Resisting white supremacy at Earlham

A HISTORY AND RESOURCE GUIDE FOR EARLHAM’S WHITE COMMUNITY

March 10, 2006
THANK YOU

This packet would not have been possible without the initiative and passion of Elly Porter-Webb, who constantly challenged us to wake up and take action against white supremacy at Earlham. We appreciate the time and energy of all of those who granted us interviews by phone or email, including Shenita Piper, Kathy Taylor, Wendy Selligman, Tom Hamm, Stephen Butler, Doug Bennet, Landrum Bolling, Daniel Hunter, Zachary Metz, Joe Lopez, Krista Alderson, Sunu Chandy, Andres Conteris, Sadie Forsythe, Jason Shenk, Allan Gibbons, Robert Meeropol, and Gypsy Swanger.

PLEASE NOTE

Since the first printing, we have made some corrections to our statement of purpose to more closely reflect our intentions and to clarify some questions we have already received. We also removed the page on Michelle Collins-Sibley because we discovered it to be inaccurate and added some recent events to the history on page six. Other minor editing corrections have been made. Please let us know if there are other mistakes you find while reading this packet so they can be corrected for the second edition.
This packet was made by six white students to address the pervasive and destructive nature of white supremacy in the world and on this campus that all too often goes unnoticed and unaddressed by white people. This is an attempt to highlight the importance of white responsibility in challenging white supremacy; it is an attempt to show how we as white people directly contribute to, are affected by, and almost always benefit from racism in every aspect of our lives. We acknowledge the historic weight that the phrase white supremacy carries, but we find this term useful to talk about racism in a way that places the responsibility on white people.

Although this packet is for all members of the Earlham community, it is especially geared towards the white members of this community, including students, administrators, faculty, board members, presidents, and staff members. If we do not open ourselves up to the necessity of combating racism at Earlham, in all spaces (physical, emotional, and intellectual), nothing will ever change. The realization that we all share responsibility for the continued presence of white supremacy must be owned and understood on this campus, in our ordinary, infinite, and infinitely powerful everyday lives. Our good intentions are not only not enough, they are actively destructive when based in the comfortable ignorance our privilege affords us.

One thing this packet is not is definitive or perfect. It is not an end-in-itself, and we do not intend it to be. That said, we take full responsibility for everything which is included in it and everything which is not. This is one more contribution, one more resource, in the continued effort to hold ourselves as white people accountable for racism at Earlham College. We envision a future time at which there can be a general semblance of a collective effort across difference to combat white supremacy. Before white people can effectively contribute to that effort we need to do a lot of work to understand white supremacy and how we contribute to it.

As to the contents of this packet, the following pages include history, analyses, queries, definitions, opinions, quotes, Earlham Word articles, interviews, and tools.

One issue we find it essential to address is that most information included in this packet is reflective of a black-white lens that often defines the terms of conversations about race. This packet does not pretend to move beyond this binary view of race; we are cognizant of its limitations and acknowledge their problematic nature. Racism and white supremacy permeate every moment of all of our lives; oppression works on many levels, on more than two groups of people – racism is a fact in the lives of all people of color. We are situated in relation to privilege and oppression not only by our race, but also and inevitably by our gender, class, sexual orientation, physical ability, and education (to mention a few of innumerable factors). The analysis provided here is not adequate, but it does attempt to acknowledge the pervasive and multi-faceted nature of the subject matter.

The history included in this packet is not meant to be comprehensive or finished. Rather, it is a collection of several examples of white supremacy and resistance at Earlham from the mid-20th century to the present. The purpose of such an admittedly incomplete history, which we see as crucial, is to combat the historical amnesia that keeps us from seeing the history of racism and resistance on this campus. This is not a history of “progress.” Some important gains have been made in the fight against racism at Earlham, the results of continuous efforts of people of color and their allies. However, these small gains can be countered by an overwhelmingly disproportionate amount of evidence that shows that, for some time, not much has changed in how racism functions here.

In fact, what we are trying to say has already been said by countless people of color on this campus, throughout Earlham’s history. Earlham, as an institution and as a community, needs to make a commitment to anti-racism, not just diversity. Moreover, it is the primary responsibility of the white people of this community to make the commitment which has been asked of us for so long with neither sufficient action nor response.

What does the constant fight by people of color to raise the issue of racism mean, if not that white people are constantly racist?

Lastly, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, we want to hear them. We welcome all and all types of responses.

Thank you for your time.

**CONTACT:**

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<td>Greg Elliott</td>
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<td>Gillian Connolly</td>
<td>connogi</td>
<td>2992 433</td>
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<td>Laura Sweitzer</td>
<td>sweitla</td>
<td>2697 1632</td>
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<td>Ellie Taylor</td>
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**RESISTING WHITE SUPREMACY AT EARLHAM**

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### Useful Definitions

#### Racism:
Racism: A system of advantage (disadvantage) based on race. Racism is prejudice plus power. Racism is different from racial prejudice because racism has to do with the power that comes from one’s social ranking as a member of the dominant group.

#### White Supremacy:
White Supremacy is an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent, for the purposes of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege.

The most common mistake people make when talking about racism (White Supremacy) is to think of it as a problem of personal prejudices and individual acts of discrimination. They do not see that it is a system, a web of interlocking, reinforcing institutions: political, economic, social, cultural, legal, military, educational, all our institutions. By not understanding that racism is systemic, we guarantee that it will continue.

The need to recognize racism as being systemic is one reason the term White Supremacy is more useful than the term racism. They refer to the same problem but:

A. The purpose of racism is much clearer when we call it “white supremacy.” The word “supremacy” means a power relationship exists.

B. Although racism is a social reality, it has no biological or other scientific basis. Race is an unscientific term for differences between people; there is a single human race.

C. The term racism often leads to dead-end debates about whether a particular remark or action by an individual white person was really racist or not. We will achieve a clearer understanding of racism if we analyze how a certain action relates to the system of White Supremacy. The term White Supremacy gives white people a clear choice of opposing an inhuman system or not.

#### Whiteness:
Whiteness is a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white.

*From “What is Whiteness?” in Paul Kivel’s book Uprooting Racism, 15.*

#### White privilege:
U.S. institutions and culture give preferential treatment to people whose ancestors came from Europe over peoples whose ancestors are from the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Arab world; and exempt European Americans – white people – from the forms of racial and national oppression inflicted upon peoples form the Americas, Africa, Asia and the Arab world.

This web of institutional and cultural preferential treatment is called white privilege. In a white supremacy system, white privilege and racial oppression are two sides of the same coin.

*From Sharon Martinas, “Shinin’ the Lite on White: White Privilege,” 2.*

#### Intent versus impact:
Out intent is invisible to the other person; however, our impact is not. It is the impact, or effect, of an action or statement that the other experiences. Intent and impact are not always the same, and this disconnect is often a source of tension across race. Whites (or members of a mainstream group) tend to focus on their intention, not on the impact of their actions. So they may feel angry or hurt when someone’s reaction does not seem to recognize their intention. People of color (or folks in a marginalized group) focus on impact. For regardless of someone’s intention, the effect is still real. Some actions of statements are not in themselves racist; however, they may have that impact.

Racism:
more than a word

Published in the Earlham Word, March 12, 1999
By Angelita Hampton

Racism.
That word should have tremendous
impact for everyone every time they read
it. Yet we often do not critically consider
the extent of our words.
I have assumed a major undertaking in
this article - to define racism and offer an
analysis of what must occur for us to
move toward racial justice. So I entreat
you to concentrate on every word and
know that there is true meaning behind it.

Feel its impact. Know that every word
describing oppression or exclusion is
describing the very existence of millions
of people. Feel the impact.
I am writing in response to an article in
last week's Word, and I want to start by
addressing the title of that article: "Let's
stand together against racism." Before we
try to do this, let's clearly delineate what
the role of whites is and what the role of
people of color is.

