

Decolonizing Our Curriculum

Presentation from the CAHSS JEDI Committee
C&D Retreat Sept. 13

Who are the JEDI Committee?

What do we do and
why are we here?

We serve as resources rather than pushing for a mandate.

The committee is faculty-driven and not dean-driven - we identified areas of work we want to focus on and propose to the Dean.

We recognize the work done by CAHSS colleagues in the college in the area of social justice, equity and inclusion - we are not the only ones who do this work.

We practice cultural humility and would like this to spread in CAHSS.



Who are the JEDI Committee?

What do we do and
why are we here?

JEDI Committee Co-Chairs

Margo Hill

Pui-Yan Lam

Angela Schwendiman

JEDI Committee Members

Kate Crane

Sara Goff

Kassahun Kebede

Malcolm Pelles

Erin Ross

Jason Sculley

Jacki Hedlund Tyler

**Time is tough - but there is “never a good time
to do JEDI work”**

**One of our proposed JEDI initiatives is to establish a
Summer Institute to help faculty decolonize our
curriculum**

Overview of the Importance of Decolonizing Curriculum

For our students from historically marginalized groups, feeling they belong at EWU is not just about interpersonal relationships - they also want their worldviews and experiences reflected in the curriculum.

The history of our disciplines is connected to Western colonization - there are movements in the US and globally calling for decolonization of higher education in general.

We also acknowledge that decolonizing higher education takes more than just decolonizing our curriculum.



BLACK STUDENT VOICES

PART 3



The Role of Chairs & Directors in Decolonizing Curriculum

As change agent encouraging and facilitating curriculum and other changes in your units for EWU to become more inclusive, equitable and social justice oriented.

To coordinated efforts within your unit instead of relying on the effort of individual faculty, which often results in changes at the course-level only.

What JEDI skills are you going to learn today?

Program Curriculum Decolonizing Activity - 1. Paired Work

You will work in pairs (or trios) and use the provided set of questions to examine the curriculum for the Classical Studies major at University of Kansas.

For this part of the activity you will need:

1. The handout with a list of questions to help you assess the program curriculum.
2. Access to the University of Kansas's Classical Studies website using the QR code shown here (to the side).



Program Curriculum Decolonizing Activity - 2. Group Discussion

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1. What are your takeaways from this activity?
2. Do you think we should decolonize our curriculums in CAHSS? Why or why not?
3. What would be the obstacles (besides budget and personnel constraints) and resistance if we were to decolonize our curriculums in CAHSS? How can chairs/directors and administrators address this?
4. How do you think as chair/director you could motivate and mobilize colleagues in your program/department to decolonize their curriculum? What strategies do you think would work? And what wouldn't work?

Decolonising Classics

Inclusive Pedagogy & Classical Studies

- [Keele University's Manifesto for Decolonising the Curriculum](#)
- hooks, bell. 2014. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. Routledge.
- Rankine, Patrice D. "The Classics, Race, and Community-Engaged or Public Scholarship." *American Journal of Philology* 140, no. 2 (2019): 345-359.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. 'Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation', *American Sociological Review* 62.3 (1997), pp.465-80
- Jackson, P. 'Fight or Die: How to Move from Statements to Action', *Eidolon*
- Dr Sarah Derbew Interview: '[Decolonizing Blackness, alongside the Classics Curriculum](#)'

On this page

[Inclusive Pedagogy & Classical Studies](#)

[Background Reading](#)



diversity and equity

Equity

Over the past months the Covid Crisis and horrific incidents of racist, especially anti-Black, violence have exposed anew the systemic inequities of our society.

These tragedies demand that we reaffirm our commitment to diversity and equity within our field and add our voice to those calling for an anti-racist, just society for ourselves, our students and, indeed, for all.

The history of our own department bears witness to the place of Classics in the long arc of systemic racism. Our department is housed in a building named after Moses Taylor Pyne, the University benefactor whose family wealth was directly tied to the misery of enslaved laborers on Cuban sugar plantations. This same wealth underwrote the acquisition of the Roman inscriptions that the department owns and that are currently installed on the third floor of Firestone Library.

Standing only a few meters from our offices and facing towards Firestone is a statue of John Witherspoon, the University's slave-owning sixth president and a stalwart anti-abolitionist, leaning on a stack of books, one of which sports the name "Cicero." So great a fan was Witherspoon of the Roman orator and politician that he named his nearby estate—where he regularly hosted George and Martha Washington after purchasing two enslaved people as farm-hands—Tusculum. This statue is no artifact of the distant past: it was erected in 2001.

Mindful of this history's reverberations down to the contemporary moment, our efforts in the Classics Department have advanced and will continue to advance the following three objectives:

πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι
ὀρέγονται φύσει.

All human beings naturally desire
to know.

Aristotle, Metaphysics

Equity Committee Members

J. Arbeiter, Graduate Administrator
S. Bebon, Undergraduate Student
N. Blaustein, Department Manager
B. Graziosi, Faculty, Committee Chair
S. Johnson, Graduate Student
S. Lee, Graduate Student
D. Padilla Peralta, Faculty
K. Stergiopoulou, Faculty
A. White, Undergraduate Student

What are our next steps?

Next Steps on Decolonizing Our Curriculum

- Faculty and staff at the all-college retreat on Sept 18 will go through a similar exercise that focuses on course-level changes
- JEDI Committee will get feedback from CAHSS faculty to develop a plan for the Summer Institute for Decolonizing Curriculum
- JEDI Committee members will work on finding resources to organize the Summer Institute and pay faculty to work on curriculum changes in Summer 2024