

CALL FOR BOOK CHAPTER PROPOSALS

White Liberalism and the Persistence of Racism in Higher Education

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Send queries, questions, and proposals to whiteliberalism@edchange.org.

A significant portion of racism in higher education is connected to the ideas, actions, and influences of people and institutions outwardly hostile to any serious response to racism, whether interpersonal, institutional, or societal. There are colleges and universities where leaders and others simply refuse to address racial disparities and injustices in any serious way or address them only in ways that demonize or alienate communities of color.

In this book we intend to focus on “the other elephant” in higher education: the emotional, social, material, and spiritual damage often done by ***white people who see themselves as racial justice advocates*** and by ***white-dominated educational institutions that might even claim a racial justice commitment***.

In our experiences, part of what makes common “racial equity” efforts so ineffective is that they often reflect common elements of white liberalism. These elements include (1) mistaking celebrations of diversity for racial justice, (2) equating peace—*the absence of tension* as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., described it in his Letter from Birmingham Jail—with justice, (3) rewarding good intentions while punishing just actions, (4) slowing racial justice progress by insisting on “baby steps” and “developmental processes” that protect white people from grappling with racism, (5) adhering to a savior mentality or some other ideology that positions white people as the “fixers” or “saviors” of people of color, (6) misconstruing equity as equal numbers or representation rather than the elimination of racism, (7) superficially expressing a desire for diversity but rarely engaging in meaningful practices that substantially incorporate the voices and desires of communities that are racially marginalized, (8) refusing to acknowledge the expertise or authority of people of color, even on matters of racial equity, (9) white educators manipulating the narratives of people of color in order to position themselves as “well-intentioned” or “innocent,” (10) engaging in “toxic positivity,” insisting that conversations about racism are too “negative” and we should focus on the “positive,” and (11) building “racial equity” efforts solely around student “diversity” programming.

What We’re Looking For

We seek chapter authors who will draw on frameworks such as critical race theory, critical whiteness studies, culturally sustaining pedagogies, equity literacy, and others to explore how white liberalism operates in deleterious ways in higher education contexts *including student affairs, academic affairs, academic departments, tenure and review processes, hiring* and other spaces, how to recognize and confront it, and how to move institutions from white liberalism to a transformative vision for racial justice. We anticipate contributors drawing on established concepts such as white fragility, racial battle fatigue, white emotionality, interest convergence, and others where helpful.

We seek chapters that combine narrative aspects with theoretical grounding and that bridge critical analysis to visions for moving forward. We see our audience broadly as people working

in colleges and universities, so we seek chapters written with a broad audience in mind. We do not intend to publish research studies, but encourage people to draw on their research where helpful.

Each chapter should analyze a specific manifestation of white liberalism in a higher education setting and how it perpetuates racism. We're looking for specific and deep over broad. So, rather than submitting a proposal on how white liberalism operates broadly within an institution or department, consider a deep dive on a specific way white liberalism operates in that institution or department.

With the above general framing in mind, we hope to cover:

- (1) the ways white liberal higher education educators and institutions—those imagining themselves as committed to racial justice, at least to some extent—play key roles in the perpetuation of racism and whiteness,
- (2) how whiteness and racism in higher education repress faculty and staff of color, sometimes pressuring them to internalize racism and adopt a white liberal approach to equity—conditions meant to control educators of color and make them appear less threatening to white students, staff, and faculty,
- (3) how common and initiatives often are filtered through a white liberal mentality that masks racism when implemented in place of serious racial justice commitments (e.g., diversity and inclusion, restorative practices, distance learning, diversity training, “diversity core” curricula, intergroup dialogue, service learning, white affinity groups), and
- (4) how white faculty and staff, and all faculty and staff, can reject—and are rejecting—the white liberal frame to adopt more authentically justice-oriented approaches to antiracism in higher education institutions.

We anticipate 4,000-6,000 word chapters. We encourage narrative, case scenarios, and other elements that help readers engage with and apply ideas. We expect each chapter to offer a vision for what a more transformative vision for racial justice ought to look like.

Instructions

Send your chapter idea/proposal (400 words or fewer) by **September 15, 2020** to whiteliberalism@edchange.org. Please use these headings:

- **General Description** (which should explicitly name the *specific aspect of white liberalism* you're covering and how you'll bridge readers to a deeper racial justice vision)
- **Unique Elements** (which should describe how you will engage readers through narrative, case scenarios, thought exercises, or other elements)
- **Theoretical Frame** (which should identify concepts that will frame your chapter)

Additionally:

- Please label the file “last-name_first-name_proposed-chapter-title”
- When emailing your idea, please use the subject line “White Liberalism Chapter Proposal”

Timeline

September 15,	Chapter ideas due. We will respond by October 15, 2020.
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2020	
March 15, 2021	Chapter drafts due. We will respond with feedback by April 15, 2021.
June 1, 2021	Final chapters due.