In fighting for racial justice, people of
color must be self-empowered to recog-
nize and address our own needs. We need
to fight our own oppression and refuse to
be discredited, marginalized, exploited,
and destroyed. We must have a command-
ing presence, lending us visibility and
fighting power.
There is a different struggle for whites.
First, it must be understood that racism is
not merely a personal issue. Whether you
like me or get along with me is really not
the point. It is not simply an issue of
whether "we can all get along"; it is an
issue of whether we can all have equal
access and equal empowerment. Whites
need to recognize the privilege of white
skin, the privilege of having your exist-
tence be normative and dominant.

So how do self-empowered people of
color and self-reflective whites interact in
a community? I will address this question
through a discussion of diversity.

The concept of diversity needs to be
clarified on this campus and we need new
terminology. Diversity simply means dif-
fERENCE and numbers of people, but num-
bers of different kinds of people does not
make for an equal, just, and conscientious
community.

Rather than aim simply for a "diverse
environment" our goal should be to
achieve an actively anti-racist environ-
ment. Those are two radically different
concepts.

One says, "I will tolerate that you are
here and I may even accept you and inter-
act with you." The other says, "I will be
conscious of your existence and culture
and I will be critical of my privilege and
actively eliminate those aspects of my
thinking, actions, or understanding of the
world that in any way exclude, exploit,
discriminate against, or devalue people of
color."

To make the kind of commitment that
the latter statement suggests takes tremen-
dous effort because it means that you have
to be constantly conscious and active. But
how could you do anything short of that?
To eliminate racism on some fronts but
not others, or to be conscious of it only at
times will never be enough to destroy it.

"Celebration of our diversity" will be a
byproduct of anti-racism and critical con-
sciousness. But this cannot come before
commitment to anti-racism because you

Angelita Hampton was a junior
Psychology and African and African
American Studies major.
We have put these events together in an attempt to create a “useable history”, to educate Earlham about what has happened in our past, that you might take this new knowledge and learn from it. We specifically went looking through Earlham’s history to find evidence of events that have worked to support and uphold the system of white supremacy at Earlham, as well as events that worked to challenge it. We found many instances, and recognize that this is only a fraction of Earlham’s racist history. We include these bigger events, but acknowledge that these are merely events that drew more attention at the time and are not the only events that pertain to white supremacy in Earlham’s past and present. Racist behavior is an every day occurrence on Earlham’s campus. We present this list of events in the hopes that people realize Earlham does not exist separate from the world, its power structures, and the system of white supremacy.

Earlham was an all white space for the first thirty three years of its existence. The first African-American student and the first Native American student both enrolled in 1880. (Hamm, 46)

Tom Barr, a 1921 Earlham graduate and a Quaker pastor, was a national Klan leader. He did some recruiting on campus, resulting in two students joining, both Quakers. Their names both appear on local Klan membership rolls. (Hamm, 152)

Though the first black student at Earlham enrolled in 1880, the first black student to graduate, Clarence Cunningham, did not graduate until 1924. However, while here, he was not allowed to “head” a table in the dining hall, as was traditional for seniors. Also, the Glee Club and the drama group both refused to accept him as a member. (Hamm, 152)

Under President Dennis, who came to office in 1929, all action regarding diversity or fighting racism came to a standstill. Few black students were admitted, and interracial dating, which became a focus for Dennis, was unacceptable. Black speakers continued to come, but were not allowed to speak on race relations. (Hamm, 153)

In the 1930s, black students were allowed to play football, but Earlham “bowed to the informal state rule that Negroes are banned from indoor sports in Indiana.” (Hamm, 175)

In December 1943, James Turner, a black student, asked a white girl to an Earlham dance. Dean Comstock “counseled” the woman involved and President Dennis met with Turner, who afterwards backed down, fearful of losing his scholarship. (Hamm, 175)

In May, 1947, Earlham students picketed two Richmond restaurants to desegregate. Then President Jones forbade students to participate in such behavior. He allowed only discussion and study and NO ACTION. (Hamm, 204)

The interracial dating policy, introduced by President Dennis in the early 1940s, was not removed until after President Jones’ retirement in 1958. (Hamm, 206)

The first black professor at Earlham, William Cousins, a sociology professor, came in 1966. He left after only two years. (Hamm, 258)

Simba Lewis, an African-American Earlham student, wrote in the 1970s that the atmosphere at Earlham was “very covert but very hostile.” (Hamm, 260)

In 1974, the position of Assistant Dean for Minority Affairs was created. The full-time position of Director of Multi Cultural Affairs was not created until 2000. (Hamm, 311)

In 1977, a group of visiting African-American alumni wrote that there was an “almost total lack of meaningful commu-

“One of the things that strikes me about campus activism is that students don’t know the history of their own campus. They think that they are almost permanent fixtures on the campus. At the stage of your life when you come to campus, you’re 18 and think you’re gonna be somewhere for four years and that seems like an awfully long time. The reality is that students are transient. They come and go, the administration stays, faculty stays for decades in many cases. I am unaware of any campus in which students make an effort to research and provide entering students with a student history of what went on in that campus.”

-Robert Meeropol, Word article

1980s: South Africa apartheid divestment were the focus of consistent protests on campus during this time, as it was on many college campuses. Students camped outside the Board of Trustees meeting in the early 1980s, building a shanty-town in front of Carpenter. Students felt positively about their efforts, though the Board did not change its policy; many Board members bought into the “Sullivan Principles” which allowed investing in companies that agreed to a Code of Conduct, including certain standards of rights for black employees.

The Class of ’88 put their senior gift to the college “in escrow” until Earlham divested from Apartheid investments, which Earlham never did. (Hamm, 312)

In April 1989, racist graffiti was found in a Runyan bathroom. (Hamm, 311) See page 7 for a case study on this incident and its aftermath.
**1983: Joyce Foundation**

In 1983, Earlham received a grant from the Joyce Foundation specifically for the purpose of increasing enrollment of African-American students. This money was put into the existing budget for increasing the African-American student population, but at the same time Earlham withdrew the same amount of “its own money” from the budget. The result was that there was no increase in the amount of funding for increased enrollment of African-American students. This process is sometimes referred to as “budget-relieving” – technically, the funds are not misappropriated, because it is “Earlham’s money” that is taken out of the budget. In practice, there is no increase in funds for the specified cause, even though a grant is generally seen as furnishing supplemental funds, in addition to, for example, a budget that is already in place. Students saw this as fraudulent and insulting. Earlham had the chance to double their efforts with regard to “diversity,” a huge administration catchword at the time, but did not take it.

In 1991, an alumni wrote in a letter, “Every time a racial incident occurs, we get a race seminar. No action is being taken.” (Hamm, 311)

April, 1999 marked the formation of Black Men United in an effort to increase the voice of African-Americans on campus; they were only the second organization specifically for students of color. (Word article, 10.1.99, Evans)

Minority Senior Speak Out, a former Earlham tradition that stopped in 2001, provided an opportunity for minority seniors to share their experiences at Earlham and to address problems they have encountered. (Recordings are available in Media Resources.)

A Student of Color Day of Silence occurred on March 9, 2001. For more information, see page 18.

In April, 2002, Spectrum hosted a conversation about racism in the LGBTQ+ community.

In February, 2006, the individuals who stole kitchen utensils from SAGA left behind a swastica made out of forks. Swastica’s had previously been drawn on Jewish residents white boards and painted on the wall of Barrett’s basement in fall of 2004. Swasticas were also drawn on the walls of an Earlham Hall stairwell in the spring of 2005.

