Original Research

# Operationalizing Antiracism in Higher Education Community Engagement

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## Abstract

Higher education must move beyond statements of solidarity towards action to support antiracist work at institutions.  Although these statements of support are laudable, it can be challenging to successfully operationalize antiracism across all levels of an institution (individuals, activities/programs, courses, units, and entire institutions) and with all stakeholders (faculty, staff, students, and community partners).  We suggest that community engagement is a key overlooked strategy and method for advancing antiracist agendas within institutions.  Examples of how antiracist work actually manifests through community-university partnerships can help identify successful outcomes of antiracist practices and policies. This article will share findings from a series of dialogues engaging over 250 participants about the intersection of engagement and antiracism, and share a call to develop a set of metrics to assess and measure antiracism in higher education community engagement.

**Keywords:** antiracism; community engagement; community-university partnerships

## Introduction

Systemic racism has always existed within all facets of our country – higher education being no exception (Bensimon, 2020; Museus, Ledesma, & Parker, 2015).  Health, economic, and social inequities magnified by COVID-19, coupled with the issues of ongoing police brutality and White supremacy, are bringing to the surface disparities that have always existed at disproportionate rates for people of color.  Now more than ever, public outcry over systematic racism and disparate treatment of marginalized communities has increased.  Leaders in all sectors have denounced racist policies and practices, and pledged support not just for diverse, equitable, and inclusive engagement, but also for *antiracist* engagement. Although these statements of support are laudable, often it is challenging to infuse these ideals within current systems and policy.

For many, issues of social justice, antiracism, and equity, diversity, and inclusion (DEI) seem inextricably linked to higher education community engagement (HECE) efforts.  Both scholarship and practice suggest that the concepts of equity and social justice must inform the work faculty, staff, and students do *in* and *with* communities (CCPH Board of Directors, 2021; Loggins, Nayve, & Plaxton-Moore, 2020; Mitchell, 2008; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Public Purpose Institute, 2021).  Yet from an institutional perspective, the work of HECE practitioners and DEI practitioners continues to proceed on separate, parallel tracks (Hurtado, 2007; Sturm, Eatman, Saltmarsh, & Bush, 2011) and there is little evidence of the benefits of HECE on *institutional* DEI or antiracism efforts.  If community engagement is a *strategy* through which campuses achieve their institutional mission and goals, why are more institutions not explicitly relying on it to respond to the events of 2020 and the call to become an antiracist institution?

Even more elusive is the need to assess and measure antiracist engagement in the context of HECE.  It is important to note that there has been much more research conducted on the benefits of DEI on HECE at the *individual* level.  These benefits are realized through evidence of student learning and transformation as a result of having participated in a high impact practice like service-learning (Einfield & Collins, 2008; Zimmerelli, 2016), and though increased commitments to civic and community engagement in faculty of color (Aguirre, 2000; Vogelgesang, Jensen, & Jayakumar, 2010).  At the institutional level, there are several rubrics that consider DEI in isolation from engagement efforts (New England Resource Center for Higher Education, 2016; Harris & Bensimon, 2007).  These tools consider the importance of institutional mission, administrative leadership, and evaluation and assessment capacity, but they do not consider the interplay or effects of community engagement efforts as methods to accomplish these goals.

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This article describes the efforts of an inter-institutional, cross-sectoral group of scholars and administrators to identify synergies between institutional leadership and on-the-ground community engagement practitioners as it relates to community engagement and antiracism. Over the course of the last year, we have engaged with over 250 HECE practitioners, most of whom articulate feelings of being *left out* of institutional responses to antiracism and who are searching for a way to elevate the stories and impacts of those working at the intersections of HECE, social justice, and antiracism. In this paper, we will summarize a series of dialogues engaging participants about the intersection of engagement and antiracism. Lastly, we will provide next steps to measure community engagement efforts using an antiracism lens.

