



Proposal for Center for Equity & Social Justice

July 13, 2020

“No matter how big a nation is, it is no stronger than its weakest people, and as long as you keep a person down, some part of you has to be down there to hold him down, so it means you cannot soar as you might otherwise.” - Marian Anderson

Introduction/Summary

Inequity in the United States of America will not simply disappear. Sadly, it is woven into the very fabric of our country. The Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863, and until this year, the Confederate flag was proudly flown in many parts of the United States. The recent, tragic events that have caused this nation to collectively rise up and reject the inequities that permeate our country provides us all with the opportunity to question, to self-reflect, to look inward and ask ourselves if we really know what social inequity is and do we understand what it feels like to be someone other than who we are.

Between Rodney King in 1991 and George Floyd in 2020, little has changed in America for people of color in terms of equity and social justice. In the first six months of 2020, Natalia Miranda, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Christian Cooper exemplify the cruel reality of the disparity in equity and social justice in this country. Now more than ever, there is a call to action for Americans to have conversations about inequity, conversations that can be incredibly difficult and uncomfortable. However, if we truly believe in a society that is equitable and just for all, a society that respects everyone regardless of color, creed, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, then we must not fear those crucial conversations, but embrace them, because it is through open, honest dialogue and discourse that we will learn that we are joined by so much more than that which separates us.

Inequality & Injustice

Issues of inequality and injustice are prevalent in all areas of American life, including education, law enforcement, criminal justice, healthcare, and employment. Indeed, every facet of life is affected in some way by issues of racism, discrimination, or inequity. Some of these issues include:

- Black Americans are more likely than white Americans to be arrested. Once arrested, they are more likely to be convicted, and once convicted, they are more likely to experience lengthy prison sentences.[1]
- In 2016, Latinos had a median wealth of \$6,400 compared to White median wealth of \$140,500 [2]
- 36% of adult workers over 40 feel their age has prevented them from getting a job since turning 40. [3]
- Two weeks after launching its Coronavirus Anti-AAPI Racism Incident Report platform in mid-March 2020, a coalition of Asian-American groups has received over 1,100 reports of incidents of coronavirus-related attacks and racial discrimination. [4]
- 40% of the homeless population in the US are under the age of 18. [5]
- The top 1% [K-12 school] districts across the nation funded their schools by an average \$21,000 per student in 2015. That's almost three times the level of the bottom 1% of school districts where funding levels were \$7,500 per student. [6]
- Hispanic women actually have the highest unemployment rate as of April 2020—about one in five Latina workers are unemployed. [7]

- Throughout the U.S. workforce, women remain vastly underpaid. Among full-time workers, women earned less than 81 cents for every dollar a man earned in 2016. If part-time workers were included, the gap would be even wider, since women are more likely to work reduced schedules, often in order to manage childrearing and other caregiving work. [8]
- Poverty is a particularly acute problem for women of color, affecting 21.4% of Black women, 18.7% of Latinas, and 22.8% of Native American women, compared to the national poverty rate for white men of 7%. [9]
- The coronavirus pandemic has left millions of families without stable employment. More than 54 million people, including 18 million children, may experience food insecurity in 2020. [10]
- Between 11% and 28% of LGBTQ workers report losing a promotion simply because of their sexual orientation, and 27% of transgender workers report being fired, not hired, or denied a promotion [11]
- On average, Black men in the US receive sentences that are 19.1% longer than those of white men convicted for the same crimes.[12]
- In research on presentence reports, for example, scholars have found that people of color are frequently given harsher sanctions because they are perceived as imposing a greater threat to public safety and are therefore deserving of greater social control and punishment. [13]
- From 2013 to 2017, white patients in the US received better quality health care than about 34% of Hispanic patients, 40% of Black patients, and 40% of Native American patients.[14]

Race & Ethnicity in Delaware and Chester Counties [15], [16]

Race/Ethnicity	Delaware County Population: 562,316 (2018)	Chester County Population: 512,028 (2018)
White	68.6%	80.6%
Black	21%	5.8%
Hispanic	3%	6.9%
Asian	5.3%	4.6%
Mixed	1.9%	1.8%
Other	0.3%	0.2%
Equity Score ♦	28.6	38.4

♦ Equity Score: assesses income, education, health and social equity to determine how well all members of a community are afforded the opportunity to live a productive, healthy life. [17], [18]

Proposal to the Communities of Delaware and Chester Counties

At Delaware County Community College, we live our strategic vision which states, “through working relationships with school districts, university partners and community and business leaders, the College will be the first choice for:

- *Employees as an organization committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in all facets of the working and learning environment*
- *Local communities as an institution inspired to learn, respect, understand, embrace and support the diverse needs of the area and its residents*

As a pillar within Delaware and Chester counties, the College serves the students, residents, school districts, organizations, and employers of our many communities. As a leader in education, the College is committed to helping our community heal, to bring people together, and to let voices be heard so that together we begin to eradicate the issues of inequality and injustice. The College has demonstrated its commitment to the fair and equitable treatment of all human beings, and to that end, the College seeks to establish a Center for Equity & Social Justice.

Mission/Vision for the Center for Equity & Social Justice

The Center for Equity and Social Justice at Delaware County Community College will contribute to dismantling systems of racism and social injustice within our communities by acting as a convener to provide ongoing opportunities for education that leads to greater awareness, and for meaningful dialogue that leads to common ground, and transformational change. Through these efforts we will endeavor to understand our differences and recognize our commonalities, all in an effort to build trust and promote greater acceptance and understanding.

Goals

- Facilitate meaningful discussions that provide opportunities for education around issues of race, inequity and social justice.
- Inspire social change with discussion on action-focused topics presented by local, state and nationally recognized speakers.
- Create spaces that promote open and honest conversations.

Examples of Inequity and Social Injustice Areas to be Addressed

- Racism/Privilege
- Discrimination
- Homelessness

- Education
- Gender Inequality
- Food/Housing Insecurity
- LGBTQ rights
- Police and Community Relations
- Healthcare
- Employment

Function/Role of the Center

Students, parents, community members, local non-profits, school districts, community organizations, businesses, and other colleges and universities will be invited to attend forums or workshops, facilitated by Delaware County Community College.

The Center will host guest speakers who are experts in the fields of equity and social justice, as well as guest speakers who will address the numerous issues outlined above. Due to current social distancing guidelines, these events will be held virtually until such time that larger in-person events are feasible. The Center plans to hold its first panel discussion at the end of July 2020.

An Advisory Committee of individuals chosen for their involvement with the communities of Delaware and Chester counties and their knowledge of issues pertaining to equity and social justice will provide feedback and suggestions on the role and scope of the Center, topics of discussion, guest speakers, and other issues that have a successful impact on the mission and goals of the Center.

Works Cited

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