**1993: Big May Day**

Significant student action centered around the “Big May Day” celebration in 1993. Little May Days happened every year; these alternated with Big May Days, which happened every four years. Big May Day, in essence, was a celebration of the culture of Elizabethan England, catered toward older alumni who supply a significant amount of donation dollars for Earlham. Big May Day was completely funded by the administration, and was the single biggest campus-wide event in every four-year cycle. The 1993 protests began as a group of concerned students from various student organizations (BLAC, Women of Color, and JSU were significant participants) who wanted to dialogue with administration about the problematic nature of Big May Day. Concerns included that the celebration was completely exclusive of other cultures and traditions; that there was no comparable administration-funded event representing non-white cultures; that the event was driven primarily by the office of the president and not by student input; and that there was no acknowledgment of the atrocities being committed by Elizabethan England during the same time period that May Day was celebrated (think world-wide imperialism and colonization). When concerns were voiced to the president, Dick Wood, was resistant to dialogue. Students felt dismissed. They were given the option of setting up “cultural villages” around the perimeter of the Heart – they were literally asked to marginalize themselves. On the date of the May Day celebration (at which Dick Woods and his wife presided on horseback as “King and Queen”), the alliance of student-leaders took over the stage. A representative from each student organization presented a short statement on how the May Day celebration was problematic with regard to the group with which they identified. The protest was short and to the point. President Dick Wood responded by stuffing all 4th-year students’ mailboxes with both a virulently racist letter from an elderly woman alumnus (which included a statement beginning with, “I like Chinese food, but…”) decrying the student protest, and a letter from Wood applauding the alumna letter as a “thoughtful critique” of the May Day protest. Students responded by distributing a letter summarizing administration response at graduation to all attendant parents and family.
On April 20, 1989, racist graffiti was found in the men’s bathroom in Runyan. The graffiti was found on a Thursday evening, the day before the then two-day UMOJA celebration. While the graffiti itself was very offensive, what makes this incident stand out in Earlham’s history is the reaction it received from both the white and Black communities at Earlham.

Many white students were shocked, finding it hard to believe that racism like this exists at Earlham, a mentality still prevalent on campus today. Some students were more aware of the significance of the graffiti, as one student commented, “I’m appalled that it happened, but not surprised. Racism is hidden at Earlham.”

In response to the graffiti, an all student meeting was quickly scheduled for the next day, Friday, at 11 a.m. This meeting was attended by mostly white people, and the people that spoke were also mostly white people. At noon, after the meeting, a vigil was held to kick-off UMOJA.

Though this vigil had been planned for months, the Palladium-Item suggested in an article that it was in response to the graffiti, which further enraged students. Several white faculty and administrators commented on the fact that the reason the graffiti was so offensive was because it “is a physical evidence of racism that runs deeper…the unconscious racism…is the problem.” Another faculty responded to the incident very strongly, stating, “We should be asking ourselves, ‘Am I a racist?’ Any intelligent person growing up in this society will answer yes because that is how we have been socialized.”

All of this contrasts sharply with the response from many Black students. One student, who chose to remain anonymous, was quoted in the Word, saying that “things will basically be the same [though] people will be more cautious of what they say.” Many students were angered by the way white students let the focus on the graffiti overshadow UMOJA, in itself a racist act.

In response to this event, there were several meetings held and a seminar on race was held the following weekend. However, the most direct response came from a white student in the form of a fiery letter entitled “White people: wake up” printed in the Word on May 5.

### White people: Wake up

Published in the Earlham Word, May 5, 1989 By Scott Crabtree

These are the comments of a straight, white, male regarding the racist incidents at Earlham. These comments are not nice, pleasant, or very reconciling. They are intended mostly for my fellow white students at Earlham.

Personally I am disgusted by the whole thing - and I’m not talking about the racist graffiti. I’m talking about the naive, over-emotional, sensationalist reaction by all the white people who “care so much” about the pristine white liberal campus where we don’t like such things.

I think that they (white students) are upset because it’s their wall, and they want to be known as clean, nice, upstanding, educated, white people. And here, at this clean, white, middle class, liberal college dedicated to equality, no matter how much we try to cover it up, the racist (and sexist, and classist, and heterosexist, ad nauseam) nature of the system to which we are so tightly bound, to which we are so greatly indebted for our economic, educational, and other privileges, comes oozing out of the toilet and splatters itself on our clean little shitter. (We know it’s clean, because that Black lady comes in and washes it every day!)

So what do we do? All the white people get together and spill their guts – how horrible it is that this mess is on our wall. We can’t have this, not at our school, not in our clean little Utopia. No, we won’t stand for it. We gather together in somber reflection on the horrible nature of this incident, condemning the man who did this.

Which makes me wonder: Who wrote that stuff anyway? Was he in the audience [at the all student meeting]? Maybe he was the one who gave that moving speech? Point is, he could have been there, and probably was, loving it all. In other words, his shit is our shit. He is us. We are him. But let’s not get side-tracked onto the real issue...

Let’s go support those poor Black people in their celebration. They must be feeling sooooo bad about what happened (on our wall). They must feel so bad about us. As if this graffiti was so god-damned important to the Black people. As if this ONE incident, an isolated, and even mild (in comparison) incident, is going to matter so much, because it happened at this pristine white liberal campus where we don’t like such things.

The fact of the matter, fellow white people, is that this isn’t even this tip of the iceberg. It’s maybe one hydrogen atom in the very tip molecule at the tip of the iceberg. Racist graffiti? It happens all the time, wherever there are white people. Yes, white people, just like you and me. And it is only a part of the spectrum of violent acts committed all the time in Racist America.

But wait, this isn’t nice. Racist America is the real world. Let’s go back to Earlham where it’s nice.

Earlham, where everything, including the racism, is nice. Yes, let’s be so nice. Let’s tell all our Black friends (“Some of my best friends are Black!”) how bad we feel, how sorry we are for them. Let’s let them know how distressing all of this is to us.

Well how many of us actually took the time to ask one of the Black people what they really thought of all this white-wash hullabaloo?? If you had to keep your ears open, you wouldn’t have even needed to ask. The vast majority if Black people I heard (talking to the other Black people, but in public where it was obvious they could be overheard) found the white uproar “silly,” “patronizing,” “self-inflating,” and “insulting.” In a word, people, it was RACIST! As racist as the writing on the wall.

And if it wasn’t racist then:
1) Why was most of the attention during UMOJA week, a celebration by and for
BLACK PEOPLE, FOCUSED ON A WHITE MAN’S ACTIONS AND DOMINATED BY WHITE PEOPLE’S REACTIONS TO THAT ACTION?

2) Why did Black people feel patronized, insulted, and belittled?

3) Why did a Black woman who just read a draft of this essay/diatribe say that most Black people here would agree with this, but they could never say it?

White people, I hope you understand what I’m saying. You see, when it really comes down to it, to end racism will mean to end your privilege, our privilege, my privilege. And, you silly white people, we silly white people, I don’t think we’re really ready to do that. We’re willing to share it, maybe, with other Black people, as long as they act “civilized,” “educated,” and WHITE.

Racism is our problem, and part of that problem is being totally white-centered in our thinking. So, here, on the weekend of Black celebration, we totally upstaged the Black people and drew all the attention to ourselves.

Look, if you really care, if you really want to change, get out there and do something. BUT PLEASE STOP FOOLING YOURSELVES!!! DON’T THINK THAT GETTING UP AND BEATING YOU CHEST AT EARLHAM IS GOING TO DO ANYTHING!!!

To change this world will take a revolution unlike any we have ever seen before. If you really want change, get off your soapbox, and get down to earth. And stop committing subtle, yet just as vile, acts of racism such as the patronizing and belittling protests we have seen here recently…The only think to do now is act.”

Graffiti, cont.

Late September – Signs are posted by Earlham Security and a member of the Mock Trial team that invoke racial stereotypes.

Also Late September – The initial planning meetings for the Anti-Racist Caucus (ARC), consisting of all white students, began at this time. After meeting with students from BSU, ARC holds two mini-trainings/discussions on racism, which were geared towards educating white students, but with the observation of students of BSU and a documentation of the proceedings. The first meeting had over 30 people in attendance (roughly) and the second had less than 15.

