

More than 1,600 from 34 Countries

June 26, 2020

In response to the call for racial justice, more than 1,600 people from 34 countries registered to view Responding to Racism: A Lasallian Dialogue, a livestream discussion on June 25, which can be viewed by clicking [here](#). The Lasallian Association of Colleges and Universities (LACU) hosted the dialogue in collaboration with the Office for Lasallian Education at Christian Brothers Conference and three of the Districts in the Lasallian Region of North America (RELAN): District of Eastern North America, Midwest District and District of San Francisco New Orleans.

During the dialogue, four Lasallian educators discussed racism and how to act in response to systemic and institutional racism. Among the topics addressed, panelists explained what systemic and institutional racism is and offered examples, talked about where this moment might lead us within our institutions and society, and explored steps Lasallians could take to make real change happen.

“The dialogue is important because silence is not an option, and it can serve as a catalyst for change,” said panelist Kristi J. Kelly, Ed.D., chief diversity officer and director of Multicultural Student Services at Lewis University. “I hope the dialogue achieves a desire for people who are willing (including those that may have initially been unwilling) to work toward transformative racial justice. An outcome of hope is to move from being culturally competent to anti-racist.”

In addition to Dr. Kelly, panelists included Hayden Greene, M.A., founding director of Multicultural Affairs and coordinator for the Multicultural Center at Manhattan College; Maureen O’Connell, Ph.D., associate professor of Christian Ethics, Department of Religion and Theology at La Salle University; and Luisa Marcela Ossa, Ph.D., associate professor of Spanish and area chair of the Undergraduate Spanish Program at La Salle University. Brother Ernest Miller, FSC, D.Min., vice president for mission at La Salle University, and Frances Sweeney, Ph.D., professor of Spanish and vice president for mission at Saint

Mary's College of California, moderated the discussion.

Responding to Racism: A Lasallian Dialogue continues the work of the annual Lasallian Higher Education Colloquy on Racial Justice, which started in 2017 as a collaborative initiative of the LACU Mission Officers and their faculty colleagues seeking to explore the intersections of the struggle for racial justice and equity with the Lasallian heritage and mission and Catholic social teaching. It highlights the Lasallian mission's commitment to discover the root causes of poverty and, with great determination, promote justice and human dignity. (Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, 16.1) The commitment is exemplified by the vast collaboration in RELAN, led by the members of LACU, which are Christian Brothers University, La Salle University, Lewis University, Manhattan College, Saint Mary's College of California and Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.

The collaboration, conversation and action will continue following this livestream dialogue. Planning is underway for the next Lasallian Higher Education Colloquy on Racial Justice, and LACU is working with the International Association of Lasallian Universities (IALU) to explore a number of global initiatives, including offering a livestream with panelists from the global network of 65 Lasallian colleges and universities in order to broaden the discussion and strengthen the action regarding racial justice and other aspects of equity, reflecting the deepest concern of the Lasallian heritage and mission.

"My hope is that this dialogue is not the end but a step toward Lasallian schools, universities and other centers of education generating a sustained, critical conversation about curriculum and the overall ethos of the educational community," said Brother Ernest. "Lasallian educators and educational communities must take a critical self-inventory to truly reflect on how a Lasallian education attends to racial inequities, poverty and social unrest."

A recording of the June 25 livestream can be viewed here.

For more information or to become more involved in these LACU initiatives, please contact Brother Jack Curran, FSC, Ph.D., vice president for mission at Manhattan College and coordinating chair of LACU Mission Officers at LACU@cbconf.org.

Learn more about this initiative here >

Top photo: Courtesy Peg Hodapp, DeLaSalle High School, Minneapolis

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