

Diversity is about all of us, and  
about us having to figure out  
how to walk through this world  
together. – Jacqueline  
Woodson



**Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion**  
September 2023 Newsletter

## Welcome from Dean Pierce

I hope this update finds you in the midst of a wonderful fall semester, enjoying the milder temperatures, the sunshine, and invigorated about your return (or start) on campus. I want to take this opportunity to extend an official welcome from the Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion. I invite you to collaborate with me on any projects and initiatives you are undertaking relative to inclusion and celebrating diversity, as well as any challenging topics or questions you might have as it relates to marginalization, oppression, and/or discrimination. I will periodically send out updates from my office as a mechanism to share information, create awareness, and encourage involvement and engagement in our collective mission to create community. In this update, I want to provide aggregate data on Bias Incident Reports from the 2022-2023 academic year, discuss next steps in streamlining that process, provide an update on the student petition, and provide educational/reflective content relative to DEI that was shared in my Faculty Institute and other presentations I've given on campus. I also want to let you know that my office has (temporarily) relocated to Hamilton Hall, so if you want to stop by, I am on the second floor in Suite 230. Or, you can reach me via email at [lpierce@centenary.edu](mailto:lpierce@centenary.edu) or at extension x5050.

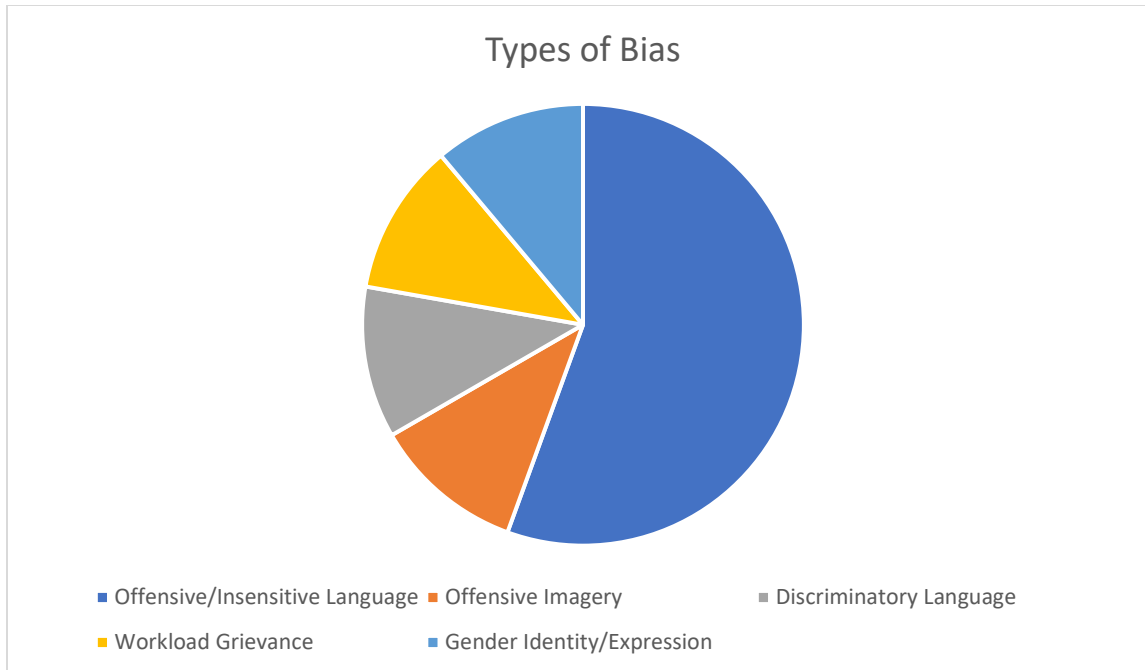


### Bias Incident Reports 22-23 AY

The following is an aggregate data report on bias incidents for the 22-23 AY. It's important to note that while the Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion establishes initial contact with any individual filing a report, the ODEI serves as an intermediary, liaison, and supportive resource in the process to effect change via educational programming, raising awareness, consultation, etc. Many of the resolutions and outcomes are handled by campus offices and/or officials who have a supervisory role of the alleged perpetrator, thus you will see the term "referral" used as an outcome.

