Student Activism, Curriculum, and Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression

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Racism and Anti-Racism

- **Racism:** *"A SYSTEM of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on social interpretation of how we look (which is what we call "race") that:*
  - *Unfairly DISADVANTAGES some individuals and communities, and*
  - *Unfairly ADVANTAGES some individuals and communities, and*
  - *Saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources."*
    - Camara Jones MD MPH PhD, UCSF Presidential Scholar
- **Anti-Racism:** The consistent practice of seeking out and dismantling the policies, procedures, practices and beliefs that sustain racism.

The issues discussed today are not limited to one course;
They are also not limited to the needs of students.

- Although the events that precipitated these forums occurred during a specific course, the concerns raised by students and their goals for a School that fully embraces anti-racism are **relevant for ALL courses and clerkships**.

- Similarly, although it is the students carrying the message, **the beneficiaries of action towards anti-oppression is much broader:** Patients, residents, faculty and communities.

Quick Synopsis of Events

- 3 Black/AA students left a small group because of content and process concerns
- Students in the course directors' lectures redirected the lecture to a Q& A session about course concerns.
- Faculty felt vulnerable because of public criticism and lack of appreciation of all the progress they had made prior to this point.

On Student Activism

- *Let me give you a word on the philosophy of reform. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. The conflict has been exciting, agitating, all absorbing, and for the time being putting all other tumults to silence. It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle there is no progress.* ***Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters****. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle.*

Power concedes nothing without a demand*. It never did and it never will. Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.*

Frederick Douglass
in a letter to an abolitionist associate, 1848

Learner Activism is a Vital Part of UCSF's Success

Strikes (Residents 1980s)	Unionization (Residents 2019)
Die Ins	Report Cards (Racial Justice, Climate Change)
Petitions	Lecture Activism

Activism results from the realization that

- I deserve to be treated be treated better
- We deserve to be treated better
- You are capable of being better

Key Issues the Students Have Raised

- Content and conduct of small groups were traumatizing to Black/AA students despite feedback from prior year's students about the risk of harm

- Black/AA students were forced to respond to case scenarios that required them to describe their lived experience with racism or oppression by unskilled facilitation or a requirement to respond in order to be assessed

- Facilitation for sessions on racism/oppression was not done by experts in racism/oppression

- Focus on teaching foundations of structural racism rather than on managing racism privileges the education of students without lived experiences of oppression

Latent Errors: Systems That Fail To Protect Against Active Errors

- Program Evaluation not evolved to identify curricular harm as a never event

- "In range" mean course ratings as a marker of success may miss outlier ratings that cluster in affinity groups

- A thematic approach to identifying significant trends in narrative comments overlooks isolated but serious concerns

- Low faculty ratings did result in removal from facilitation, but as isolated bad apples rather than a signal of challenging facilitation environment

- Faculty development has not imbedded anti-racism content for all faculty; substitute strategies for non-anti-racism experts not identified

- Roll out of the AOC initiative curriculum work was delayed by COVID pandemic

Active Errors: Individual Errors, should be mitigated by appropriate systems

- Unprepared faculty facilitators making mistakes
- Missed signals in individual faculty small group experiences, emails, or conversations
- Management of individual faculty stress/distress

Activism Has Always *Catalyzed* Change; Sustaining Change Requires Organization

Clear understanding of the problem

Systematic approach to developing countermeasures and strategies

Operational plan to implement strategies

Metrics and accountability to continuously pursue success

Resources and infrastructure support

Initial Response

CURRICULUM:

- AOC initiative is now underway; Camara Jones MD MPH PhD has reviewed and provided input.
- CCL reviewing course content to identify which sessions need expert facilitations because they are dealing with potentially triggering content

STUDENT SUPPORT:

- Diversification of Mental Health Providers

PROGRAM EVALUATION:

- identify markers suggestive or diagnostic of curricular harm

FACULTY SELECTION AND PREPARATION

- Engagement of outside facilitators/experts
- Faculty development redesign
- Support for faculty to master and work on anti-racism competencies

Addressing Faculty Concerns: Courage Required at your Expertise Growth Plate

Currently available support:

