

Rise, Teach, Learn - Season 2, Episode 4

Social Justice & Equity Work at Chico State

00:03

We acknowledge and are mindful that CSU Chico stands on lands that were originally occupied by the first people of this area, the Mechoopda, and we recognize their distinctive spiritual relationship with this land and the waters that run through campus. We are humbled that our campus resides upon sacred lands that once sustained the Mechoopda people for centuries.

00:27

Welcome to the Rise, Teach, Learn podcast. I am Dr. Chiara Ferrari, Director of Faculty Development at Chico State, and we are happy to make this resource available to our campus community and beyond. The podcast is hosted by Dr. Jamie Gunderson and she will engage in timely conversations with faculty, staff, and students and give you a taste of the Chico experience. Subscribe to our podcast and explore the many resources available on our website. Thank you for listening.

1:00

Hello, and welcome to Rise, Teach, Learn. I'm your host Jamie Gunderson. In this episode, I along with Dr. Chiara Ferrari, Catherine Lemmi and Bretton Varga share work focused on promoting and supporting equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racist pedagogies at Chico State.

01:23

One of the university's strategic priorities centers on equity, diversity, and inclusion and focuses on cultivating and nurturing a welcoming and inclusive campus where students, faculty and staff have an equitable opportunity to thrive. In support, the Office of Faculty Development has created a variety of resources and learning opportunities. And I'm so excited that Chiara Ferrari, the director of the Office of Faculty Development could stop in today to tell us more about not only the teaching racial and social justice series offered this semester, but also some breaking news about upcoming work that relates to equity, diversity, and inclusion. So, Chiara, thank you so much for talking with me today. I'm really excited for you to share what you're about to share.

02:07

Thank you, Jamie, thank you for having me. I am excited that this year we have a chance to offer a teaching racial and social justice series for the second year. We had our first meeting on October 13th. It was actually a workshop offered by a professor from CSU Stanislaus. So, we're opening up our conversations beyond Chico State to include other CSU campuses. But Dr. Daniel Soodjinda presented a sort of rubric. But really, they have added some anti-racist standards to the quality learning and teaching instrument. So, it was interesting to see how these best practices for online and frankly, not just online, but all sorts of mode of instructions. The best practices for pedagogy, are now including specific standards and ideas for implementation for anti-racist work in the classroom. The recording for that workshop is actually available on the FDEV media channel, if you're interested to check it out. And

it's called, confronting the traditional learning space, anchoring your course in an anti-racist, inclusive and culturally sustaining framework. So that is available for whoever couldn't make it to watch on your own time.

03:37

Our second workshop will be offered on October 27th. And we will have our own Dr. Claudia Sofía Garriga-López, who is going to teach us or talk to us about how we can throw out the syllabus, literally, that's the title of her talk or workshop, throwing out the syllabus, responding to crisis in real time. So oftentimes it happens that in our classes, we are dealing with students that are struggling to respond to whether it's the pandemic or the wildfires. So, in her workshops, she's given us some ideas about how to address these conversations in the classroom, and therefore being able to adapt what we teach, to address concerns that are very real for our students. We have one more workshop coming up in November and that will be offered by two librarians, Stefani Baldivia and William Cuthbertson and their workshop will be focusing on capturing student voices in the University Archives. So, this semester, we have three very interesting workshops that offer specific ideas and specific real practices that we can implement in our classes to respond to our students' needs, but also to making sure that we can capture their voices.

05:11

Now, the work that faculty development has done in relation to equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism - I am very proud of the work that we have done. But I feel that it's still a number of initiatives that are somehow separated that happen in different spaces under different goals and circumstances. So, my ultimate goal last year was to really think about a way in which we could identify a clear and stronger structure under which faculty development can do work that relates to EDI and anti-racism. And I am happy to announce that in the next year or so, faculty development will create a hub for research in equity, anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion, the acronym will be READI research, equity, anti-racism, diversity and inclusion that will allow faculty development to really put together and concentrate the efforts and initiatives in terms of equity, diversity, and inclusion and anti-racism practices under one hub that will receive significant support from the provost office. In fact, in the next couple of years, between this coming semester, spring 2022, and next year 2023, faculty development will receive an additional \$261,000 to create and get this hub up and running.