#### Aggregate Data

| <b>Incident Date (Month)</b> | <b>Alleged Bias</b>                            | <b>Type of Incident</b> | <b>Setting</b> | <b>Outcome</b>   |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------------|--|
| August                       | Offensive, Derogatory Language                 | Verbal                  | Campus Event   | Referral to Campus Office/Unit                               |
| October                      | Offensive Language/<br>Ableist Language        | Verbal                  | Campus Event   | Referral to Campus Office/Unit                               |
| November                     | Offensive Imagery/<br>Racial/Ethnic            | Social Media            | Social Media   | Intervention from Dean of DEI/CDO;<br>Referral to Supervisor |
| February                     | Offensive Language                             | Verbal                  | Campus         | Referral to Campus Office/Unit                               |
| March                        | Discrimin. Language                            | Verbal                  | Campus         | Referral to Campus Office/Unit                               |
| April                        | Insensitive Language                           | Verbal                  | Campus Event   | Intervention from Dean of DEI/CDO                            |
| June                         | Workload Grievance/<br>Group Bias              | Written                 | Campus         | Referral to Campus Office/Unit                               |
| July                         | Offensive Language/<br>Gender Iden./Expression | Verbal                  | Campus         | Referral to Campus Office/Unit                               |
| July                         | Offensive Language/<br>Cultural                | Verbal                  | Campus         | Intervention from Dean of DEI/CDO; referral                  |



**Statistics:**

9 Total Bias Incident Reports

- 56% Offensive/Insensitive Language (5 reports)
- 11% Offensive Imagery (1 report)
- 11% Discriminatory Language (1 report)
- 11% Workload Grievance (Group Bias) (1 report)
- 11% Gender Identity/Expression (1 report)

**Pathways Forward:**

- ODEI will partner with the Diversity Committee to establish programming around bias patterns and trends; Inclusive Language will likely be a first priority due to its occurrence rate.
- In addition to an initial contact with the individual filing a report, the ODEI will provide a status update on the report (i.e. if the report has been referred to another campus office, a contact person, if the ODEI will provide conflict resolution) as well as supportive resources. *Please note that the ODEI is unable to provide specific information on internal proceedings such as consequences, suspensions, etc. as this violates institutional policy.*

## **Other updates:**

### **DEI & the Strategic Plan:**

The new strategic plan highlights a number of initiatives focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. I want to highlight one initiative as a mechanism for transparency and planning for upcoming collaboration:

#### ***Inclusive Excellence Initiative***

**Year One:** Connect with existing student groups, faculty, and staff in developing understanding around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Connect with and support new student groups, faculty, and staff in raising awareness of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, and how it permeates our campus community. Work with the entire campus community on creating spaces for intentional engagement, dialogue, and learning around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

**Year Two:** Increase student and faculty engagement with topics and experiences relative to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in academic and co-curricular programs inclusive of a curriculum review of utilization of diverse scholar voices, diverse experiences, and inclusive pedagogy, as well as strategies for implementation. Conduct a review of institutional policies for equitable procedures and practices.

My office will be collaborating with the Provost/VP of Academic Affairs and a number of individuals, committees, and groups to conduct the curriculum review and institutional policy review mentioned in the strategic plan. I want to make sure this is on your radar, and I will work to establish a timeline for these important events to occur. Thank you in advance for your collaboration and participation.

## **Student Petition**

Prior to the start of the school year, a student petition was circulated calling for a student-led diversity committee. The concerns from the petition were placed on the agenda of the first Diversity Committee meeting, held Thursday September 7<sup>th</sup>. The Diversity Committee carefully considered the requests in the petition as well as the need for student engagement in social justice initiatives. The committee's suggestions are as follows:

- *The Diversity Committee fully supports student involvement and engagement in campus diversity initiatives and encourages student advocacy in creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging and community.*
- *The Diversity Committee supports the creation of a student-led organization that is inclusive, representative, and created for the purpose of building community. This organization must be led by a faculty advisor (or advisors) and go through the proper channels of establishment via the Student Government Association procedures.*

I am encouraged by the desire of so many students wanting to participate, advocate, and effect change in social justice initiatives. I am happy to serve as a consultant and resource, and if my office can be of any assistance, please let me know.