## The (Re)Emergence of Antiracism

The question could be asked, "why is it so difficult to introduce antiracist practices into higher education? The complexity stems from the ongoing discussion of race and the intersectionality of the impact of individual difference within our society. "Today we are faced with complex, contradictory and complicated understandings of the language of race and racism" (Kailin, 1994, p. 130). Moreover, a larger challenge, often overlooked, is the long-standing history of systemic racism in the United States (Feagin, 2013; Museus et al., 2015). Higher education was created to sustain this system of oppression. As Hall, Ansley, Connolly, Loonat, Patel & Whitham (2021) discussed in *Struggling for the anti-racist university: Learning from an institution-wide response to curriculum decolonisation*, the role of higher education in sustaining current power structure as:

- The creation of relationships of inclusion and exclusion between staff and students, institutions and stakeholders, and institutions and society.
- The dominance of white, male views of reality (ontology) and ways of producing knowledge about the world (epistemology).
- The hegemonic (dominant and manufactured) position of knowledge generated in the global North in addressing crises.
- The value of alternative histories and conceptions of a meaningful education and life.
- The relationship between, first, economic value and value-for-money, and second, humane values and human flourishing (p. 903)

Examples of policies that reinforce systemic racism in higher education include standardized testing, higher education finance models, performance funding, and cultural marginalization and isolation, to name a few (Feagin, 2013; Museus et al., 2015). Hence, when we think about infusing antiracist practices and policies into our campuses some might say we are suggesting a *reimagining of higher education*. Furthermore, when we seek to infuse antiracist principles into community engagement, we move counter to the traditional lens through which community

engagement is conducted, which often includes individuals providing service to the community through non-reciprocal relationships. This is traditionally a Eurocentric perspective of interacting with the world (Hall et. al, 2021; Yep & Mitchell, 2017).

## Dimensions of Racism

To better understand the meaning of *antiracism*, it is imperative to have a contextual knowledge of the pervasiveness of racism within society.  Although when discussing racism, individual actions are often considered rather than systemic structures, racism has several different dimensions. These dimensions move from the individual (internalized and interpersonal) to the systemic (cultural, institutional and systemic). Although these dimensions are presented on a continuum, they occur and can be experienced together as well as separately as distinct phenomena. Moreover, the dimensions are connected by people that perpetrate and maintain, *intentionally or unintentionally*, the dominant system.  Said another way, there is a connection between the individual and systemic dimensions, in that individuals with authority create and implement policy to reinforce and sustain the unjust policy or system. "It is argued that these racisms are grounded in the tendency to use White, Euro-American culture(s) as the norm from which to evaluate other cultures and to treat people differently" (Dei, 1996, p.12). A deeper discussion of the different dimensions of racism are detailed below.

*Internalized racism* is an individual's private beliefs, bias, and prejudices as they relate to race (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 2007; Sue, 2016). These are thoughts that an individual might not know are there as they are often influenced and reinforced by culture and social programming (e.g., stereotypes of underrepresented populations and communities).  Internalized racism can lead to internalized supremacy by the dominant group and/or sublimated inferiority complexes in the minoritized groups.

*Interpersonal racism* is what is most thought of when we see acts of racism within the media or when we discuss acts of racism (Feagin, 2013; Sue, 2016).  It focuses on how racism manifests when people interact with each other.  Said another way, it occurs when a person acts upon their internalized racism and their private racial beliefs lead to public interactions.  Examples of acts of interpersonal racism include racial slurs, bigotry, and hate crimes.

*Cultural racism* refers to the societal beliefs and customs that assign greater value to beliefs associated with dominant norms (Powell, 2000; Sue, 2016).  These beliefs are often maintained through various media outlets.  Examples of cultural racism can be found in the language, traditions, and icons we privilege.  Cultural Racism is often thought to be where personal racism connects racisms that are found in society (e.g., institutional and systemic).

*Institutional racism* occurs within institutions and systems of power. As individuals are the leaders of organizations, our personal beliefs often produce and perpetuate institutional racism (Feagin, 2013; Jones, 2000). Institutional racism can be seen in unfair policies (formal and informal) as well as inequitable opportunities and disparate impacts of policies.

*Systemic racism* is the cumulative and compounding effects of a number of societal factors that have been designed to maintain and reinforce those in power (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 2007, Feagin, 2013). Through interactions with institutions and policies, systemic racism maintains a system of privilege for those in power and a systemic disadvantage for those that are not in power.

