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TOWN HALL ON I N C L U S I O N

February 10, 2016

TRANSCRIBED BY:  
Michelle L. Conero

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MR. CHRISTIAN: Good afternoon,  
everyone. Thanks to all of you for joining us  
for this forum Town Hall on Inclusion. For those  
of you who don't know me, my name is Donald  
Christian and I have the great privilege of  
serving as President here at SUNY New Paltz. I  
want to welcome all of you. I told someone I  
have the challenge here of audiences to my front  
and my back.

I also want to welcome Dr. Steven Jones  
back to campus. Dr. Jones will be guiding  
today's Town Hall discussion. He's nationally  
recognized for his twenty-seven years of  
experience as a speaker, trainer and facilitator  
on diversity. In 2005 he was noted as one of  
America's top diversity experts by Diversityinc  
magazine. He's been providing cultural  
competence educational programming here at New  
Paltz for about the last year or so and has now  
worked with more than 300 members of our  
community who speak almost universally and  
uniformly about the powerful impact that their  
work with him has had on their thinking and their  
world view. We're delighted to have him back

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here with us today. He was here just last week working with University Police in the morning and a session with faculty and staff in the afternoon.

I want to set the stage for our discussion today by drawing on a newspaper column published just this past Sunday by Leonard Pitts who often writes about diversity, inclusion, race and racism. His very timely column was entitled Inclusion Helps Erase Bigotry. He described a research study that used a Canadian television series as a test for reducing prejudice, and this series was called Little Mosque on the Prairie. Some of you may have seen it. It highlights cultural clashes surrounding a Muslim house of worship in a small town in rural Canada. The researchers studied white adults who were first tested to establish a baseline measure of their prejudices. Half of that group watched episodes of Little Mosque on the Prairie. The other half watched episodes of Friends. Go figure. Mr. Pitts wrote that prejudice derives from identification of an in-group and an out-group and the social distancing of the first group from

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the second. Some call this process otherization. The social distance and the tendency to otherize shrank for those adults who watched episodes of Little Mosque on the Prairie. They learned about the lives of Muslim citizens and could imagine themselves having similar experiences themselves. They also watched both Muslims and Christians struggle with the complex issues that they were dealing with in this community. Changes like that, not surprisingly, did not happen for the people who watched episodes of Friends.

In part, our purpose here today is to counter otherization and to shrink social distances among members of our community. Otherization and social distancing related to race are a source of deeply rooted issues confronting contemporary American society. Certainly our campus as well.

Race and racism will no doubt be on our minds today, along with other divisions surrounding gender, sexual orientation, economic status, religion, ability status, other elements of human difference.

Mr. Pitts wrote that the study he

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described, and I'll quote here, "Underlines a truth often overlooked, namely that inclusion is not some enlightened standard operating procedure to political correctness, rather inclusion changes the society itself, it lessens fears, opens eyes, unsticks hearts, makes people better. What exclusion otherizes, exclusion normalizes," end of quote. So I think those words, as I read them on Sunday morning, they sent kind of a chill down my back because they captured so much of what we hope to accomplish in this session today as well as in our longer term work on diversity and inclusion.

We know that blatant acts such as hate speech are the tip of the iceberg for many members of our community. Below the surface members of our community regularly experience micro-aggression, insult, dismissal, minimization, sometimes invalidation. We have to as a community move beyond the responses to actions that we sometimes hear, such as oh it probably was just a joke, or lighten up, don't take this too seriously, or that are concerned about such incidents is a trivial matter of

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"political correctness."

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As many of us have learned from Dr. Jones in our training with him, we must develop and reinforce a skill set that shifts our focus from our intentions in such matters to better understand the impact of our words and actions on others.

Our campus community can not correct all the ills of American society but we can work to make our campus more inclusive, more equitable. We've learned that having conversations solely in response or reaction to hateful acts or racist incidents is insufficient for our long-term welfare. We've learned that we must be committed to ongoing work if we're to address issues that are deeply embedded in our society, our culture, our history and our institutions. These are conversations that need to happen at all levels of the institution.

Dr. Jones has worked with us over the last year to help build common language and cultural competency skills that will help members of our community move these conversations forward in respectful and productive ways and offer all

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of us tools to disrupt incidents of exclusion. Today's conversation will also help inform and guide institutional level planning as we look to appoint a chief diversity officer, develop our campus plan on diversity and inclusion this spring and summer, and form a standing committee that will help sustain these efforts.

I will listen and participate as a member of this campus community and under the smaller group that I'll describe here shortly. I recognize and acknowledge the special responsibility that a college president has to set tone, to lead by example and to motivate change. I understand that and expect that some questions and comments today may be directed toward me. I stand ready to learn, along with everyone else, about how I can fulfill those roles better. Members of the College's senior leadership team are also here today for that purpose as well.