- TEACH for UCSF DEI certificate
- Toolkit for inclusive teaching
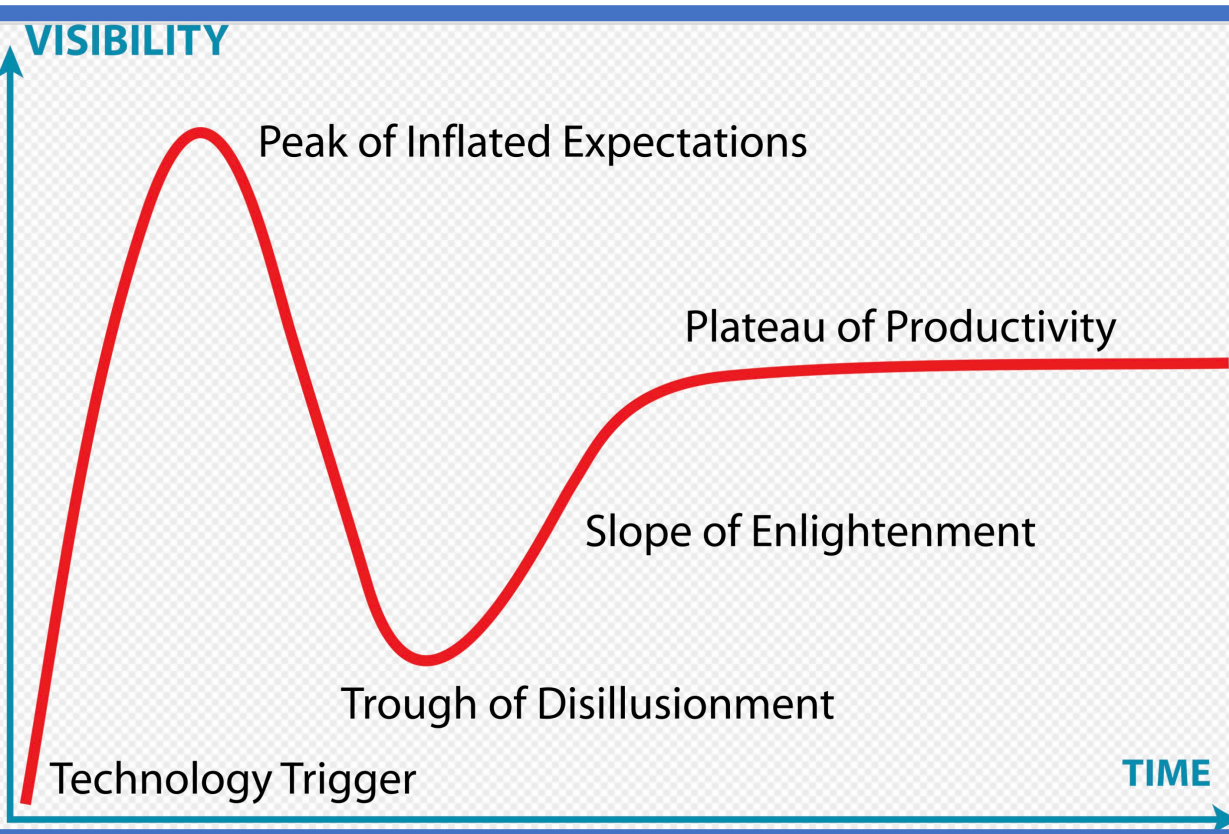- AOC CCL review of slides for inclusivity

Under design/implementation

- Holistic review for faculty evaluation
- Systematic approach to reviewing student curricular concerns to identify proportionate and successful corrective action (avoiding cancel culture)