From “Racial issues demand campus attention,” by Deb McNish, Oct. 7:

“Students expressed their anger and frustration about the covert nature of racism on our campus. They feel that the institution stands behind a history of strong peace and civil rights work. The community is veiled in liberal politics, political correctness, and a stale friendliness that gives everyone an “I’m not a racist” badge when they arrive at Earlham. All the work to be done is done, but problems persist.”

From “Convo speaker prompts racial discussion,” by Silas Girmay and Joi Johnson, Oct. 21

“To take away color is to take away, in many cases, culture and experience, which is a dangerous aspect of “color blindness” that Loury didn’t divulge to any extent. To remove race is to remove part of a person’s identity. To remove race is to deny white privilege. Both are equally condemnable, and in themselves seem to be a facton of racism. Why is it that on this campus, we revel in celebrating diversity, especially international diversity, yet in the same breath embrace color-blindness? By embracing the idea that color is not important or relevant, diversity is being undermined.

Fall 2005 Revisited

Considering the events of last semester, it is clear that there was and is a demand for action to address racism at Earlham. What have you done in response?

To be color blind is just as dangerous as stereotypical racism. By ignoring race, in many cases history is being ignored, and assumptions about marginalized groups and equal opportunity make for distorted views of the varying experiences of diversified groups.”

Oct. 25 – DIALOGUE hosts a lunch on the topic of race at Earlham. Over one hundred people attend. After presentations by black alumni, faculty, and students and discussions in small groups, the major themes that emerged were concerns about admissions policies, the dangers of tokenization, the structural nature of racism, and the need for courage in discussing race matters.

Nov. 16 – Joi Johnson raises many important issues regarding racism at the all campus meeting on Principles & Practices. From the Nov. 18 word article, by Andy Hickman: “You can’t focus on ‘respect for persons’ without focusing on race.” Speaking particularly to the ‘privileged, white students,’ Johnson appealed to the campus ‘need to be more proactive with regards to Principles & Practices’ and ‘not engage commentary arising in the midst of controversy but decline in importance quickly.’ Finishing her speech with a call to ‘recognize institutionalized racism at Earlham College,’ the auditorium filled with applause.”

Nov. 30 – Faculty meeting discusses race on campus. From the Dec. 2 article, by Anna Benfield: “The faculty discussion ranged from admissions recruitment, persistence rates among African American students, diversity within diversity, structural versus personal issues with racism, and how to address racial stereotypes.” The article has much more depth on the discussion.

Resisting White Supremacy at Earlham
**From Diversity to Anti-Racism**

**Multiculturalism**

**Diversity**- All the ways in which we are different.

**Multiculturalism**- Embracing multiple cultures’ ways of being and seeing the world, shifting from one world view to multiple world view. It explores the cultural aspects of different races and ethnic groups such as their art, food, dance and sometimes family values, etc.

**Multiculturalism**, alone, does not explore the power relationships between groups (i.e., dynamics of dominant and subordinate relations). It assumes all groups are equal and are the same except for their culture. Sometimes organizations use faulty reasoning that if we can learn to appreciate and accept each others’ difference we could all learn to get along. It is more powerful and complete to work at both multiculturalism and racism.


“Behind the rhetoric and hype about multiculturalism and honoring diversity lurk the same attitudes of entitlement and privilege that form part of structural racism. For the most part, these white people haven’t done the work necessary to become allies to people of color. They know little or nothing about current global struggles of people of color, as we define and articulate them.”

-Joanna Kadi, *Moving from Cultural Appropriation toward Ethical Cultural Connections, 86.*

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**We’ve particularly shifted in the way our institution looks, but the question is how much have we shifted on an individual basis the ways in which we think in regards to diversity.”**

- Shenita Piper- Director of Multicultural Affairs

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Earlham’s Diversity Aspirations Vision Statement, a document that mirrors demands made by black students made in the late 1960’s and again by the Multicultural Alliance in the mid 1990’s was approved by the Earlham College faculty February 20, 2002. The statement – available in its entirety at [http://www.earlham.edu/~diversity/vision.html](http://www.earlham.edu/~diversity/vision.html), immediately recognizes that it is only a step in a journey. The statement claims that Earlham College “welcomes the contributions of divergent voices as we seek to foster a deep, shared sense of purpose” and quotes the principles and practices as a reminder that, “To be a genuinely diverse community we must expect and welcome changes and transformations.”

What do these statements of commitment really imply? What kinds of changes and transformations might we be claiming to welcome and need to be willing to welcome if we are serious about a commitment to fighting racism?

It may mean that we as white people need to stick our necks out- the willingness to truly listen and engage in dialogue. It may mean finding the courage to acknowledge that white people – even well intentioned, conscious white people – uphold, contribute to, and benefit from systems of oppression. It may imply coming to the realization that everyone you love – including the folks who raised you – are racist too. Welcoming diversity and change at Earlham may mean taking a step away from our constant Quaker way of doing things. Welcoming change means welcoming all styles of communication – not just “Quaker Speak” It means listening to anger, validating anger – not just getting defensive or taking a moment of silence – but allowing the impact of rage to roll over you and trying the best you can to learn from it and change your ways. Maybe that’s what this change we claim to welcome looks like.

We celebrate and affirm the importance of diversifying our community. An increase in diversity brings with it the potential for growth and transformation.

However, numbers are the easy part, especially with a little money to put behind those goals. We are not yet diverse enough as a college, but we need to work towards more than just diversity. Working against white supremacy requires true dialogue, maybe even conflict- we hate conflict- we need to get over that.
Many students have heard of or participated in the working group on diversity. Charged in September 2000 by President Doug, it began this semester to meet and "undertake renewed focused work with regard to our aspiration to diversity."

After its wide consultation with members of the community regarding diversity, the members of the working group will create a plan of action.

Recently, as readers may know, Queer House signs advertising for applicants were repeatedly torn down. A number of groups have acted to address these hate crimes and underlying issues of homophobia and heterosexism.

Concerned students and faculty on campus, including Black Men United (BMU), Black Leadership Action Committee (BLAC), and Cunningham Cultural Center (CCC) have posted signed petitions condemning the anonymous actions.

Student Development has raised the issue and is looking into ways to better address these sorts of issues such as improving diversity in its RA training.

In all these happenings, there is hope. Personally, I find the energy with which different groups are finding ways to address these issues unique and encouraging.

I also want to be a critical thinker about these issues. I am insistent that uncovering the truth of our own prejudices must be a high priority.

There is potential for the diversity working group to uncover important and hard truths.

There are also real concerns. Some students have raised issues with the group, their main contention being that, like most committees President Doug creates, it has no decision-making power and can only make recommendations.

President Doug says he hopes the committee's final plan will be submitted "to appropriate parts of our governance process for approval."

A number of years ago, a similar committee was created and they formed a plan. Little, if anything, was done with the plan.

We need to be prepared to move beyond mouthing words condemning hate crimes and mouthing condolences to victims. We need to take positive steps to halt injustice.

Furthermore, it is not the responsibility of the targets of systematic injustice to defend themselves.

Those in power have a moral responsibility to do all they can to make systematic changes to eliminate the causes of these injustices.

I think this predicament requires an approach involving truth-telling and simultaneous acting. Some questions that might be raised:

*How many people of color have been denied tenure? What was the reason we gave? How might racial prejudice play a part in these situations?*

*What has happened to many, especially minority, teaching faculty who speak out? Part of the answer seems to be that they do not get tenure.*

*Why do diversity conversations often stay at the surface level except when behind closed-doors? Let's look for some answers in our history. What happened to the Multicultural Alliance about ten years ago when it "demanded" serious changes? (Part of the answer is that it was forcibly disbanded as an organization!)*

*Why do so many of the "minority" Humanities books shift and change while we always keep the Greek classics?*

*Are faculty encouraged to continue to learn widely and apply their intercultural learning?*

These are only some of the questions which linger.