## Defining Antiracism

As alluded to by the title, antiracism is not a new term. The term actually has roots and history as part of the abolition movement. Resurging again in the 1960s, the term "antiracism" became popular with various other types of emancipatory discourse including anti-sexism and gay rights (North, 2020). "A minimal definition of antiracism is that it refers to those forms of thought and/or practice that seek to confront, eradicate and/or ameliorate" (Bonnett, 2000). Said another way and enhanced to current context "Anti-racism is understanding how years of federal, state, and local policies have placed communities of color in the crises they face today, and calling those policies out for what they are: racist." (North, 2020, para. 16).

It is important to note that the focus of antiracism, when developed, was not only racism. Rather, it was also a response to issues of discrimination based on nation, culture and religion (Anti-racism, 2000, Bonnett, 2000). It is also important to recognize that the concept of antiracism is a global phenomenon. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity defines antiracism as the "active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably" (Alberta Civil Liberties Research Center, n.d.).

A similar thread throughout all of the antiracism definitions is the focus on changing systems to create a more equal distribution of power as well as moving from discussion of tolerance to acknowledging, celebrating and embracing difference (Lynch, Swartz, & Isaacs, 2017). Moreover, in considering the racism continuum, antiracism focuses on the *systemic* rather than individual level. "Anti-racism moves beyond a narrow preoccupation with individual prejudices and discriminatory actions to the examination of the ways in which racist ideas and individual actions are entrenched and unconsciously supported in institutional structures. It is understood

that racist practices do not require intentionality but that such practices are deemed racist in terms of their effects " (Dei, 1995, p.13).

With the recent unrest related to systemic racism, the call for antiracist practices has resurged. One of the most important current voices in this conversation is Ibram X, Kendi, PhD, founding director of the Antiracist Research and Policy Center at American University.  In his book, *How to be an Antiracist*, Kendi provides the following definition for "racist" and "antiracist":

> **Racist:** One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction, or expressing a racist idea.

> **Antiracist:** One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea (Kendi, 2019, p. 13).

Kendi's position is very clear.  Regardless of intent, if one's actions support racist policy they are considered racist.  If one's actions support antiracist ideas, they are antiracist.  Malini Ranganathan, a faculty team lead at the Antiracist Research and Policy Center remarks about Kendi's interpretation of antiracism that "One endorses either the idea of a racial hierarchy as a racist, or racial equality as an antiracist" (North, 2021, para 11). An antiracist idea is understood as "one...expressing the idea that racial groups are equals and none needs developing, and is supporting policy that reduces racial inequity." (Kendi, 2019, p. 24).

Three goals of work from an antiracist perspective is to identify systemic oppression, challenge the inequity and bring about equity (Lynch, Swartz, & Isaacs, 2017). "An emerging concern for contemporary anti-racist research is to move beyond the bland politics of inclusion to a new politics of transparency and accountability" (Dei, 2005, p.5). An amalgamation of the historical context of antiracism as well as contemporary discourse has served as the conceptual foundation upon which this work has emerged.

## Origins and Foundations of this Work

This work was borne out of a national network of institutions committed to holistically understanding their community engagement and public service efforts through *Collaboratory*, a platform designed to track the landscape of institutional engagement - the who, what, where, when and why of activities designed with and for community.  Collaboratory supports interdisciplinary teams at 45 institutions across the United States and facilitates peer-to-peer connections and mentorship through a robust community of practice.

The network represents a diverse group of institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2022): 81% are public, four-year institutions and 19% are private not-for-profit; and they range in size from 1,000 - 10,000 students (57%) to 10,000 or more students (43%). The network also includes one historically black college or university, one land grant, four faith-based institutions, and 47% hold the Carnegie Foundation's Elective Classification for Community Engagement. The communities within which these institutions reside is also diverse – 50% of institutions are in urban communities, 43% are in suburbs or towns, and 7% are in rural communities. Collectively these institutions have tracked more than 4,300 engagement and service activities with more than 5,500 community organizations (Medlin and Seto, 2021).

