

Chatman Diversity Center Community Forum 2021

Thursday, March 25, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Purpose: This event provided a safe space for student expressions concerning the social landscape; and provided a platform to share ways in which support is needed for the betterment of the CSP community.

Description of the Event: This event was patterned to the liking of a Community World Café—with several facilitators assisting with conversations around three purposeful questions. There were light refreshments, 3 well-crafted questions, and a system for accountability and processes shared.

Desired Outcomes:

It was the hope that those persons in attendance left...

- **Encouraged**—Feeling empowered to live fully and safely
- **Empowered**—Comfortable to speak freely and share concerns, feelings, and thoughts in a positive manner that embraces all
- **Valued**—Knowing that the CSP community cares and respects their individuality, voice, and convictions

Access the Recording of the Forum:

https://csp-edu.zoom.us/rec/share/EFk8YmH8-SVezZo8JhgDIyHjRTc7sl9hh5ncy7UiAk_gAyFIjVWpEpE_ag6FvR6.7IGMo_fZ44QfVsB5

Password: L+wvTys6

Record of Conversations and Comments Provided

Setting the Stage:

- **Michael Bond**
 - Shared greetings and opened the event with prayer.
 - Introduced the Facilitators
 - First Lady Monique Nunes, Concordia College New York
 - Aqueelah Roberson, Director of the Chatman Diversity Center at CSP
 - Introduced the Spoken Word Artist

- *What Makes Me a King?*
- Davaris Cheeks, CSP Student, recipient of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Service Award, and Vice President of Student Senate

- **Aqueelah Roberson**

- “It has been a very unprecedented, strange, and challenging year considering the catastrophic events that have taken place including: the pandemic (impacting everyone, regardless of where one stands of the ladder of social stratification); the murder of George Floyd, as well as countless others, (witnessed on camera and sparking national and international civil unrest); the intensified hate crimes targeting the Asian American Community; and many other happenings.”
- Shared how the evening will flow in conversation, reviewed norms, and expounded upon purpose.
- Shared importance of having a broad perspective on issues that affect minority groups.

Question One: *How are you?*

- “Tired.” Balancing school, social life, and feeling worn down
- “Overwhelmed...”
- “Hopeful with vaccination coming up...and how students have been so resilient...and do neat things and support each other...and be kind.”
- “Proud of DC (Davaris Cheeks) for the speech, hopeful to learn and grow—grateful for the opportunities to work with the leaders that are present.”
- “Sick and tired of being tired...” Shared experience about having a black son and the worry of what he may encounter; and agreeing with being tired, hopeful, and proud. “We have to be so sick and tired of what’s going on that we are for an answer and a solution”
- “Grateful for the opportunity to share.” “Lost...” doesn’t want everything to slide under the rug, doesn’t know what to do to help the Asian American community,

- “Fluctuates day to day, hour to hour...discouraged, frustration, motivated.” The person tries to turn negative feelings into positive ones. A range of feelings, but can resonate ... never give up hope. “Don’t get stuck on feelings unless it’s joy.”
- “Blessed just to be here, to be in the position I am...” Dealt with: major knee injury; got closer to God, teammates, and loved ones; gained confidence; and was able to get back to where they were. “There’s a bigger purpose to what you are going through.”
- COVID caused them to slow down, talk to people, “...learned a lot about myself being by myself.” “What to do with that anger to be productive.” “Sometimes we overlook the simplicity of ‘How are you?’ ”

Question Two: *How can the CSP community better support you?*

- Need more resources and support to help ALL students
 1. We need to do a better job recognizing diversity is a fact. Inclusion is an act.
 2. Being proactive instead of reactive. “What can we do *now* so we are not lost.”
(Shared how the murder of George Floyd happened so close to CSP and how that affected them negatively and they wanted more resources.)
- Events like this, within the Diversity Center—Its’s important to have diversity and welcome those who are a part of the majority to conversations with those who are a part of the minority.
- “Inviting someone to a party is different than inviting someone to dance with you. We need to be comfortable being uncomfortable.”
- “Inviting people to the table, being intentional to engage with others we don’t normally engage with...”
- “We need to provide opportunities for students to tell us how we can help.”



Question Three: *How do we grow from here?*

- “...not just focusing on the spotlight events, not waiting to react to a certain situation to build that trust...”
- “Opportunities like this, maybe that involve the whole campus, and a follow-up process that is implemented.”
- “There’s one thing that keeps me going...consistency. The lack of consistency from prior experiences, the sit-in, was how much it took to get noticed.” “...Important having conversations with people outside of social circle.”
- “...Word *intention* comes to mind...Challenge athletes and those a part of groups to branch out and address problems that affects us all.”
- “I may not come from the same path, but I walk a parallel line.” “We need to let BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students know that we care.”
- Looking outside of self and people to help you look outside of yourself... having a way to learn about things that are outside of your sphere of knowledge. Seeking information about current events that affect people who do not necessarily look or live like you.
- “...Feeling of inadequacy or unequipped to have conversations, but reinforce love and resources that will help too.”
- “...Important for us to learn to be okay being misunderstood. I am a person that struggles with that, my emotions become involved...I became angry [growing up].” “Over the summer, I had great conversations with my coaches because we didn’t fully understand what we all felt. That allowed us to speak, learn and grow together.”
- “We look for platforms where people will agree with our perspective. Your perspective is not always reality.”