Redesign of evaluation, faculty development and curricular review to address systemic issues to avoid setting faculty up for failure.
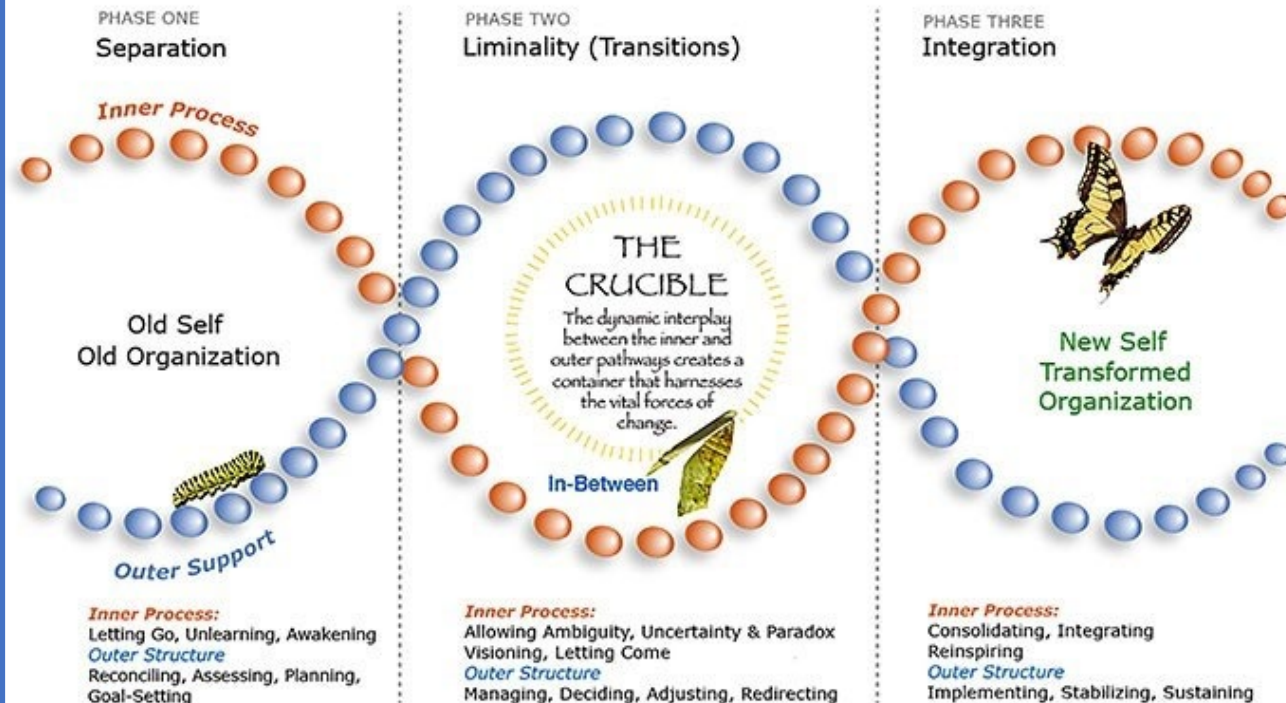
It is tempting to say that this work is too hard and we are all tired.

- Our Black/AA patients, students, colleagues do not have the option of putting aside strategies to deal with and unravel the consequences of racism and oppression; neither do our Intersectional and POC people.

- **The work to meet our anti-racism/anti-oppression goals will be hard and at times exhausting; it will require all the courage** we can muster as faculty to unlearn institutional legacy practices that have excluded or marginalized many communities.