07:03

And I am I mean, first of all, I cannot say how excited I am about the ability to expand our work but not only to expand it to better organize it and to better serve faculty through it. Some goals key goals of the new hub of the READI hub will include the faculty mentorship will include creating a forum for research and equity, anti-racism, diversity and inclusion. The idea is also to produce scholarship of teaching and learning that centers on EDI work, we will promote resources for inclusive pedagogy. We will develop curriculum and help programs develop curriculum that centers EDI. We want to improve access to EDI data and assessment practices. We will be supporting grant writing related to EDI, and we will be writing grants to support the hub so that eventually it can become self-sustained.

08:06

We also want to work with partners on campus to implement equity work in the RTP process. And generally speaking, we want to foster collaborations across EDI work and anti-racist work that is already happening on campus. So, this new hub is not a way to step on anybody's toes or to duplicate efforts. But it's a way to really point faculty in the direction of existing offices, units, programs that are providing support for EDI work. So, I am incredibly excited about the possibilities that we have. We will send out calls for equity fellows we currently have a call for two equity fellows for spring. Next year, we will have a chance to hire seven equity fellows one that will be a liaison for each college. We will have funding for a READI coordinator. We will have funding for curriculum design that centers EDI and anti-racist work. We will have grants for faculty research. We will also have grants for scholarship of teaching and learning type of work. And we will fund a significant amount of faculty learning communities that centers on inclusive pedagogy, closing the equity gaps, HSI resources, and support teaching racial social justice. And so, a number of programs that really put equity diversity, inclusion, and anti-racist work at their center.

09:48

So stay tuned because faculty development is a dynamic unit that has really committed to EDI work and in the next couple of years our commitment will definitely increase thanks to this additional funding that comes from the chancellor's office specifically for faculty professional development with an eye towards inclusive practices.

10:24

Another exciting opportunity for faculty staff and students to engage in anti-racist work comes out of the School of Education and I am super thrilled to have Dr. Catherine Lemmi and Bretton Varga here to tell us more about their anti-racism speaker series, and Catherine, I'll go ahead and start with you. Can you tell us a little bit about how this project was brought to our campus?

10:46

Sure, thank you for having us, Jamie. Um, so this project was inspired by some of the talks that have been hosted on campus recently by Angela Davis and Ibram Kendi. As well as some of the lectures by Chico State faculty members, including Nandi Crosby and some other events that were associated with the book in common selections for the past few years. And so, I just thought it would be fun to create a series of speakers that could talk about race and racism specifically, as they apply to education, but also with a perspective that would be relevant to all Chico State students and faculty and staff in their everyday lives. And so I applied to a student learning fee award. And then when we found out that we were funded, Annie Adamian and Bretton Varga stepped up and invited some of our speakers and so I can let Bretton talk about that.

11:42

Yeah, hearing about Catherine's you know, getting this project off the ground, and just talking about bringing in these different voices and perspectives to our campus, I had the thought of, you know, really weaving in an important layer into the conversation around indigenous contexts. And as we all know, the book in common for this current year is *There There* by Tommy Orange (2018), which focuses on indigenous identity. And so, I started to think about some of my contacts with the people that I knew.

