association with somebody because very often, these issues are stressful and you need somebody who is a little bit more neutral to even record or just give you some confidence in talking about issues that are not easy.

These are not easy issues at all.

EUNICE OLADEJO:

Definitely full thank you so much, Dr Henry, that brings us to our final question as we come to the end of the program. So I'm going to pass it back over to Krista, who will close us off.

KRISTA CRAVEN:

Yes, thank you so much. I want to start with a big thank you and share our deep gratitude to Dr Henry for joining us today for the EDI speaker series and for sharing her analysis and insight with us around the nuanced and necessary work of antiracism and how we can think about comprehensively addressing antiblack racism in Canadian universities.

Thank you so much, Dr Henry, we so appreciate you being here. I also want to extend a big thank you to Eunice Oladejo, who is moderating, for doing such a fantastic job of coordinating all aspects of this EDI speaker series and getting anything set up for today, moderating the Q&A, Eunice has been doing all of the work, so thank you so much, Eunice, for all you've done.

Also, the speaker series, I want to note, is something that Ikram Jama, who introduced us today, is something she has been envisioning for a long time, so I want to thank Ikram for bringing these ideas to life and thanks to our Department of equity in inclusive communities for supporting these series and its implementation.

A few more things, I want to thank the ASL interpreters and the live captioners for making this more accessible, and also to our tech support from IMS here at Carleton to ensure things ran as smoothly as possible. And then, thanks to the CRC for funding this, the Corus team at Carleton, Andrea, Sue, Madeleine for their support, accessing and managing the EDI stipend.

And finally, thanks to everyone who is here today who engaged in the session and shared your questions. We really appreciate you joining us and please stay tuned for our next speaker event, which will occur before the semester ends. So thank you so much, everyone.

DR. ANNETTE HENRY:

Thank you.

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