This work began in the summer of 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and nation-wide protest for racial justice in response to the countless people of color who have died at the hands of an unjust system. Listening to the needs and frustrations of the administrators, faculty, staff, and students with whom Collaboratory works, we felt compelled to act. We reflected on how we were uniquely positioned to deepen our own internal commitments to antiracism as an organization while also supporting our national network of institutions. It was determined that the two unique contributions we could make to the conversations were 1) using our power and positioning within the field to amplify the work our institutions were doing to dismantle systemic racism within American higher education and beyond, and 2) providing strategies to leverage Collaboratory data across our network to explore and highlight if/how community engagement supports the fight for a more socially just and equitable society. Collaboratory published a statement articulating these intentions to our network, and invited our community of practice into conversation to explore collective avenues for growth and exploration.

The Collaboratory team hosted an initial conversation with members of our community of practice on June 30, 2020. Upon further reflection, participants shared that they felt a disconnect between those messages being shared by their institutional leadership and the work of individual faculty, staff, and students. *While most community of practice members were positioned in units responsible for community and civic engagement, they felt that their offices were being left out of the conversations about how to react and respond to current events.* They articulated a desire to continue to meet and discuss the intersection of community engagement and antiracism efforts more broadly. From this, a working group developed within our community of practice composed of institutions that wished to examine how they could leverage previously collected data on community engagement activities to enhance and reinforce their institutions' narratives around antiracism. Collectively, the working group developed three research questions to collectively explore:

1. What does "antiracist community engagement" look like and how does it manifest?
   a. What are key characteristics of certain types of antiracist engagement (e.g., policy work, service-learning, volunteering in communities of color)?
2. How do we intentionally incorporate antiracism work into efforts across campus?
3. How do we hold our institutions accountable in more deliberate ways, with data?

The working group emphasized the need for their institutions to more pointedly acknowledge community engagement as a strategy for operationalizing an antiracist agenda. The working group articulated the need for an operational definition of "antiracist community engagement" that they had yet not seen based on their backgrounds, experiences, or expertise.  In an effort to assist their institutions, more effectively leverage community engagement within their antiracist commitments, the working group identified a clear need to better understand the ways antiracist engagement is manifested and assessed in higher education.

The Collaboratory team committed to funding a Research Fellow to develop criteria for what "antiracist community engagement" looks like – including common characteristics, principles, and focuses that are present when engagement is conducted with an antiracist lens. The working group hoped the definition and criteria could later be used to measure and assess existing community engagement and public service activities that had been previously documented on their campuses without having to re-engage faculty and staff directly.  This form of secondary data analysis felt critical at the time, given the context of institutional burnout and uncertainty amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing racial tensions. The Collaboratory team invited *Stella L Smith*, an educational researcher and faculty member at *Prairie View A&M University*, a Historically Black College and University, to serve as Collaboratory's Antiracist Community Engagement Research Fellow to assist with working on these initiatives.

## Research Design
The research design to answer the three research questions posed in this paper is a qualitative, interpretive research design to identify ways that universities are engaging in community engagement activities through an antiracist lens. As this work aimed to first understand the depth of individuals' experiences and strategies as well as the frequency and breadth of the experiences, qualitative interpretive investigation is the best approach.  Institutional and community stakeholders who work directly with community engagement programming and activities participated in one of three community dialogues.

## Data Collection

To uncover the answer to the first and second research question, we conducted virtual community dialogues titled *Community Dialogue on the Intersection of Engagement and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion* using the ZOOM video conferencing platform.  The community dialogue was scheduled for 1 hour.  The Community dialogues were promoted via social media (Facebook and LinkedIn) and online through Collaboratory networks. Participation in the community dialogues was free; however, participants had to register to receive the link to log into the meeting. The event was held in a ZOOM meeting format to allow participants to fully participate in the conversation by turning on their video and unmuting their microphone to share their perspective and experiences.

Participation in the series of community dialogues was open to anyone — from novices to experienced practitioners, scholars, students, or community members — who wanted to align their community-based work more effectively with an antiracist lens. Due to the overwhelming response for participation in the Community Dialogues we held three events instead of our originally planned single session.  Table 1, below, provides information about participant attendance.

