



Student Forum- A Conversation on Becoming More Inclusive
Hosted by the Student Union & the Vice Presidents for Academic and Student Affairs
Wednesday, October 19th 2011 Jardine Room

President Rita Rochford called the student forum to order at 5:07 pm.

Introduction

Tonight's Student Forum was created in order to encourage students to share their concerns about the issues related to discrimination and harassment that have been happening on the John Carroll campus. Since the beginning of the semester, posters and chalking have appeared on campus describing acts of intolerance and bias, calling for action to end discrimination. This Student Forum is the first of many, to come together as a community to discuss and consider ways that we can eliminate exclusion and intolerance on our campus. Dr. John Day, Dr. Mark McCarthy, Dr. Bowen, all members of the Student Union, members of the Diversity Steering Committee, faculty and staff members, and John Carroll students were present to engage in conversation about the issue.

Dr. Day, Academic Vice President: Addressed the importance of paying attention to the student body along with concentrating on academics. Hopes that discussions like this Student Forum will open up conversation and listening opportunities between students, faculty, and staff members. Stressed the importance of working together to create the best education experience for all students. Asked all members present to seriously think about the issue and what we as community can do to improve the situation. Questioned how these issues manifest itself at JCU.

Dr. McCarthy, Vice President for Student Affairs: Stressed the importance that we can and must work together to make this campus become a more inclusive community. Discussed the actions that have been happening on campus, the real challenges that we face, and the call to action that has been asked of the John Carroll community. The Student Forum presents students with the opportunity to listen to others about their experiences, for administrators and student leaders to share what steps have been taken to enhance a safe and welcoming environment at JCU, and to identify ideas that students may have to improve and better this community regarding this issue.

Open Floor Discussion:

Student: When it comes to this issue, the biggest component is the fact that students just don't seem to be concerned about anything going on around them. Suggested that there should be more student involvement on social and political activism. Students must be challenged to raise their voice instead of not being concerned about what's going around in their own environment. The more we voice our concerns the more things we can change. Stressed how sick he is of the apathy demonstrated by students on campus and that students must start to speak up.

Student: Agreed with the statement by the previous student about the need to speak up and the apathy demonstrated by individuals in the John Carroll community. Suggested that one way we could tackle the issue of apathy is have faculty address these issues in the classroom instead of just focusing on the class

materials. The class room is a great opportunity to open up discussion and is a great environment to bring up issues and to have discussions. Stressed the importance of having faculty members have discussion not just on course topics but on issues that concern students to make them more aware of things that are going on.

Student: Acknowledged the fact that one of the biggest things are that students are so involved with so many different things that the only time students can really come together is in the class room. Stressed the importance of the suggestion of having more discussions in the classroom. By bringing up issues in the classroom for discussion it sends the message that the campus cares, that the faculty cares about the students, and brings awareness to students who may not know of the issues that are going on. Also, stressed the importance to carry out the same welcoming feeling in every office and throughout the faculty and staff members. By having a more welcoming atmosphere it will make a more comfortable setting for students in the future.

Student: Shared a personal experience. From the personal experience, realized that you have to stand up and say something if you believe something. The only reason why we are here today is because someone stood up and said something. The issue is here, and no matter how small or big it is we need to voice it and stand up for what you believe in. Acknowledged the fact that small changes have been made already by online forums, but these results happened because students addressed the issue. Standing up for what you believe in will make our campus more inclusive like what our mission states.

Student: Stressed the importance of the need to get students to speak up and talk.

Student: Acknowledged that the challenge here tonight is how we should go forward?

Student: Announced that the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion is excited about taking a stand and moving forward. In terms of what we can do, education is the first step. Suggested that before coming to Carroll students should take a course on how to interact with different people who are culturally different from themselves, just like students are required to take an alcohol course before coming to school.

Student: Stressed the importance that students cannot just sit back and let things happen. If you want something to happen you need to be able to communicate with each other first, the less that is communicated the less things will happen.

Student: Notified everyone that the Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs has changed to the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion. Currently, working on a project that involves students and faculty to communicate with each other in order to make a more comfortable environment for everyone. Stressed the importance of taking advantage of all the resources that we have on campus in order to be able to communicate with each other to work towards a more inclusive community.

Student: Recently became aware that some organizations cannot discuss certain issues and in order to open up a full discussion we should be able to discuss certain topics. Addressed that student leaders have been making steps towards making a campus more inclusive but sometimes we do not feel we know who to go to for help sometimes. Suggested that maybe the office of the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion should be located to a more central location, like where the office of student activities are. Stressed the importance that all students need to have a voice.