I hope that everyone here recognizes that we, the senior leadership team and I, can not be in every classroom, every student organization meeting, residents hall or faculty

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discussion, nor can we read and respond to every social media posting. This is why it's critical that each of us listen today with compassion and leave with a sense of responsibility to be more intentional in recognizing our biases and their impacts on members of our community.

Before I turn the microphone over to Dr. Jones I want to note that we're audio recording this meeting to preserve these conversations as part of our institutional history. A transcript of this Town Hall will be available in the future, but I want to make clear that individual speakers will not be identified in that transcript.

We want to welcome (redacted name) who is a student journalist from the Oracle here to report on this Town Hall. She's been asked not to quote anyone directly but has been encouraged to speak with participants afterwards who may be willing to offer comment.

I want to comment just very briefly about this Town Hall format. This is a typical format for Town Hall meetings, particularly with large groups like this where there's a smaller

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group that leads to focused and maybe more

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continuous conversation than we can develop if we

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try to engage a very large community in

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discussion. The members of this smaller group

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represent a mixture of students, faculty, staff.

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The faculty and staff are here because they

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represent particular interests in some of the

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topics that we're discussing today. They may

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serve in particular offices that -- where this

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work is particularly relevant or they may have

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particular expertise that we think can help

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advance the conversation. The students who are

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here have expressed concern about key issues on

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the campus in recent months, and we know that

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they also want to help move these conversations

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along. So with that, Dr. Jones.

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(Applause.)

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DR. JONES: Thank you.

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MR. CHRISTIAN: Welcome back.

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DR. JONES: Good afternoon. How's

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everyone doing this afternoon? Good, good, good,

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good. I am really excited to be here with you.

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Can you hear me okay?

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AUDIENCE: Yeah.

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DR. JONES: Yeah. And I also want to start off by acknowledging that this Town Hall that we're going to hold today on inclusion is a very, very significant event, and I say it's a significant event because we say that to build that culture of inclusion takes intentionality. It doesn't happen by accident, right. Because we know that you can have diversity and not have inclusion. Yes? You can have inclusion and not have diversity. Right? The question becomes how do we create an intentional campus community where we have both diversity functioning within an inclusive environment. Right? And that's a big part of why we're here today, to continue this ongoing effort, to continue to support the diversity that exists and increase that diversity right here at New Paltz, and then also to focus on building and increasing the level of inclusion.

Now, when we talk about building the level of inclusion we are challenged to explore the diversity within the diversity. Ya'll, I'm going deep today, ya'll, all right. What do I mean? I mean you can have some groups that may

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feel included, and then right next to that have other groups that do not. Right? We can have the LGB members of our community feel very diverse and not have the transgender community feel included. I'm sorry. Ya'll know what I meant, right? I said diverse but I meant inclusion. Right. We can have women feel included and not have people who are members of the lower socioeconomic community feel included. So this is a complex 3D or 4D challenge. That was dimensions, ya'll. That was dimensions. Right. So I say that because I want to invite us to enter a complex conversation. A complex conversation that challenges us to explore the conscious and the unconscious biases that we all hold. We say if you have a brain you have bias.

I was doing a workshop once and this guy showed up early. The workshop was on unconscious bias. He showed up early and he said Dr. Jones, I just came a little early because I wanted you to know that I don't have any unconscious biases. I was like dude, how would you know? They're unconscious. Right? If you have a brain you have bias. And so this is not a

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one-sided conversation, it is a conversation that includes all of us.

And I just want to give you a quick example of this programming, this association and kind of how a supercomputer in our head works. I'm going to ask everyone in this room to answer a question for me out loud in one voice, okay. What color is this sheet of paper?

AUDIENCE: White.

DR. JONES: A little bit louder. What color is this sheet of paper?

AUDIENCE: White.

DR. JONES: Come on, New Paltz. A little bit louder. I need to hear you over here. What color is this sheet of paper?

AUDIENCE: White.

DR. JONES: What do cows drink?

AUDIENCE: Milk.

(Chuckle.)

DR. JONES: It's all right. There's somebody in here who's going I don't get it, what's the problem. And some of you said milk very, very confidently. Milk. I'm a senior, milk. Milk. I've been a professor for

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twenty-five years here, milk. Right? Cows  
drink --

AUDIENCE: Water.

DR. JONES: You were like M -- M -- M  
-- water. So why did you say milk?

AUDIENCE: That's what we associate  
cows with.

DR. JONES: That's what we associate.  
That's what they make. We associate cows with  
milk. You have a thought drink, you see a symbol  
cow, your next thought is milk. It does your  
body good. Pass it on. Right?