**TABLE 1.** Breakdown of community dialogues

| Date/Time | Total Registrants | Stakeholder Participants in Attendance | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Higher Education | Community Partner | National Association | Planning Team |
| January 18, 2021 2:00-3:00pm EST | 115 | 96 | 14 | 1 | 4 |
| January 27, 2021 3:00-4:00pm EST | 47 | 35 | 8 | 0 | 4 |
| February 2, 2021 2:00-3:00pm EST | 87 | 68 | 13 | 2 | 4 |

Overall, the dialogues engaged almost 250 participants, encompassing 75 distinct higher education institutions, representatives from three national associations, and more than two dozen community partners.  Semi-structured conversations were conducted and an activity was

developed to explore participants' thoughts about racism and antiracism, specifically how they might move one engagement activity to be more antiracist.

During the community dialogues, participants were provided an introduction to racism. Though we recognize that the structures that need to be changed are at an institutional level, we discuss the connection of the individual and systemic racism in the creation and disruption of unjust systems. As an activity, participants were asked to consider how one activity that they currently conduct could be reimagined from an antiracist perspective and what type of assessment would be appropriate for the event?  Given this context, participants were asked questions about their perceptions of how HECE could become more equitable and antiracist.

## Data Analysis

Although the data collection method (community dialogues) was informed by antiracism historical and current literature, the analysis of the data gleaned from the community dialogues utilized a grounded theory approach.  The researchers did not use a theoretical lens to focus the analysis of the data; instead, the data emerged through a deductive analysis process. The five analytic, and not strictly sequential, phases of grounded theory building were used; namely, research design, data collection, data ordering, data analysis and literature comparison.  All information was analyzed using open coding methods to uncover salient emergent categories and themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

It is crucial to understand the possible biases that the authors bring to the study and what measures were taken to minimize the influence of this bias (Maxwell, 2005).  In this section, the authors present their relationship to the topic and the participants in the study. The three authors' positionalities provided for a well-qualified and trained research team. *Stella L Smith, PhD* is an educational researcher and faculty member at Prairie View A&M University, a Historically Black College and University, and as the Anti-racist Community Engagement Research Fellow with Collaboratory, approached this work through the lens of increasing access and opportunity for underrepresented populations in higher education. As an African American, cis-gender, woman in academe, I grappled with concepts of racism and anti-racism in both my professional and personal life.  My educational achievements do not insulate me from the realities of systemic racism in the United States.  My position as both a member of doubly underrepresented populations (both race and gender) provides me with a unique understanding of the benefits of community engaged work conducted from an anti-racist perspective.

*Kristin Medlin, MPA, MS* is equal parts higher education administration; public affairs/nonprofit management and leadership; educational research, assessment, and evaluation; and educational

technology. My work in the community engagement sphere started over a decade ago, where I co-founded Collaboratory  I consider myself to be a unique version of a practitioner-scholar, working from within my position in industry to raise awareness about the value of engagement data, to help institutions develop a data culture, and to help build systems and structures for data collection, access, analysis, and sharing across the field. A pragmatist by training, my approach to research draws on the benefits of both positivist and constructivist paradigms and prioritizes a mixed methods and value-laden approach to research (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). As a white, cis-gender female, I believe it is my responsibility to act as an advocate and ally for underrepresented colleagues and communities. This project is a concrete attempt to embody this commitment. I acknowledge that I bring my personal beliefs and values to this research - and I firmly believe that there are structural inequities in our educational system that community engagement can help to address.

*Lauren A. Wendling, PhD* is a graduate of the Indiana University Bloomington Higher Education doctoral program, former Graduate Assistant within the IUPUI Office of Community Engagement, and a working professional at Collaboratory, I have operated both personally and professionally within the sphere of higher education community engagement.  I strongly believe that the foundational purpose of higher education is to contribute to the public good and my work as both a scholar and professional has reflected this belief.  My professional trajectory and personal beliefs have been heavily influenced by my time spent at IUPUI, a highly engaged institution that is seen as a thought leader in higher education community engagement (IUPUI, 2019).  Through my professional experiences at IUPUI and Collaboratory, I have come to believe that community engagement is a strategy through which institutions can actualize their visions, missions, and goals. In an effort to acknowledge the values and beliefs I bring to this inquiry and increase clarity and transparency throughout the research process, I continue to critically reflect on my positionality and guiding interests about the decisions made within each stage of the inquiry process – the formulation of research questions and methodology, data collection and analysis, and the representation of findings (Luttrell, 2010b).

