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The Correlation is a Causation: A Look into Social Justice and Civility at IWU

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THE CORRELATION IS A CAUSATION: A LOOK INTO SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CIVILITY AT IWU

PRESENTERS: QUENTIN JACKSON, NGAN PHAM, SHAELA PHILLIPS
WHICH WOULD YOU PREFER???
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CIVILITY?

• What is civility?
  – Civility is the act of formal politeness and courtesy in behavior or speech.

• Why is civility important?
  – It enables people to have a forum where they can discuss their viewpoints, even if those viewpoints are different from your own.
  – It may also give you a better understanding on your position on a certain topic/ or issue.
  – It instigates and helps maintain an open mind about controversial topics (tying it back to the acknowledgement of various viewpoints).
# Civility or Rather the Lack Thereof

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shaela’s Experience</th>
<th>Quentin’s Experience</th>
<th>Ivana’s Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where?</strong> Inside the classroom</td>
<td><strong>Where?</strong> Tommy’s</td>
<td><strong>Where?</strong> Gateway class/ TOL group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What?</strong> A mock debate between two groups in my international human rights class on the topic of immigration</td>
<td><strong>What?</strong> Sitting down conversing, listening to music in a public setting. All of sudden a Caucasian male decided to stand up and scream across the restaurant, “You didn’t ask us what we wanted to listen to, turn it off”!</td>
<td><strong>What?</strong> Playing hotspot, a game where you asks another person probing/challenging questions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Who?</strong> Between my group and another group</td>
<td><strong>Who?</strong> A couple of my friends and this guy from the baseball team.</td>
<td><strong>Who?</strong> Ivana and another student playing the game</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Why?</strong> Student representative from the anti-immigration group presented their view in a very disrespectful way while the rest of the group found it humorous. “You’re illegal,” and “You don’t belong here”.</td>
<td><strong>Why?</strong> He tried to show off in front of his teammates.</td>
<td><strong>Why?</strong> Gets asked are you for or against Trump. Tells her that he’s against illegal immigrants being in America.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESULTS OF THE LACK OF CIVILITY

- Lack of civility at IWU
  - Students do not typically engage with those of the other side or who they disagree with
    - Creates an environment where students do not know how have difficult conversations or conversations at all
    - Also creates a much more polarized, tension filled, and isolating campus climate
  - Lack of knowledge flowing through the campus which creates knowledge bubbles as well as ignorance
    - Creates a campus that doesn’t not prioritize social justice which alienates those who do want this to be a part of their campus experience
    - Lack of students participating in social justice classes or activities on campus
Possible Solutions #1: TAKE A STANCE AND HOLD STRONG

- IWU should voice that they are Pro Free Speech and encourage students to voice their opinions in a RESPECTFUL MANNER
- IWU should respond to acts or incidents of incivility with much more of a serious tone with possible punishments or consequences against those who commit such acts
- IWU vs ISU response
- IWU should promote the importance of social justice through programming and creating spaces where students feel safe speaking their opinions
- Kalamazoo College’s Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership = IWU Social Justice & Diversity Room

- This could help students feel more comfortable with voicing their opinions as well as help students engage in difficult conversations in a more effective manner
- Enables students to know that there will be consequences for their uncivil actions, which can possibly lower the amount of uncivil incidents on campus as well as show students that the university does care
- Allows students to have a space where they can feel comfortable to voice their diverse opinions with others as well as gives them the opportunity to turn those opinions into more than just opinions by using those opinions to further their involvement with social justice
Freedom of Expression or Movement

Violations shall consist of but are not limited to:

1. “Preventing a speaker or those listening to him/her from voicing or hearing his/her ideas.”

