

Anti-Racist Task Force

Kent State University School of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies

February 2022 Newsletter
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TLC's Vision: Fostering courageous thought, innovative research and practices, and local and global community engagement for a more just world.

Welcome!

After a busy fall semester, members of the TLC Anti-Racist Task Force took a moment to regroup and focus on the intentional work we have done and are doing. One effort we recently engaged in was the submission of a grant proposal to AERA's Division K. The grant was titled: "Fomenting Anti-Racist Dispositions Across Teacher Education Faculty At Kent State University." The grant, led by Dr. Francisco Torres and Dr. Rhonda Hylton, aimed to begin work on fomenting anti-racist dispositions in Kent State University's teacher education faculty. The purpose of the project was to create a shared sense of commitment among faculty to anti-racist tenets and create community groups whose goal was to act as critical friends in the endeavor of enacting anti-racist practices in our classes. We believe the work must start from the top down to change the dynamic and climate our students are entering, especially as we try to recruit diverse populations into our school. Our hope was to involve community partners, students, and others to solidify anti-racist dispositions in our school, the community, and more specifically, the schools our students enter. The grant was very competitive and although we did not receive funding for our proposal, we still believe in the efficacy of this plan and hope to implement it over time and with new commitments from the school and beyond. We welcome feedback on this work as we think of next steps and ways to do this without financial support.

Our overarching focus for the Spring 2022 semester and forward is programmatic change. Specifically, we aim to look for ways that program areas can interrogate and improve policies and practices as we work collectively to ensure our efforts toward creating a more socially just and inclusive school are embedded across programs. Other goals of the task force include: (1) Reading and discussing articles with one another that inform our research and teaching practices, and sharing them in future newsletters/Critical Conversations; and (2) Continuing to hold Critical Conversations in which we better connect the research we do with our teaching practices. We constantly strive to remember that whether we see ourselves as teaching or research faculty or both, research must inform our practice and vice versa, especially as it relates to issues of social justice and equity. We invite you to join us in this work, and in making TLC a better place for students, staff, and faculty.

The topic for our first Critical Conversation will be how faculty have used research to inform our teaching practices for social justice and equity. If you are interested in sharing your expertise, experiences and strategies aligned with this topic, please email us at ARTF-TLC@kent.edu. We would love to hear from you!

Anti-Racist Task Force Members: Rhonda Hylton, Elizabeth Kenyon, Doug Ellison, Lisa Testa, Bridget Mulvey, Jen Walton-Fisette, Marty Lash, and Francisco Torres

Celebrating Our Heritage: Black History Month 2022

Did you know that Kent State played a critical role in founding the annual celebration of contributions and achievements by Black Americans? Read a message from Kent State President, Todd Diacon:

<https://www.kent.edu/president/news/celebrating-our-heritage-black-history-month-2022>

Additionally, a list of Black History Month events held on campus and virtually are displayed on the Kent State University Student Multicultural Center website: <https://www.kent.edu/smc/black-history-month>.

We encourage you to attend as many events as you can!

Master Class is offering its Black History, Love and Freedom class for free for the month of February – instructors include Cornel West, Angela Davis, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Nikole Hannah-Jones – and many others. <https://www.masterclass.com/classes/black-history-black-freedom-and-black-love>

We would also like to highlight our own Dr. Martha Lash, as she joins Monica Ratcliffe Cooper to share the story of Miss Eileen Miller, an educator who managed her teaching career through the desegregation experience. Their talk is part of a series of Black History Month events presented by the Ohio County Public Library (Wheeling, WV). The talk will be in person and will also be live streamed.

Miss Eileen Miller (1921-2010), an African American teacher from Wheeling, taught there before, during, and after school desegregation following the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954. Kent State University professor Dr. Martha Lash and Monica Ratcliffe Cooper of Pittsburgh will share Miss Miller's story which stands as an exemplar of the desegregation experience and as such deserves a place in the history as a talented educator who gracefully and powerfully managed her teaching career through many changes.

Dr. Lash shares, "A master's degree student posed the following question to our Professional Development in Teaching class: 'Did anyone in class have an African American teacher during any of their PK-12 years?' Only two raised their hands: the African American female student posing the question, and I, a middle-aged, female, Caucasian professor. The class discussion revolved around the topic of the relatively few teachers of color who grace our public schools. It also left me with lingering questions of how and why an educated and talented African American teacher had taught me in eighth grade in my predominantly European American community on the northern edge of Appalachia during my school years in the 1960s and 1970s."

This program will be available to watch live on [Facebook Live](#), on [YouTube](#), and on the OCPL website's [LWB Livestream page](#). [<https://tinyurl.com/84twbpck>]



Multimedia Highlighting the Work Still Needed to Be Done

Police: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf4cea5oObY&ab_channel=LastWeekTonight

The GOP Blocks Voting Rights Legislation | The Daily Show

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laC4WvAatng&ab_channel=TheDailyShowwithTrevorNoah