## Findings

Participants shared a dynamic scale and range of activities hosted at their institutions including blood drives, food pantries, student internships, community-engaged academic courses, and other forms of community-engaged programming.  In an analysis of the community dialogues, the following preliminary themes were identified: (a) quantitative and qualitative measures are needed, (b) intent is important, (c) institutionalization of antiracist community engagement ideology, and (d) boundaries of community engagement.

## Theme One: Quantitative and Qualitative Measures Needed

Based on the dialogues, it was clear that there are quantitative measures used to document the impact of community engagement activities (e.g., number of registrations, number of participants, demographics of attendees); however, there was less thought about how engagement impacts the community from an antiracist perspective. Furthermore, when participants were asked for quantitative measures to demonstrate the outputs or impact of antiracist engagement, they were unable to articulate them during the discussion.

Participants stressed that quantitative measures were critical, particularly when discussing the need to institutionalize antiracist community engagement within the fabric of an institution. Participants shared that often their institutions highlight community engagement activities as an example of how the institution is *being a good neighbor* and supporting the well-being of the community around them.  However, if community engagement efforts are not institutionalized, they are at risk during times of budget cuts, institutional change, or staff turnover.  Developing quantitative measures to illustrate the benefit and impact of engagement for the institution, specifically through an antiracist lens, is vital to ensuring that permanent funding is allocated for community engagement.

In addition to creating quantitative metrics to evaluate community engaged activities, there is a continued need to understand the impact and value of engagement through a qualitative, story-telling approach.  Mixed methods research can help address this need and give voice to the impact of these activities and support the institutionalization of community engagement.

## Theme Two: Intent is Important

Participants shared it was also necessary to understand the intent for organizing an engagement activity to truly assess it as antiracist because the intent or purpose of the engagement is related to its assessment. Ultimately, the intent of the engagement would influence the design of the event as well as which metrics would be most accurate to measure the activity.

It was also proposed that there is a connection between institutional and individual intent.  Said another way, the different dimensions of racism are important as we assess engagement events from an antiracist perspective.  It was expressed repeatedly that *people* are the ones that create and plan events, and if those individuals have not had the opportunity to engage in critical conversations related to systemic racism and antiracism, the event, although often well-intended, can still end up having an impact that is counter to the goals of an antiracist community engagement agenda.

Many of our participants stressed the idea that this is a *both/and* situation.  In order to develop truly antiracist community engagement activities it will require work at both the systemic and institutional, as well as the personal dimension of racism.  An institutional assessment of an activity is important, but that cannot replace or supplant each individual's work to personally understand and embrace the concepts, policies, and practices that support an antiracist agenda.

## Theme Three: Institutionalization of Antiracist Community Engagement Ideology

Participants shared the need to institutionalize antiracist community engagement as part of the core of the institution.  Participants shared examples of how involvement in community engagement activities can be institutionalized by adding credit to the tenure and promotion process or providing adequate resources to support reciprocal efforts to participate in engaged activities.  Participants stated that everyone on campus must take ownership of ensuring the institution maintains antiracist community engagement activities, including departments that might not traditionally participate in community engagement.  The institution comprises multiple *micro-institutions* and part of the goal is to ensure community engagement is seen as a standard, not an exception, throughout the university.

## Theme Four: Boundaries of Community Engagement

There was discussion about the definition of community engagement; specifically, what is community versus what is the institution.  Depending on stakeholders that participated in the dialogues, there were varied definitions of community and community engagement.  As we look to discover from an institutional perspective what antiracist, diverse, equitable, and inclusive community engagement looks like, the very boundaries of what creates community might also need to be questioned.  For example, can faculty work that occurs within the confines of the institution, but benefits the larger public constitute community engagement?  How can we determine if engagement with diverse institutional colleagues qualifies as community engagement?  Traditionally it seems that community engagement has been considered to be outside of the actual institutional physical space, but within our community dialogues, there was a question about how that traditional definition might be expanded to include activities that seek to empower underrepresented communities within the borders of that institution's physical space.