Let us answer them fully and follow them closely with measures to realign ourselves with attitudes encouraging positive diversity. The MIR (multicultural) requirement is one example of attempting to realign our values. Some other actions that might be taken:

* Create spaces, such as a time within faculty meeting, for voices that feel quieted to speak up and be heard.

* Have Earlham participate in a Freedom of Information Act where people know where and how to get a hold of pertinent statistics (i.e. how many white professors got tenure, how many did not, etc.).

* Instead of one person devoted to "Multicultural Affairs," crammed into an office no larger than a closet, we should have a staff team supporting students' voices.

We could change our perception of Multicultural Affairs not as a separate area but as a department that is integral to everything we do.

* Write a public letter institutionally to Congress calling them to strike down the bill passed by the Senate which would cut all affirmative action funding for minorities (applicable to ALL institutions of higher education on ANY federal funding!).

These are only some ideas to play with and mold.

As action without faith is empty, faith and truth without action are dead.

Daniel Hunter was a senior Conflict Transformation major.
Doug Bennett

September 5, 2001 – From the Convocation Entitled “Race Matters at Earlham”

I’ve been working my way towards voicing these propositions:

First, race matters because, as a nation, we cheated on our founding ideals by systematically denying liberty and equality on the basis of race. And thus race matters because still today the distributions of good things — money, education, employment, health, for example — are systematically biased by race.

Second, race is a bogus category biologically, yet it matters a great deal because each of us has ascribed to us a nearly indelible racial identity that has been socially and historically constructed.

Third, race matters because human beings of many races have struggled against and risen above the predicaments of racial categorizing to realize great triumphs and accomplishments in every variety of human endeavor. Those triumphs and accomplishments are worth knowing, and can only be fully known, by understanding the race-saturated terrain on which they were won.

Fourth, race needs to matter to the White members of our community as much as it has been made to matter to the Black, Hispanic, Asian American and Native American members of our community. The White members of our community need to break out of unconscious acquiescence into self-conscious awareness of the undeserved privileges that attach to being seen as White.

Fifth, an education in the liberal arts and sciences is the best strategy for dealing with the double consciousness which Du Bois describes as undermining the self-confidence of Blacks. And an education in the liberal arts and sciences is the best strategy for coming to terms with Whiteness. No one should be seen, simply or primarily, as a White person or a Black person. Among our goals in liberal education are to free each individual as much as we can from having a racial identity ascribed to him, and to equip each individual, so far as possible, to shape her own identity, herself, from the full range of cultural resources which human beings have fashioned.

And sixth, for decades, Earlham had only a half-hearted commitment to racial justice. Today I believe we are making a whole-hearted commitment, but we need clearer thinking and continuing honest dialogue with one another to give force and effect to that whole-hearted commitment. We need strategies we can unite in supporting that will be honest and effective on the tricky terrain of race.

“The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line,” says Du Bois. What shall we say of the twenty-first?

I want to close by making one specific proposal. I’ve stressed today that I believe we need to talk about race as a community — all of us, not just some of us. At lunch today we had one such opportunity, but we need others. And there are other important topics about which we could use opportunities to talk as a whole community — students, faculty and staff. For the past several years, we’ve found ourselves wondering what is the best way to observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Some have argued it should be a day off. Others have urged that we honor the memory of Martin Luther King Jr. by having ‘a day on,’ going about our regular activities of teaching and learning. I propose that we observe King’s birthday each year by making it a day that we use to talk about important matters facing our community — like race.

March, 1998 – From President Doug’s inauguration speech

We aspire to become a more diverse community. We aspire to become a crossroads community that extends an invitation and a welcome to the whole of the human family. Why? For this simple reason: we believe we will educate each individual better if our community genuinely embraces the whole of the human family. Diversity is not a goal in addition to educational excellence. It is a goal at the very center of educational excellence. We learn from each other what it means to be human, and what the possibilities are. We will learn much less if we only learn from others who closely resemble us. Recognizing the challenge of diversity—not just at Earlham but around the world—has been the work of the century just coming to an end. Dealing successfully with that challenge must be a global accomplishment of the next few decades. Because we believe there is that of God in each and every human being, I believe Earlham can be at the forefront of this accomplishment.

I am certain the commitment to diversity here is broadly shared. No single goal was mentioned more often or more forcefully in the conversations I have been having during the past few months. Why, then, have we not made more progress? For two reasons, I think. We have not had a plan bold enough and specific enough for achieving that goal. Good intentions will not be enough. And we have not yet fully grasped that embracing diversity will require each and every one of us to make changes. We do need more African-American faculty, more Hispanic staff and students. We need more in our curriculum and campus programming that is grounded in and speaks to the plurality of humankind. But it is the small, warm, half-conscious things we do that make newcomers feel welcome and at home in our community. We will all have to make adjustments and reach a little further if we are to extend a broader welcome. This cannot be the work of a few. We must have confidence that each of us shares the goal wholeheartedly. And we will all work on the goal of diversity together, or we will not make progress at all.
“Doug, actions speak louder than words.”
-Banner hung at his convocation Wed. Jan. 18, 2006

Many of the issues Doug brings up in the two speeches on the opposite page are reminiscent of demands already made in Earlham's history by the Multicultural Alliance. The Multicultural Alliance was formed in response to Big May Day protests in 1993.

1994: Multicultural Alliance Demands

On Friday May 13th, 1994, a group of students from the Multicultural Alliance met with Len Clark to present a list of demands generated at the May 9th all-student meeting. The list was addressed to then-president Dick Wood, but since Wood was off campus on business, Len Clark received the students. The following are excerpts from the list of demands:

Curricular changes included:
- restructuring of general education requirements
- turning humanities into a program where multiculturalism will no longer be marginalized
- transforming the African/African-American Studies program into a department [that] would provide stability and the opportunity for growth
- the addition of questions about multiculturalism to course and faculty evaluations

Faculty and administration changes included:
- hire and retain more professors and administrators of color, including tenure track faculty
- include at least two students on the Board of Trustees
- review decision-making processes to include more student input

Student life changes included:
- recruit and retain students of color
- create a plan for a permanent Multicultural Center
- expand criteria of exemptions, ‘and ‘increase institutional support for students with children

At the time Len Clark reacted to the demands as follows:

“The tone of the letter and the language used, the language of deadlines and ‘this must be accomplished’… sounds like it is not asking for discussion… Now that’s a big problem, because Earlham operates in a broadly consultative structure… The language of the demands appears to say the president ought to fix this or change it. The president doesn’t have the power in our governance structure. I suppose he has the power legally, but to ask the president to accede to these demands would be to change the whole way we govern ourselves… What we get here is no recognition that this has ever been discussed by anybody. We’re going to have to figure out the terms under which we discuss these things first. I thought we all understood that… Can changes be made? Sure, but not here, by a set of demands and a timetable.”


Queries:

What do you think about President Doug’s statements and proposals?

What do you notice about the language that is used?

Did you know before you read this that President Doug stated that “Diversity” was one of his priorities as president?

Do you think President Doug has followed through on his statements? If not, what should he do?

Who’s holding Doug accountable? Are you?
Black Faculty/Staff Retainment

Over nine years of work by student staff, the AAAS department pieced together an annual review called “Intouch” in January of 1987. The publication included several articles, statements by the president of BLAC and head of the department, as well as lists of African-American professors and students. The fact that this issue of “Intouch” was Vol. I, No. I, the first and last AAAS review published at Earlham is telling. There was little to no institutional support for the continuation of “Intouch”; this issue was organized and funded entirely by the AAAS department. Also telling is the fact that “Intouch” provided the first and previously non-existent record of black alumni of Earlham – the college itself kept no such record. A look at the list of African-American professors hired by Earlham from 1966 (when the first African-American professor was hired) until 1987, when the issue was published, illustrates the high rate of turnover for black faculty and staff. An overwhelming majority of the professors listed below became frustrated with the lack of support for growth and change, or were denied tenure, so left Earlham after one or two years. The list of names and dates below should be an invitation to consider Earlham’s apparent lack of support for black faculty and staff, the reasons for this lack, and the implications for students of color at Earlham.