Harassment and Intolerance

• “Illinois Wesleyan University does not tolerate harassment based on racial, ethnic, gender, religious or other hostility.”
• “This definition of harassment specifically includes verbal acts, which are intended to insult or stigmatize an individual or group of individuals based on their race or color, their ethnicity, their sexual or religious orientation, or a disability”
• “Harassment can include, but is not limited to, hostile or intimidating verbal or written statements or symbols, or physical threats or intimidating conduct”
• “The University will take appropriate disciplinary action against those found to have committed harassment, up to and including dismissal from the university.”
ISU

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

The early morning hours brought closure to one of the most contentious presidential elections in U.S. history. While Illinois State University police reported only minor acts of overnight vandalism, there have been plenty of social media rumors regarding incidents of criminal hate activity and racial slurs. In addition, police are aware of and investigating individuals who are purposely posting fictitious information on Facebook and other social media sites.

I urge all students, faculty and staff members with firsthand knowledge to immediately report any suspected criminal activity to the University Police Department at (309) 438-8631 and any acts of intolerance to the Dean of Students Office at (309) 438-2008.

Anyone found responsible for such actions will be held accountable to the limit of applicable laws and policies.

Every member of our campus community deserves a safe and secure environment. For a great many people, this election has shaken their sense of well-being, leaving some fearful of what may happen next.

I ask everyone, especially over these next few days, to treat each other with an extra measure of respect, dignity and friendship. It is imperative that we make every effort to come together as a community and not fall victim to divisiveness.

ISU

might have been appropriate, this note was hostile in its profanity and disrespectful by targeting our Chinese students by language choice (although it was clearly not a native speaker who wrote it).

After a Resident Assistant found the note, it was removed from the kitchen, but not before damage was done. As a result of this note, many of our Chinese residents are feeling targeted, unwelcomed and disrespected in their home. This behavior and the outcome is unacceptable.

Leaving a note such as this does not resolve issues occurring in our community. If a problem arises, we ask that you address fellow residents in a respectful, kind manner or speak with a Resident Assistant. We expect our students at Illinois Wesleyan University to uphold a standard of respect towards all residents and their cultures. We are all impacted by this kind of incivility as it sets the norm for how we treat one another. If you or someone you know left the note, please let me know so that we can facilitate a more constructive dialogue among members of our community. It is important to note that these were actions of a few and the vast majority of our community respects and appreciates difference in all its many forms and facets. To the students affected by this incident, we have resources available on campus to support you at Counseling & Consultation Services. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Office of Residential Life with any questions or concerns.
Kalamazoo College: Arcus Center for Social Justice

- Center that focuses specifically on providing students, faculty, and staff members with the resources and support to become leaders in human rights and social justice
- Holds different workshops and events throughout the year to facilitate discussion as well as to educate students
- Actively involves students through summer internships and student jobs

IWU: Social Justice and Diversity Room

- Room that houses different books that can act as a resource for students interested in social justice topics
- Study/work space for students that is supposed to feel very warm and welcoming
## Possible Solutions #2: The Classroom Approach

### Solutions

- Challenge students to speak up on their viewpoints
  - teaches that talking about these issues isn’t taboo or looked down upon just because they’re sensitive or controversial
  - the difference between being open-minded and civil versus being insulting

### Results

- Promotes healthy dialogue in a neutral safe space that allows everyone to voice their opinions
  - Outside the classroom
    - applying civility
    - less hesitation speaking about controversial topics
POSSIBLE SOLUTIONs #3: Forums outside of the classroom

**Solutions**

Provide and promote the events that require people to discuss touchy topics

*Possible events:*

- Mock debates between College Dems and Rep
- Rallies and protests (DACA, Walk a Mile in Her Shoes)
- Require/incentivize students to go 3D's and other events centered around diversity and social justice
- Create a space like Kalamazoo College Social Justice Center

**Results**

- Forums outside of the classroom would allow students the opportunity to voice their opinions on controversial topics.
- In turn, if students are engaging in dialogue outside of the classroom they may feel more inclined to speak up in class when dense topics arise and outside of the class when they see someone’s identity being challenged
WHAT DID YOU LEARN IN K-12 ABOUT BLACK HISTORY?

Slavery = a blip in U.S. history but...
1) Others did it, too; and
2) The Civil War righted our wrong
Isn't that a relief?!

Some slave masters treated their slaves "humanely" (implication: a slave's life wasn't necessarily all bad). "Not the point?"