And so, Dina Giglio-Whitaker, her work takes up indigenous sovereignty in the context of environmental justice, which I think is extremely of the utmost importance to our community and, and the rest of what's going on in the world today. And she in her work, she draws a direct connection between settler colonialism and ecological justice. She has a book that came out in 2019, *As Long as Grass Grows* (Giglio-Whitaker, 2019), where she really highlights the destructiveness of colonial practices and colonial logics. One example would be interrogating the way that dams have really disrupted the landscape. And as we have a dam in our greater community, what better voice to bring into the conversation than Dina's. A friend of mine and colleague, Dr. Sarah Shear from the University of Washington suggested that we put Dina alongside of Dr. Leilani Sabzalian who I know through my academic field of social studies, education, and we're excited that both of them come to the conversation of indigenous sovereignty in different ways, right? Like, as I just mentioned, Dina's work is in the context of ecological justice where Leilani comes at this idea of indigenous sovereignty through indigenous children survivements in public school. And she really troubles civic education by laying bare how indigeneity is precariously positioned, as well as it's very frequently often erased from multicultural and citizenship related educational practices. So, we're an honor, it's truly an honor to have both of them be a part of this series. And I look forward to hearing them speak as well as the rest of the presenters. It's going to be a wonderful opportunity to learn from them.

13:55

So, on Thursday, we'll be hearing from Dr. David Stovall. And he's going to be talking about the differences between schooling and education, schooling being a system of order and compliance and regurgitating the rules of white supremacy, contrasted with education, which is the process of asking questions, creating new insights, and creating the will to change our conditions. So, he's going to be talking about how people across time and place have struggled for education. He's going to be talking about the current struggles in K12 school boards and some of the restrictions and eliminations that have been placed on critical discussions of race and class, gender, disability, and sexual orientation. And so if you've seen this word, fugivity in the title, and that's a specific kind of theoretical term that talks about fugitive spaces and the ability to move to address the needs of students and families, specifically over the rules of the state or any institutions within the schooling system. So, I'm really looking forward to it. He's an amazing speaker and it's going to be great.

15:14

You know, these speakers are outstanding like they, I mean, if you've never heard Stovall speak like he, he gave the keynote at our big social studies conference a couple years ago, and it's just, he is like a force of nature coming in there. It's. he's really something.

15:33

Jessica Harris, she's going to be talking about her work on intersectionality and higher education. So, she studies the experiences of women of color on college campuses, with a particular focus on how intersecting systems of domination, racism and sexism specifically influenced the experiences of survivors of sexual assault. And she works in the higher education space. And her findings, I think, are relevant to all of us in many different spaces and places in our lives. We also have Patrick Camangian is a professor of teacher education in San Francisco and an English teacher as well. His work is in the

area of liberation pedagogy, and he's very closely linked to the classroom and to teacher education. So, he'll be talking about critical pedagogy, action research and critical literacy.

16:34

I think it's going to be a powerful opportunity for our students to engage with these academic scholars who, whose work has shown up in a lot of the classes that they've, that they're in right now and that they've been in since they've been a part of the Chico State community.

16:50

I love that kudos to the School of Education and kudos to Catherine and Bretton, thanks for bringing that work to our campus.

17:01

In addition to the learning opportunities we have discussed, I want to highlight a couple of teaching guides and helpful tips for integrating anti-racist pedagogies into your teaching practice. First, and most importantly, it is important to honor the distinct values, beliefs, identity, and cultures of our students. Consider exploring the culturally responsive teaching guide for more information and resources on creating student centered learning spaces that support learners from all backgrounds, cultures and abilities.

17:32

It is also important that we as educators recognize that historically underserved students have not had equal access or opportunity for educational success. And we must cultivate an environment that embraces diversity of thought, freedom of expression, and respect for all. I encourage you to consider drawing inspiration from the research, resources and application tips on the creating anti-racist classrooms, and black lives matter in the classroom teaching guides, and/or review your course materials to ensure that a diversity of voices and perspectives are represented.

18:07

At Chico State, we also have the power to address and eliminate achievement gaps and support all students by analyzing our own teaching impact on the grades and equity gaps dashboard. Check out the analyzing equity gaps using the dashboard teaching guide for directions on how to log in and examine and reflect on your data.

18:29

And there you have it, folks. Today we explored work focused on promoting and supporting equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racist pedagogy that Chico State. For more information explore the resources associated with this episode, including links to the teaching racial and social justice and anti-racism speaker series on our FDEV podcast web page. I'd like to thank our guests Drs. Ferrari, Lemmi, and Varga for contributing to this episode, and for their hard work and providing learning opportunities for our campus.