## Discussion

The community dialogues brought forth five clear takeaways.  The first is the complexity of this challenge as we work to better understand and institutionalize antiracist community engagement.  As community engagement professionals and advocates, we endeavor to assist institutions infuse antiracism into their community engagement.  We also seek to help individuals understand and grapple with issues of systemic racism and antiracism, which are often very emotional issues to

discuss.  However, particularly in this time, it is critical that we capture the momentum of the national conversation about systemic racism and begin to address the challenges that are inherent in our higher education system.

One source of information that might be of assistance to assess community engagement through an antiracist lens is Collaboratory.  The Collaboratory database includes a variety of community engagement and public service activities from all over the country and can be used as a resource to compare and highlight those institutions that have done work to develop antiracist community engagement activities.  The activities can serve as examples and benchmarks for institutions that have a desire to develop such programs but need a road map and an example for how to do so.

Second, there is also a need for examples of metrics that can be used to better understand and assess antiracist community engagement.  We need to begin to think intentionally about how we develop metrics and assessment measures during the planning stages to ensure that community engaged work does indeed have the impact that is intended on the communities that we work with and serve.

Third, ensuring that we are consistently foregrounding antiracist principles as we think about how to engage with the community is a priority.  "Antiracism change requires that research and researchers see local peoples/subjects as the orists of their own everyday lives and practices. Local peoples live and create theory. They are creators of knowledge not simply subjects of study" (Dei, 2005, p. 5). The thread of antiracism should run throughout the development, planning, execution, and assessment stages of our engagement.  Assessment, as it relates to antiracist community engagement can no longer be an afterthought.  We must develop formative and summative assessments so we can determine how we are doing and how we can improve.

Fourth, we need to acknowledge higher education's role in the reinforcement of systemic racism within this country. Often community engagement programs endeavor to do work in communities, but we miss the important step of acknowledging how sometimes our very presence has reinforced the challenges that underrepresented groups have within that community. Whether it is gentrification, displacement, or other racist policies, our institutions must acknowledge that we have been, and continue to be, part of the problem. From this place of recognition, we can move forward and strive to be part of a jointly constructed solution where we work with the community in order to be part of antiracist community engagement efforts.

Finally, we need to ensure that we start from a common language when we discuss antiracism. In any antiracism conversation, it is important to define these terms in order to make sure that everyone understands the terminology and intent of the conversation.  Sometimes the words

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"racism" or "antiracism" can cause communication to halt, though the goal of these words is actually the opposite. When we work to establish antiracist community engagement, we are seeking reciprocal relationships where all parties are able to discuss and interact based on their needs. Everyone brings value to the table. It was clear from the community dialogues that we need to make sure that we define these terms and that everyone understands that these conversations, although they are personal in some regards, are focused on the systemic challenges.

North (2020) quoted this profound statement by Malini Ranganathan who stated "Anti-racism is an acknowledgment of privilege in a way that, I think, simply disavowing racism is not … It takes seriously that we all are situated into different matrices of power and privilege, and the first step is to take stock of that and not to disavow it or invisibilize it" (para 15). When we discuss an antiracist agenda it is an institutional agenda and an opportunity for us to work together as a community to improve outcomes for all.

## Next Steps

At the beginning of this paper, we alluded to the creation of an Antiracist community engagement scorecard. Our next steps are to use the data from the community dialogues as well as data captured in Collaboratory to inform the creation of a community engagement antiracist scorecard that can be used as an assessment tool for institutions to evaluate their current community engagement activities from an antiracist lens. Informed by the feedback from the community dialogues and the research literature, the scorecard will have a mixed methods design including descriptive data, likert scale items and open-ended questions (mixed methods) to provide a comprehensive accounting of antiracist community engagement at the institution.

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