## **Dean Pierce's Reflective Corner:**

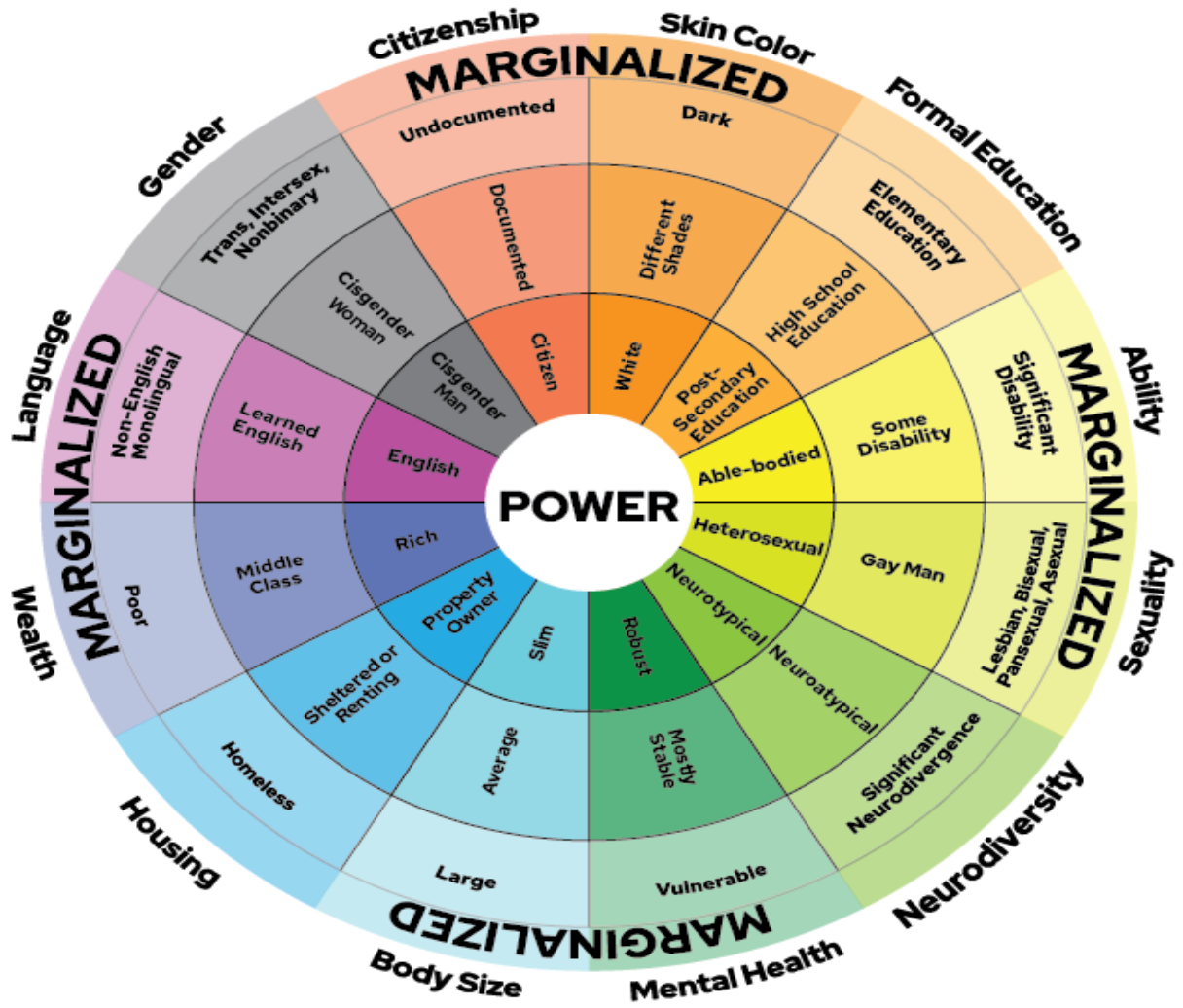
The quote I used at the beginning of this newsletter highlights my closing as well. I am always fascinated by our ability to navigate the human experience; the triumphs, challenges, and everything in-between. I find myself thinking about how to navigate different spaces, places, and interactions. In some spaces, I have privilege. In many spaces, I am one of many who belong to marginalized and oppressed groups. The questions I often ponder are these:

- In spaces where I hold privilege, *how* do I use my voice and how *often* do I use my voice?
- In spaces where I do not hold privilege, how do I find my *allies* and *co-conspirators*?
- What tactic do I use to effect change: ask questions, make connections, interrupt the dynamic, share my story/experiences,...