- If we are serious about social justice and anti-racism work we must accept the the discomfort that new learning and unlearning brings.
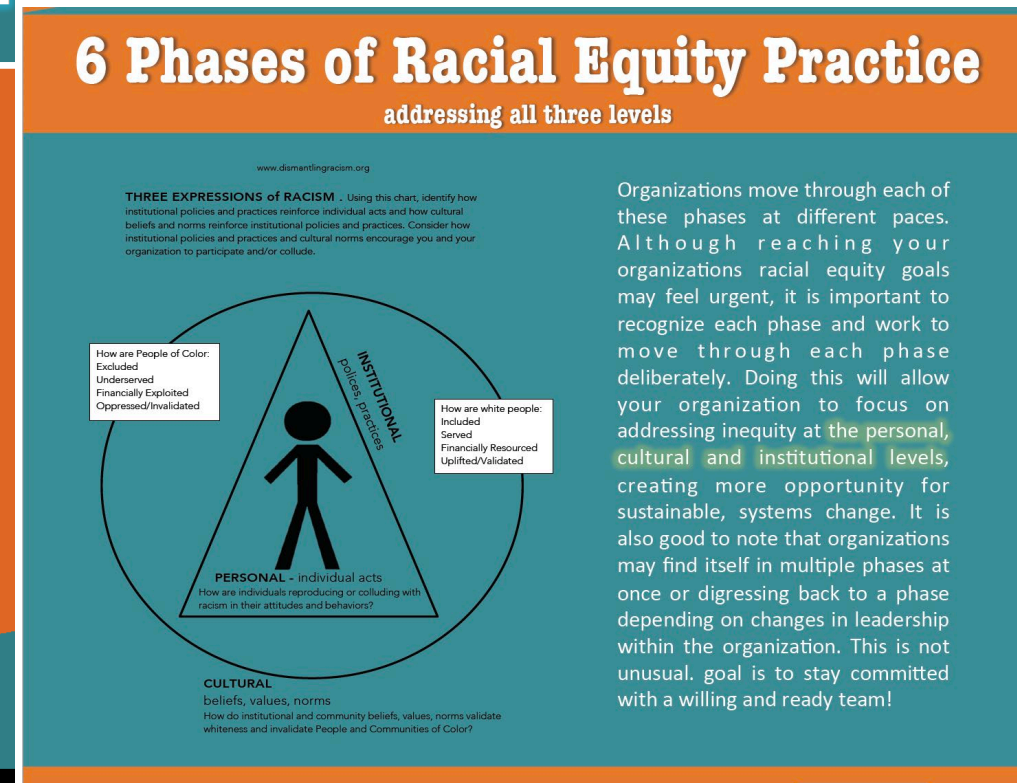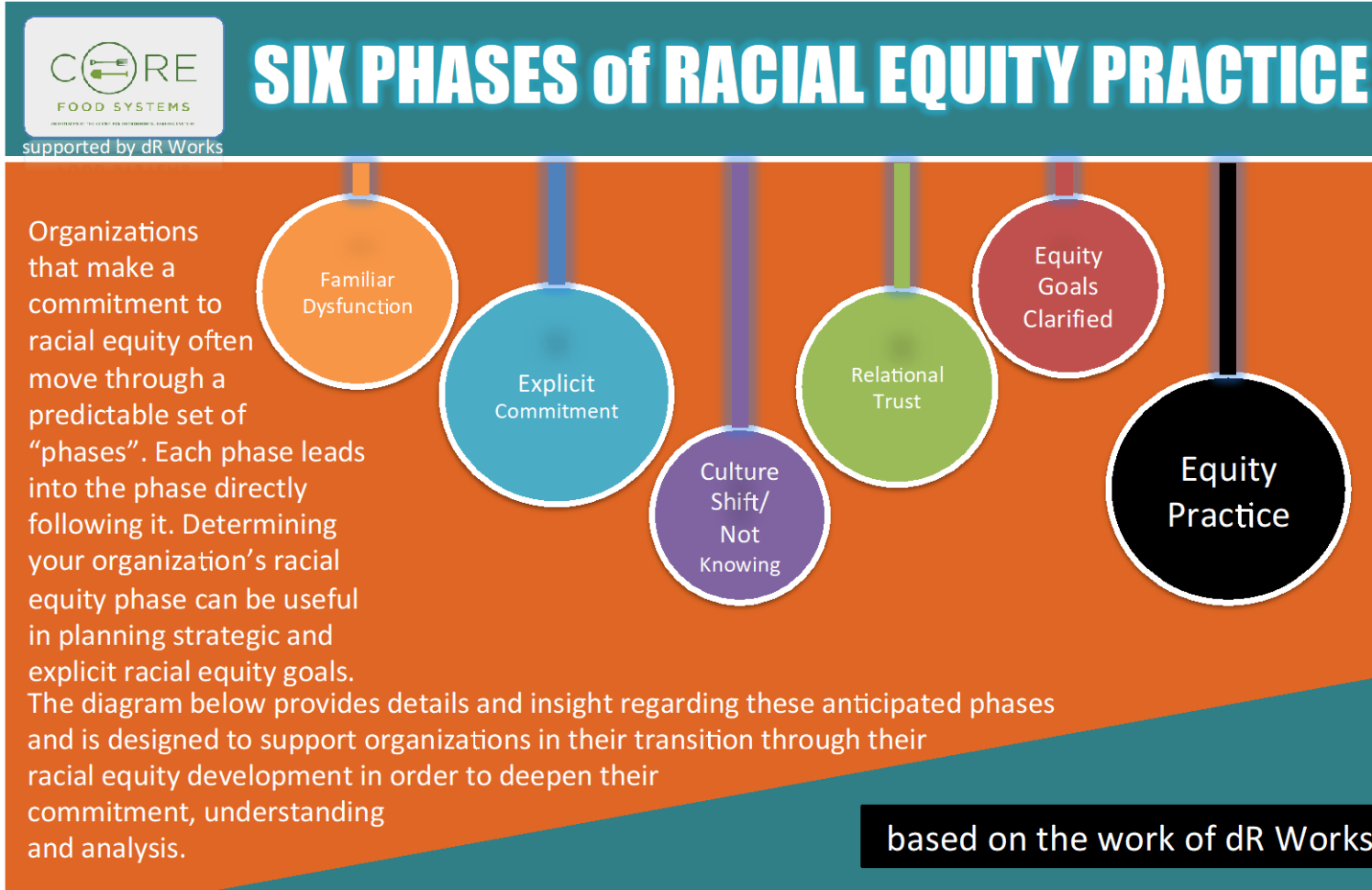
We are not alone: Organizational Change Journeys are characterized by turns in the road

VISIBILITY

Peak of Inflated Expectations

Plateau of Productivity

Slope of Enlightenment

Trough of Disillusionment

Technology Trigger

TIME

The Liminal Pathways Change Framework

PHASE ONE
Separation

PHASE TWO
Liminality (Transitions)

PHASE THREE
Integration

Inner Process

Old Self
Old Organization

THE CRUCIBLE
The dynamic interplay between the inner and outer pathways creates a container that harnesses the vital forces of change.