African-American Faculty and Staff

Hired between 1966 and 1987

Bill Cousins, 66-69, Sociology Instructor
*Ken Christmon, 67- , Director of Security, Assistant Dean of Student Development
Morris Gordon, 69-79 Associate in Music
Richard Robinson, 70-72, Instructor, Physical Education
Ken Martin, 70-75, Asst. Professor of English
Vircher Floyd, 70-76, Director of Cooperative Programs, Asst. Prof., Sociology
George Sawyer, 70-71, Coordinator, Urban Affairs
Sharon Williams, 71-72, Admin. Asst. Black Studies
Tom Davis, 71-76, Director Black Studies, History Instructor
Tim Knowles, 73-73, Admissions
Charlie Nelms, 73-73 Asst. Dir. Admissions
Brenda Brock, 75-75, Admissions Counselor
Sharon Blackman, 76-78, Dir. Of Housing
Jay Harris, 76-79, Black Studies, Psychology Instructor
Bill Harvey, 76-79, Dir. Supportive Services
**Stephen Butler, 77- , Professor, Sociology
Wallace Goode, 77-79, Dir. Runyan Center
Jerry Lewis, 78-81, Dir. Supportive Services
Blanche Mitchell-Hughes, 78-82, Asst. Dean of Students
Betty Barber, 78-79, Secretary, Black Studies

**Bonita Washington-Lacey, 78- , Assoc. Dean of Admissions; Associate Dean for Minority Affairs
**Robert Beal, 79- , Dir. Gospel Revelations
**Margaret Hampton, 79- , Assoc. Prof., History
**Avis Stewart, 80- , Asst. Professor, Sports, and Dir. Runyan Center
Lillie Johnson, 80-82, Asst. Prof., History
Eugene Spicer, 82-83, Asst. Basketball coach
Liz Peavy, 82-82, Dir. Supportive Services
Valerie Allen, 82-86, Admissions Assoc., Head Resident, Dir. Of Housing
Frank Chiteji, 84- , Dir. AAAS, History, Humanities
Stacey Elder, 84- , Dir. Supportive Services
John Williams, 85- , Basketball Coach
Patricia Kaurouma, 86- , Admissions Counselor
Kyle Malone, 86- , Admissions Counselor
Alicia Frazier-Burns, 85-86, Administrative Asst, AAAS; 86-, Computer Specialist, Admissions
Ryan Williams, 85-86, Admissions

Of the 35 African-American faculty/staff listed as employed since 1966:
-34.3% were still employed at the time of “Intouch” publication.
-50% of those still employed in ’87 were hired within the previous 3 years.
-8.6% are still employed today.

Of the 23 African-American faculty and staff listed who were no longer employed:
The average time of employment was 2.7 years.
-73.9% stayed at Earlham for one year or less.

Intouch Staff
Norma Duarte ’82
Jenny Bradley ’84
George Henson ’86
Stacey Elder ’80
Belinda Johnson ’85
Sheilagh Smith ’87
Lisa Limes ’89
Kelvin Holland ’88

Advisers
Stephen N. Butler
Jane Silver
Susan Lee Barton-Kriese

Statistics:

-Why is retention of African-American faculty and staff a problem for Earlham?
-What might motivate faculty or staff member to leave?
-Why might a professor not be granted tenure?
-What does this low retention mean for our student body, white and non-white?
I am writing to you all about a pet peeve of mine that has developed since I got to Earlham. There were a lot of reasons why I came here that make it so great, but at the same time there are some things that Earlham needs to work on as a community. Now, what I’m writing about is nothing new to me nor probably you; it’s about race.

Here we go again, talking about race and how racism affects us all, especially here at Earlham. Well, you know what, it is a very important topic that won’t and shouldn’t go away. Racism has been embedded in our society since its roots in early American history. It is a topic that should be dealt with in the dorms, houses, dining hall and in the Coffee Shop. People need to acknowledge that racism exists and see how they fit into the realms of racism. Somehow, everyone is affected by it, whether consciously or unconsciously so. So I encourage everyone to seriously discuss this topic and ask themselves what steps are must be taken to overcome it. That is why I applaud the Earlham Word for its special supplement on racism in the last issue, April 30, 1999, as a step in the right direction in getting this topic on the table across the Earlham community.

But, what I’m actually trying to get at is how we think of race in our community. It has been interesting to see how people think of race on campus and the feeling that I get from it. Maybe it’s just me, but it seems that race at Earlham tends to be an issue about blacks and whites. This is what my pet peeve is all about!

Coming to Earlham was a culture shock for me, especially coming form Texas. There were things that I had to get used to and adapt to. I was amazed at how very few Latino students attend Earlham. I was not used to that where I come from. My world used to be walking down the street and hearing people speaking Spanish. English, Spanglish, and Tejano music would blast out of cars and trucks. I went to a very diverse high school where I interacted with Whites, African-Americans, Latinos and Asian-Americans. Working this summer at two jobs in Houston, I came across a widely diverse range of people.

Then I think of Earlham and see how it is totally not the reality in which I lived. Now that you know where I come from, maybe you can understand not only why I feel frustrated at Earlham, but the feeling that I get that race is thought of as a black and white issue. My world was not a black and white one—it involved brown, yellow, red and everything else mixed in between. When I think of race, my mind doesn’t just think black and white automatically, I actually think Latino, then so on and so forth.

Beyond Black and White

As we said in our statement of purpose, discussions around racism are often only in terms of black and white, invalidating, ignoring, and overlooking the very different ways in which white supremacy affects other people of color and the ways in which it interacts with other axes of oppression (gender, class, sexuality, ability, religion etc). We recognize that this packet does not adequately address these differing experiences and intersections. We chose not to let this keep us from including the few articles that we did find pertaining to this problem. We hope that white people will balance the need to include the varying experiences of all people of color in discussions of racism and diversity with the need to acknowledge the unique and foundational relationship between white supremacy and Blacks.

Is it all Black and White?

I feel that many people don’t actually see the whole picture, but just part of it. When we think of race we should not just think whites and African-Americans, but Latinos, Asian-Americans, Native-Americans, Arab-Americans, and others, too. Race involves an overwhelming amount of people, and not just certain groups. This is something of which people should be aware.

In closing, we as a community at Earlham should think about the way we view race. We are now living in an ever more multicultural world and this is especially happening in the United States. The issue of race will come up again and again, especially as an election year is approaching. In the coming century, race will have part in the political power and structure of the U.S. as certain populations continue to grow (hint). But it is a topic that should be continually discussed because we actually educate ourselves when we come to understand what race is all about. We should then, as a whole, reflect on how Earlham will look upon race amongst its students, faculty, staff and administrators as we enter the new millennium.

-Joe Lopez was a junior undeclared Community Development major who is currently working at Admissions.

Published in the Earlham Word, Sept. 3, 1999 by Joe Lopez
The Asian Student Union is a support group for Asian-Americans concerned with educating the Earlham community. Those involved in ASU want the campus to understand how Asians fit in with the dynamic of racism.

"We are a minority and do experience racism," said senior peace and global studies major Kymberlie Quong Charles, who convenes ASU with Daniel Nakamura, senior economics and Japanese studies double major.

ASU has helped many Asian American students articulate the sense of being Asian American.

"Although we are trying to generate awareness, we care about each other more than educating at times," Charles said. "Most of our meetings deal with bi-racial talks and how we can negotiate between the two cultures." Many ASU members agree with Charles.

"[ASU] gives me a place to vent my personal experiences as an Asian American and a sense of a close community," said Sonoko Morimoto, first year student and ASU member. Furthermore, ASU is trying to build a community that recognizes them.

"Asians feel like the invisible minority. People have to realize that we're here at Earlham, and America," Charles said.

According to ASU, Earlham is not as aware of the Asian American minority as much as ASU would like them to be.