What we want to do is practice a  
collective skill called dialoging around  
inclusion. That being intentional about  
inclusion and building a culture of inclusion is  
not just an interpersonal you and I conversation.  
Right? It's not just a conversation with one  
group with another group. This is a collective  
conversation that challenges us -- I'm sorry, a  
collective skill that challenges us to have a  
comfortable conversation about uncomfortable  
topics. I'm going to say that again. This is a  
collective skill that challenges us to get

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skilled up enough to have a comfortable conversation about uncomfortable topics. That challenges all of us to prepare to lean in to have that conversation.

Here's my challenge for you. I'm going to ask all of you really quickly to fold your arms for me, real quickly. Fold your arms. You were already there, chief. That's okay. That's okay. All right. Now I'm going to ask you to look at your arms and switch the arms so that the arm on the top is now on the bottom. That's okay. Some of ya'll still working it out. That's all right. That's all right. We're going to call the way you had your arms folded the first time, we're going to call that position A. Give me some words to describe what it felt like to have your arms folded that way.

AUDIENCE: Comfortable.

DR. JONES: It felt comfortable, familiar. What that was?

AUDIENCE: Habitual.

DR. JONES: Habitual. Natural. Did you have to do a lot of thinking to get into position A? No. How does it feel to have your

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-- I see some of you already let your arms go in position B. Give me some words to describe what it feels like to have your arms folded in position B.

AUDIENCE: Awkward.

DR. JONES: Awkward, different, forced, weird. What else?

AUDIENCE: Effortful.

DR. JONES: Effortful. What's that?

AUDIENCE: Intentional.

DR. JONES: Intentional, unnatural.

AUDIENCE: Forced.

DR. JONES: What's that? Forced. You made me do it.

Sometimes to create that culture of inclusion we are challenged to try on position B type behaviors, to have position B type conversations, yet our brain craves position A. Position B may feel uncomfortable. Ya'll, we're going to have a position B conversation today. We're not just checking the box. Are you all okay with that? Are you okay with that? Right.

So when we talk about leaning in, when we talk about preparing to hear and explore

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multiple perspectives, right, that challenges us. So if you feel uncomfortable, know that that's natural in position B. If you feel challenged like somebody's kind of forcing you to think or hear something that's outside of your experience, that may feel like position B. Lean into it. Right.

Here's kind of our format for today.

So we're going to -- in a second I'm going to talk with you about some guidelines for our time together. I'll -- and then we'll enter community dialogue. The way we'll engage in that dialogue is we'll invite the group here to make some opening comments. I have two individuals that I'll ask to start off and build on President Christian's comments, and then we're going to open into a dialogue that really kind of focuses in on exploring experiences of inclusion and exclusion. Right? Exploring where do we get it right on campus. Right? And then exploring where do we intend to get it right and we miss. Right? Or just exploring where did we just get it wrong. Right? So we'll open it up and engage in a dialogue with this group here and we'll

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invite you all to listen in on this conversation, and then at one point in time we'll pause and then we'll invite you to come to the mike that's in the center. If you have questions or comments, we'll invite you to join in on the dialogue. And that will be pretty much the format that we'll use for our time together today. Okay.

Yes. Tell me what you see. How many people see the profile of a person's face? How many people see the word liar? Check with the person next to you to make sure they see both. See both? Okay. Let me just say real quickly there is a psychological profile if you saw the word liar first. Please stay after the Town Hall, we need to talk. Okay. What we don't want to do -- it's all about perspective, right? What we don't want to do today is what happens in a lot of communities and organizations. How many of you have been in meetings, or in classes, or in places where people rely on the meeting after the meeting? How many people have been in those places? You know, where you don't say anything in the meeting and you just nod your head like

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you're, and inside you're thinking I can't believe she just said that. Right? And some of you have mastered the timely head tilt. And then after the meeting is over you find those two or three people that you trust, right, and then you tell them what you really thought, right, and what you would have said if it was safe in the first meeting, right. What I want to ask us to do today is to not rely on the meeting after the meeting. What I want to ask us to do today is to lean in and share some of those stories and experiences that you would share in that circle. Right? I know I'm asking a lot, ya'll. But this is real work. This is real work. And we know in society as well as on campus this real work, this conversation could end up being about life or death. It is that serious. Much less do I graduate or not. Much less do I feel included or not. Does this make sense?

Okay. Can you find ten faces and then we're going to move into the dialogue. Can you find ten faces? Ten faces. The horses' faces don't count. How many of you found at least three faces so far? Three? How many of you

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found at least six faces? Has anyone found nine faces? Anyone found ten faces? Anyone found more than ten faces, please stay after the session. All right. Work with two or three people next to you. Work together to see all ten faces. Go for it. Work with two or three people to see all ten faces.

