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Professor Gibbs on the State Grant to Promote Racial Healing

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WGLT Interview with Michele Gibbs, January 1, 2021

Tiffany Jackson: Illinois Wesleyan University, the nonprofit for at risk youth project Oz and YWCA Mclean County receive funding through the Illinois department of human services. Illinois Wesleyan used its \$32,000 grant to host a virtual anti-racism and racial justice workshop. Featuring the performing arts company Brown Body. The event was part of the Universities Martin Luther King day of celebration. IWU assistant professor for theater arts Michelle Gibbs says, "The University wants to create more spaces for inclusive expression".

Michelle Gibbs: the healing Illinois grant is meant to speak to not just BIPOC communities, but all communities in regards to how would we begin to acknowledge the reckoning that's happening across the world in terms of how we deal with violence against the dark body.

Jackson: IWU is a predominantly white institution. Gibbs says combining racial healing and professional development is essential. Brown body hosted a joined workshop for students and staff using story telling through modern dance, figure skating and theater, to help students see how trauma can be processed in a new light.

Gibbs: There won't be any, uh BIPOC students, but there will be a lot of white faculty members and a lot of white staff, and so the opportunity there is to be able to be a part of something that they might not be traditionally a part of but create an opportunity for listening.