In-Between

New Self
Transformed Organization

Outer Support

Inner Process:
Letting Go, Unlearning, Awakening
Outer Structure
Reconciling, Assessing, Planning, Goal-Setting

Inner Process:
Allowing Ambiguity, Uncertainty & Paradox
Visioning, Letting Come
Outer Structure
Managing, Deciding, Adjusting, Redirecting

Inner Process:
Consolidating, Integrating
Reinspiring
Outer Structure
Implementing, Stabilizing, Sustaining

Stages of Racial Equity Practice

based on the work of dR Works

Phase I

Familiar Dysfunction

- People Of Color expected to "fit in"
- Unaware of historical impact of race on POC and resulting trauma
- Predominately White/ White-led

Most organizations start their equity commitment with an already established identity as predominately white with a dominant white culture ideology. People of Color (POC) are expected to "fit in" to existing culture. The organization is in a "fixing" stance, positioning itself as one of the "good" ones.

Explicit Commitment to Racial Equity

Phase II

- Shift begins
- Develop a shared analysis and framework
- POC gain renewed hope

Equilibrium in the organization begins to shift.
People in the organization begin to develop a shared language and framework for understanding racism. People of Color (POC) often begin to hold renewed hope that the organization might become more responsive to their strengths and needs. White people begin to question what once seemed certain. Expectations of POC begin to rise, as white people in the organization may become hyper-defensive or sensitive, given the expectation of different behavior.

Culture Shift/Not Knowing

- Either/ or thinking
- Frustration builds
- Expectation of change rises

Phase III

People of Color (POC) often read white people's complacency as intentional; they may also equate racial equity with the need for white people to change, which can diminish their sense of power and agency, resulting in high levels of frustration and hopelessness. White people begin to take every challenge as one to prove they are "good", either by disassociating from other white people, intellectualizing or criticizing the process   or seeking approval from POC. Organizations may begin to blame individuals for doing things "wrong". Leads to feeling unsettled and a search for quick fixes

Adapted from dR Works' Racial Equity Stages
visit www.dismantlingracism.org for more info

CEFS
CENTER for ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING SYSTEMS
NCSU | NCA&T | NCDA&CS

Relational Trust

Phase IV

Acknowledge messiness and chaos

Focus on building a culture of appreciation

Begin to identify individual and collective power

People start to identify their individual and collective power to make change or shift the organization without focusing on depending on others to change. People continue to identify useful and/or effective ways to disagree, looking for the value in different perspectives while assuming positive intent. Caucuses provide support for people to work through challenges related to racial equity work. People begin to sharpen their skills for holding each other accountable with a sense of possibility rather than judgment.

Equity Practice

Phase VI

Improved open and transparent communication

Culture of support, ongoing learning & accountability

Long-term commitment

Once goals have been clarified, the organization leans into the racial equity work with an appreciation for complexity, ongoing learning and reflection. The organization works to establish a culture that provides support AND accountability, one that presumes good intent while continually improving on the effort to bring intent and impact closer together through improved communication and mutual respect. The organization understands racial equity as an ongoing practice rather than a specific destination, aligning with the organizations mission and values.

Phase V

Equity Goals Clarified

Explicit Racial Equity Goals Named

Address all 3 levels

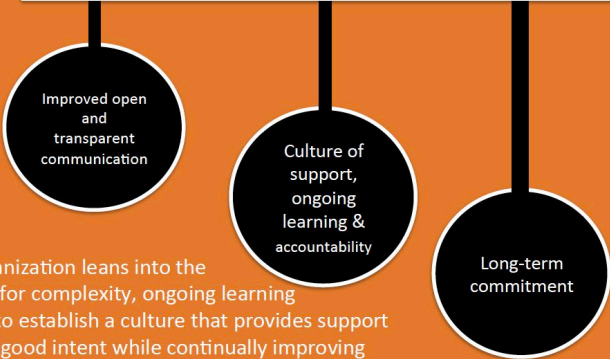Clarity around complexities of the racial equity work

Ready to identify and name specific and explicit racial equity goals at the cultural, institutional and personal levels. Naming these goals now rather than earlier, before the culture shift and "not knowing" stages, allows these goals to address the nuance and complexities in inherent racial equity work. Naming these goals now also means the groundwork has been laid for everyone to understand the integral connection between institutional, cultural and personal work.

Thank you and Questions/Comments