To help you consider how you navigate spaces, how you use your voice, and how you lean into allyship, I invite you to consider two educational resources. First, it's important to think about the 3 P's (power, privilege, positionality). Second, consider a paradigm shift that opposes cultural deficits and instead focuses on cultural wealth. The first handout is the Wheel of Power and Privilege. This helps you consider your identities holistically, and how power, privilege, and marginalization permeate society. The second handout is one of my favorites because it emphasizes cultural wealth instead of a cultural deficit. Cultural Wealth Theory was created by Dr. Tara Yosso in 2005, and illuminates an individual's abilities and assets based on the ability to navigate systemic and institutional racism, injustices, and other inequalities.

I wish you a safe and productive year ahead, with time, space, and grace to be reflective, mindful, and grounded.

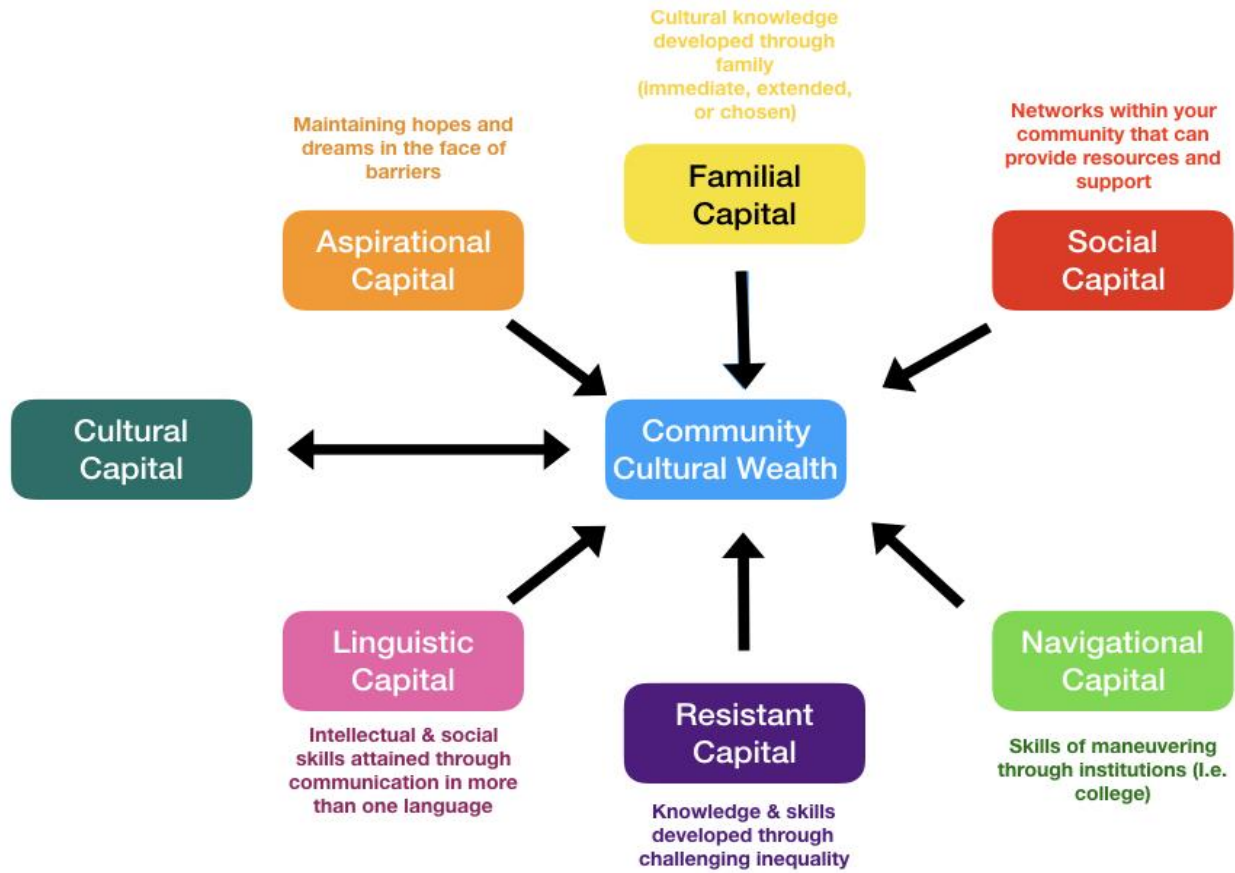
Dean Latoya Pierce, PhD, LPC



Adapted from James R Vanderwoerd ("Web of Oppression"), and Sylvia Duckworth ("Wheel of Power/Privilege")

## Wheel of Power and Privilege





Cultural Wealth Theory (Yosso, 2005)