Faculty: Stressed the importance that if we keep our heads down, nothing will be done. Shared her experiences being challenged as a staff member regarding the issue of diversity. Making a difference starts with the faculty members. If we make an effort to challenge each other then positive things will

happen. We must speak up because people either don't understand the issues that are going on or they are scared; by sharing your experience you are able to learn and move forward. Stressed the importance of getting out of your comfort zone and be willing to learn. This change also starts with leaders on campus; we must let down our guards and learn to serve each other. Suggested that what we represent should start from the top down and then the students will see that and it will catch on. The little things we do to serve on another will make JCU a better and more inclusive place and it will make a difference.

Student: Asked what the main purpose of moving the office to the student center would be. Stated the belief that an office is important to a student, they will go to it no matter where it is located.

Dr. McCarthy: Explained that moving the office would make it more visible and connected for students. By moving the office there is a bigger advantage to accessibility because it will have more traffic. In addition, by moving the office it might attract students who didn't know about the office because it will be more visible.

Student: Asked if the office would be shared with anyone.

Dr. McCarthy: Explained that the new plan is to create space and that the office would not be shared with any other office. However, it is a big project that involves a lot of money.

Student: Asked what is going to change with move. Stressed that JCU as whole needs to create more awareness for the center to let student know what it all has to offer.

Student: Shared an experience. Addressed the importance of reporting this incident and what happens when there is problem when you report something. Stated the difficulties of reporting issues and the inaction that isn't taken once the act has been reported. Asked what do you do or what happens when you report an issue and nothing happens. Stressed that students should have some closure once something is reported and know what actions were taken. Purposed an idea that there should be multiple forums that are hosted by different administrators, faculty members, and other organizations besides Student Union.

Student: Shared an experience. Stated that nothing has or is happening regarding these issues we are addressing tonight. Stated the belief that events like this forum is a waste of time.

President Rochford: Informed everyone at the forum that there was a sign in sheet so that students can be kept informed with the progress of this issue.

Student: Stated the concern of why the student forum discussion is happening in the first place. Addressed her belief that the student forum was damage control from the chalking incident. Asked what prompted this student forum to happen.

President Rochford: Addressed the different issues that have been happening on campus. Explained that we want to build a campus that build a four year experience that everyone can enjoy. We are not just doing this student forum to be seen, we want to take action and know where to go in the future.

Student: Addressed that if there wasn't hope for change we wouldn't be here at this discussion. Asked what are some solutions to go forward in a positive way.

Student: Explained that the chalking was a way to move forward in a positive way. Asked why they were erased so fast. Stressed that we need to know what and why things are happening before we can move forward. Stated that we talk about change but how can change if we don't even know or address the issues and actions that are going on.

Bowen: Stated that the faculty and staff will work hard to promote activism and effect change. Expressed that the Student Union is an effective way to create change and that in order to promote activism and create change it must be an individual and collective response. Explained that we have been working on change and addressing these issues, but like students have been sharing, how can we address these issues if we don't know what's going on. Stated that we are working to centralize these issues, making it known, visualizing it, and making it available. The goal is to harness the stories and put power behind it and that it is a collective enterprise. Thanked students for coming out and sharing their thoughts and experiences.

Student: Thanked the faculty and staff members for coming to the student-forum. However, stated the concern that how can people understand how I feel if they have never been through the things I have gone through. Stressed that just showing up to this forum is not enough, there must be action as well.

Student: Stated the belief that the simple solution is that it starts with the student leaders because we can make a difference. Making a difference has nothing to do with meeting forums; we must stick up for others because if we don't say anything you are giving people the approval to continue to do these things. Stressed that the solution is not forums and meetings because they can only do so much, but it's up to us through our actions to stop this.

Faculty: Stated that we can continue these meetings and forums but the first step is accepting that these things are happening. Stressed that this issue does not just effect ethnic or homosexual student but it effects the entire student body because we are all a reflection of our school.

Danielle Carter, Director of the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion: Stated that if there was no hope for change that she would not be here. Addressed that the office is here and you can always take your experience to the office and that we are working towards something. Explained programs such as the Lead Diversity. Stated that issued will be taken forward and we are doing things that are addressing these issues. Explained that if you don't feel comfortable voicing your stories we will not be able to move forward. Shared that the office has an open door policy.

Student: Stressed that students need to be kept better informed and administration should be taking a more active response with this issue. Addressed that the administration and student union should know more about events and programs going on.

President Rochford: Apologized on behalf of the Student Union if students have felt that they have not taken an active role regarding this issue. Stressed that this is the first of many forums.

Student: Shared an experience. Expressed that the first step is getting to understand and learn about individuals. People need to come together but more people need to be here at these types of events to share their story. In order to stand together we need to learn and understand each other.

Dr. Coleran: Stated that she is committed to sharing your stories, insights, and desires to the rest of the College of Arts and Science department when they meet in November. Stressed that we are committed to taking action.

President Rochford: Stressed the importance of this forum being the first of many. Thanked everyone for coming and for sharing their ideas and experiences. Reminded everyone that we are committed and as we move forward with different development we will let keep everyone informed as best as possible.

Forum closed at 6:36pm.