"Asian American history was not offered this year," Charles said. "Earlham, as an institution doesn't recognize us."

ASU students feel that classes, such as Asian American history are very important to them as well as educating the Earlham community.

ASU wants the community to know that they are here. They want people to have a better understanding of what it is like to be an invisible minority.

In the process of accomplishing this great task, ASU has created a home for many Asian American students on this campus.

"ASU created a place for me to look forward to during the week because I learned to really trust the people there and feel like I can depend on them," said first-year student Meg Fukuzawa, member of ASU. "Not being from America, going to ASU has increased my awareness about Asian Americans and Asian American issues."

Anger should be validated, embraced on campus

I was approached to write an opinion article for the paper this week, possibly because I am normally quite opinionated. However this week I am feeling less than ready to engage in opinion making, so instead, I give you the answer to the eternal small talk question, "How are you?"

I am angry (for those who know me, this is no surprise). The reason is simple. I am angry because I am not, in the context of Earlham, allowed to be angry. I remember way back when (two weeks ago, over break), I was in a place where I could scream indignantly about the places that hurt. I could scream about racism, about heterosexism, about sexism, about my need to escape. I could be tense and terse and cry until it ended, and above all, I could be angry.

What I'm talking about is not unjustified, irrational, bratty anger, either. I am talking about the "I just sat through a class/movie/discussion/meeting where a white person/straight person/rich person/male person tried to school me on MY oppression, and I will not take it anymore" kind of anger. I am talking about the kind of anger that makes toes curl, voices shake, that gets movements started. I'm talking about anger we run from in groups, in discussions, in classes, in our houses and dorms, because goddess forbid there be conflict.

I am angry because again someone here has dismissed an expression of oppression, of disagreement, of question ing, and because people near and dear to me are repeatedly silenced. I am angry because there are voices at this college that need to be heard, but are said to be too loud, too passionate, too personal, and of course too angry. I don't believe it is an issue of folks being too angry, or even angry in the wrong ways, but an issue of certain people not being angry enough.

I am fed up with the "Let's play nice and hold hands and sing Cumbaya" attitudes where anger is immediately alienated from the conversation. I want to see people stop the illusion, and start talking about what it is that makes them angry. I want to see conversations happening where anger is transformed, not eradicated to make false peace. I want someone to see me yelling outside of Carpenter after a particularly bad class and start yelling with me, not just stop and stare and go on.

I want anger validated, embraced, even encouraged, so maybe we'll start using it and change this place.

-Kisha Sanders is a junior SOAN major.
Assimilation...is a strategy deeply rooted in the ideology of white supremacy and its advocates urge black people to negate blackness, to imitate racist white people so as to better absorb their values, their way of life.

-From bell hooks, “overcoming white supremacy: a comment,” 70.

While it is true that the nature of racist oppression and exploitation has changed as slavery has ended and the apartheid structure of Jim Crow has legally changed, white supremacy continues to shape perspectives on reality and to inform the social status of black people and all people of color. Nowhere is this more evident than in university settings. And often it is the liberal folks in those settings who are unwilling to acknowledge this truth.


As long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people. There’s no more powerful position than that of being ‘just’ human.


### Queries:

- Is Earlham College a set white space with pre-existing values and norms for communication and behavior? If so, what are we asking of people of color when they come here? Are students of color expected to assimilate to white norms? Are they allowed to express themselves freely?

- How is faculty meeting run? Are faculty members of color expected to adopt “Quaker speak” or are they allowed to voice their thoughts and opinions as they see fit?

- Think about graduation. How is graduation celebrated? Are people of color allowed to celebrate in the way they want or are they expected to celebrate the way the white people around them are celebrating?

- Think about yourself. How often do you think about your race? If you are white do consider your whiteness to be normal? Do you think everyone else is different? Are you conscious that in actuality white people make up the minority of the world’s population (about 10%) and people of color are really in the majority? How could your whiteness be made strange? Is your whiteness and therefore your white privilege strange?
**Day of Silence**

*Excerpted from a flyer posted around campus during on March 9, 2001.*

Today we, as people of color—racial and ethnic minorities—are choosing to be silent as a way to symbolize and highlight the many days when we are pressured to be silent.

We are maintaining this day of silence as a symbolic protest to the continued disregard of our experiences and our voice in the world and in particular at Earlham College. The racism and power structures that we see in the world are reflected at Earlham, in similar and different ways. Earlham is not immune to the problems of society.

We must acknowledge that the discussion of diversity is part of a historic discussion about racism and power.

As racial and ethnic minorities, many of us experience the following:

- not being allowed to talk about race and racism and how it relates to class, gender and sexual orientation—or not engaged when we do;
- people assuming our inabilities and talents based purely on skin color;
- common misunderstanding of our experiences as people of color;
- readings that do not adequately represent our histories, cultures, theologies, philosophies, arts, and other areas of study;
- disconnected from our college experience due to a lack of such readings that are vital for understanding our personal and collective experiences;
- working with teaching and administrative faculty who are generally not of our skin color or ethnic background;
- working with faculty who are unaware of their privilege or how destructive racism is to us; and
- lack of attention to the differences among students of color.

Because you do not ask our stories,
Because you do not listen to our rage when we tell our stories,
Because you do not go beyond our individual stories into seeing the structure of racism,
Because you do not use the details of our experiencing racism to combat racism,
Because you do not go beyond talking about diversity,
Because you do not get us —

I ask you: If I wasn’t here, would you miss me? *Would you miss more than some coloring in your photos?*

"Students of color reflect on Friday’s silent protest"

In March of 2001 many students of color participated in a day of silence here at Earlham. Using silence as a form of protest was meant to encourage “white people on campus to think about race and diversity issues themselves instead of asking minority students about race issues.” One participating student said of the protest:

“It’s taken for granted that everything seems to be white and that’s the norm. We [people of color] have to measure everything against white America . . . at Earlham it’s the same way. [Today is] a day for us to express our issues, a day that was not going to be white for us.”

*Taken from March 16, 2001 Word article, “Students of color reflect on Friday’s silent protest” by Liv Leader, contributing editor.*
As a white Earlham College student:

1. I can arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time. I am rarely, if ever, compelled to be in a situation where I would be the sole representative of my race.

2. I can live in almost any on-campus housing and be fairly sure that my race is the dominant one present.

3. I can live off campus without worrying that my race would complicate my everyday experience in Richmond. I can be fairly sure that my race would not act against me as I looked into my off-campus options and talked to local landlords.

4. I can open the Earlham Word and see people of my race widely represented in all sections.

5. When I join a club or extra-curricular activity or attend a campus event, I can feel fairly sure I won’t be the only member of my racial group present.

6. I can wear my letter jacket around campus and to class without worrying that someone might think I am only at Earlham because of athletics. I don’t have to worry that I will not be taken as seriously as student because I am also an athlete.

7. I am not assumed to play a sport because of my race.

8. I can remain oblivious to the language and customs of fellow students who come from different backgrounds without feeling any penalty for such oblivion.

9. It is easier for me to choose to take classes or major in a subject that has no correspondence to practical plans for the future because I have been taught to dream big and not worry yet about setting the ground for a financially rewarding career. There is no reason I would even be compelled to think about how my race relates to my educational choices.

10. I am never asked (directly or implicitly) to speak for all the people of my racial group in formal meetings or informal conversations on campus.

11. Usually, when I go talk to professors, administrators, or other “people in charge,” I face someone of my own race.

12. I don’t have to worry that my peers or others might think my race played a role in my acceptance to Earlham, in the interest of expanding diversity.

13. I can be sure that in the Student Judicial Committee, College Judicial Committee, or any other campus judicial process my race won’t work against me, regardless of the good intentions of the people serving on those committees or making judicial decisions.

14. When I walk down College Avenue at night, I don’t have to watch people tense up or show their discomfort at my approach.

15. I don’t have to think, if I don’t choose to, about the relationship between my race and my academic performance or likelihood of graduation.

16. I am not expected to help people better understand race or teach people about their own racism.

17. I don’t have to worry that people will think I chose my major based on my race or the effect of my racial position.

18. I don’t have to worry that when I go off Earlham’s campus people will yell racial slurs at me out of their windows.

19. I can get involved in the campus conversation about race when and if I want to or feel comfortable. I can participate with passion when talking about race becomes fashionable and forget about it the next semester without being challenged by my peers. I don’t have to worry that this might challenge my “I’m not a racist badge.” I can feel that one evening of talking, thinking, and getting angry about racial issues is enough to fill my obligation as a good, socially-minded liberal.

20. I can generally avoid classes which challenge me to think critically about race. Even classes that are diversity-oriented will often not expect me to reflect on my position as a white person in a white supremacist society.

21. Except for specialized, diversity-oriented classes, the canon of curricular texts largely represents authors of my race and establishes a history and background which validates my place in the world.

22. Similarly, I may or may not like that my department’s historical sequence represents almost entirely dead white men, but I am at least studying the dominant tradition that I come from and informs by lifestyle and system of values.

23. I can go to just about any campus party and not feel alienated or different because of my race.

"The belief that EC is a liberal, accepting community means that you think you don’t have to think about race. You’re white, you think you’re not racist, so you don’t have to think about it."

- Minority Speak Out ’97
When you see incidents of racism take place do you write it off as a one time thing, someone’s personal problem and bigotry or do you make connections between these moments and the larger structures of white supremacy?

Do you value the experience, input, and insight of people of color? Do you express your support for a person of color’s ideas? Do you have the courage and respect to question a person of color when you either don’t agree or don’t understand what they are saying?

Do you actively listen and respond when a person of color speaks in class? Do you talk over others in class discussions or automatically assume the role of group leader?

Do you include people of color in decision making and planning processes for actions which will affect smaller and larger communities? Do you include people of color through all steps of the process? (not just at the beginning and not just at the end seeking their approval).

Do you make excuses for other whites by saying, “He really is a nice guy; he’s just a little prejudiced”?

Do you distance yourself from whites who you identify as behaving racist and think to yourself “I’m not like that”? Do you have the courage to start a discussion challenging their racism? Do you challenge your own racism on a daily basis?

Assume racism is everywhere, everyday.

Just as economics influences everything we do, just as our gender and gender politics influence everything we do, assume that racism is affecting whatever is going on. We assume this because it’s true, and because one of the privileges of being white is not having to see or deal with racism all the time. We have to learn to see the effect that racism has. Notice who speaks, what is said, how things are done and described.

Notice who isn’t present. Notice code words for race, and the implications of the policies, patterns, and comments that are being expressed. You already notice the skin color of everyone you meet and interact with – now notice what difference it makes.

Notice who is the center of attention and who is the center of power.

Racism works by directing violence and blame toward people of color and consolidating power and privilege for white people.

Notice how racism is denied, minimized, and justified.

Understand and learn from the history of whiteness and racism.

Notice how racism has changed over time and how it has subverted or resisted challenges. Study the tactics that have worked effectively against it.

Understand the connections between racism, economic issues, sexism and other forms of injustice.

Take a stand against injustice.

Take risks. It is scary, difficult, risky and may bring up many feelings, but ultimately it is the only healthy and moral thing to do. Intervene in situations where racism is being passed on.

Be strategic.

Decide what is important to challenge and what’s not. Think about strategy in particular situations. Attack the source of power.

Don’t confuse a battle with the war.

Behind particular incidents and interactions are larger patterns. Racism is flexible and adaptable. There will be gains and losses in the struggle for justice and equality.

Support the leadership of people of color.

Do this consciously, but not uncritically.

Kivel, Paul. “How White People Can Serve as Allies to People of Color in the Struggle to End Racism.”
**White Spaces**

Spaces don’t become "raced" when a non-white person enters the room. Most of Earlham is a white space, not a neutral space, a white space. It is white in the sense that the majority of the people are white and the norms, values, and attitudes expressed and expected are white. There are few spaces on Earlham’s campus that are specifically dedicated as spaces for non-whites. Often we whites don’t respect the boundaries of these spaces and practice something known as forced integration.

**The Company We Keep**

The following queries are intended to challenge you to think about the diversity of the people and ideas you do and do not expose yourself to. The questions address some of the many sources of ideas about our world that often become white washed without our conscious realization. The answers to these questions are not static realities, but the reflection of choices you make in your everyday life. They are answers you can change if so choose.

- How many classes have you taken with professors of color?
- How many people of color are in your classes? Major?
- Socially, on the weekends, how often do you interact with people of color? In what settings?
- What books for class have you read in the past year?
- What books for fun have you read in the past year?
- How many of each were written by people of color?
- What kind of music do you listen to... by yourself? With your group of friends/roommate/housemates?
- Who makes the music?
- What is the message that it is transmitting about people of color/white privilege overtly or covertly?
- Do you participate in any religious activity?
- What extra-curricular activities are you involved with?
- Are there people of color involved in these activities?
- Who are your heros?
- What movies have you seen in the past year?
- What magazines do you read regularly?
- How many of these activities involve people of color or information about non-white culture? Who are the directors/editors of the magazine? Who is represented in the articles/pictures/ads?

Make up some of your own questions that look at other aspects of your life. Then answer the same questions, but instead of thinking in terms of white privilege/racism, choose and do the set of questions for other privileges/oppressions such as sexism, anti-Semitism, class bias, and heterosexism.

*This list was originally compiled by Elly Porter-Webb.*

"People ask why we sit in the back of SAGA, segregating ourselves. Well, it's not about you. It's not about your feelings or your tears.”

- 1997 Minority Speak Out

"Making an issue of the fact that people of color eat lunch together, socialize together, etc.

Perceiving that "they" are clique-ish or are segregating themselves, while overlooking that white people sit together and have their own social groups.

As a white person, you have a comfort zone as big as this campus. What do we have? CCC?... If you want to engage me, you have a problem, because the tone has already been set for that not to happen.”

- From the 1997 Speak Out sponsored by BLAC
All materials used in the formation of this packet will be available:
- on Moodle, listed under Women’s Studies: Challenging Whiteness
- on reserve in Lilly library, under Barb Caruso: Challenging Whiteness

A folder compiled of all of the work collected in the research for this packet will be placed in the office of Shenita Piper, Director of Multi Cultural Affairs.

Works Cited:
hooks, bell. “overcoming white supremacy: a comment.”
Kadi, Joanna. “Moving from Cultural Appropriations toward Ethical Cultural Connections.”
Martinas, Sharon. “Shinin’ the Lite on White Privilege.”
McIntosh, Peggy. “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.”

All presidential writing can be found at **http://www.earlham.edu/~pres**
All Word articles from Fall 1997-Present can be found at **http://www.word.cs.earlham.edu**
All Word articles from previous years can be found in the Word archives in the Word office.
Minority Speak-Out Videos can be found in Media Resources.
The Diversity Aspirations Vision Statement, Plan, and Progress reports may be found at Earlham’s Diversity homepage at **http://www.earlham.edu/~diversity/index**

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**Come hear white anti-racist activist Tim Wise, author of “White Like Me” speak during UMOJA week on April 13 at 7 p.m. in Loose Lecture Hall.**
Whites who want to be allies to people of color: You can educate yourselves via research and observation rather than rigidly, arrogantly relying solely on interrogating people of color. Do not expect that people of color should teach you how to behave non-oppressively. Do not give into the pull to be lazy. Think, hard. Do not blame people of color for your frustration about racism, but do appreciate the fact that people of color will often help you get in touch with that frustration. Assume that your effort to be a good friend is appreciated, but don’t expect or accept gratitude from people of color. Work on racism for your sake, not “their” sake. Assume that you are needed and capable of being a good ally. Know that you’ll make mistakes and commit yourself to correcting them and continuing on as an ally, no matter what. Don’t give up.”