(Short pause.)

DR. JONES: All right. Let's see how your teams have done. Here we go. We'll start off over here. Does everyone see this one?

AUDIENCE: Yes.

DR. JONES: Here's the eye, nose, mouth.

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

DR. JONES: Right? Does everyone see this one?

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

DR. JONES: Number two, here's the nose, the mouth, the eyes.

Number three is a little harder to see. It's right here. Here's the eyebrow, the eyes, the nose looking down, high cheekbones.

Number four is a little larger. Number

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four is right here. Here's the eye, the nose,  
upper lip, lower lip, chin. Everyone see this  
one?

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

DR. JONES: Number five is right here.  
Everybody see that one? Eye, nose, mouth.

Number six is up here.

Number seven is right here. Here's the  
nose, mouth, eye.

Number eight is tucked back here.

Everybody see that?

Number nine is right here, nose, mouth,  
eyes.

Number ten is right here. Everybody  
see number ten? Two eyes, nose, mouth.

Number eleven is over here.

Number twelve is a big one. Here's the  
eye, the nose, the mouth, chin. What number was  
that?

AUDIENCE: Twelve.

DR. JONES: Twelve.

Number thirteen is right here. Here's  
the eye, the nose, mouth.

Fourteen is right here, eye, nose,

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mouth.

And there's a little one right in here.

He said really. Two people from the audience, why and how do these two slides connect to the importance of our dialogue today? Two, three people. Two people from this side. How do these two slides connect to our dialogue on inclusion today?

SPEAKER: Perception.

DR. JONES: Yes. It's about perception. Prepare yourself to hear other people's perceptions. Prepare yourself to not have your experience be a criteria for whether someone else's perceptions are valid or not. Did ya'll just hear that?

AUDIENCE: Say it again.

DR. JONES: Sure. Thank you. Prepare yourself to not use your experiences as a criteria for whether someone else's perspectives are valid -- is valid or not. Right?

Someone else on this side. Yes.

SPEAKER: Working together to see the bigger picture and the details within the picture.

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DR. JONES: Working together to see the bigger picture and the details within the picture. Right. Yes. Yes. Yes.

SPEAKER: You gave us a little -- you said if you see more than ten, stay.

DR. JONES: Okay. Yes.

SPEAKER: And we looked only for ten --

DR. JONES: Yes.

SPEAKER: -- even though there can be more than ten.

DR. JONES: Very good.

SPEAKER: There was fourteen.

DR. JONES: He said you limited us.

(Chuckle.)

DR. JONES: Absolutely.

SPEAKER: Look, in our lives there are people putting us to limits. Write a 500-word essay, not 600.

DR. JONES: Yes.

SPEAKER: And we limit -- we tend to limit ourselves with that.

DR. JONES: Yes.

SPEAKER: And we limit our brains with that.

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DR. JONES: Yes.

SPEAKER: Do you know what I'm saying?

DR. JONES: Absolutely. You're absolutely spot on. That there are places and spaces where someone sets the expectation, and that expectation may put a boundary or a limit on what is possible. Right? If I would have said to you find as many faces as you can, right, then you would have found as much as you could. Right? So there are times where others will place a limit on you, right? And some people will meet that limit and stop.

SPEAKER: And you just do the required work.

DR. JONES: And you just -- what do I need to do to get an A? Give me the expectation, I meet it, I get my grade, I move on. Right? To your point, what's the knowledge, right, versus what's the knowledge that I gained. Good.

One more person from this side. How do these two slides connect to the importance of a conversation on inclusion?

SPEAKER: Active participation.

DR. JONES: Active participation. Yes.

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Yes. That is about leaning in and being willing to share what you see, what you experience. Right?

And so what we're going to move into now is that active participation where we're going to ask members of our community to share some of their experiences and perspectives. So I want to open up with inviting two individuals to speak. One person I've given the heads up, the second person I have not given the heads up.

Hi there.

SPEAKER: Oh, me?

DR. JONES: Yes.

(Chuckle.)

DR. JONES: We'll start off with (redacted name). We'll give you a little time to collect your opening statement. Very good.

So this is (redacted name). And (redacted name), you're going to start off and share with us from a student's perspective some opening comments. Very good.

SPEAKER: I think most --

DR. JONES: Is it on? Sorry.

SPEAKER: It's probably on, I'm just

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not holding it right.

DR. JONES: There we go. Stand up.

SPEAKER: Okay. So I think from a student's perspective kind of what we expect to get from here, and I'm going to try to speak on behalf of all the students here, is we want this to kind of be a dialogue and a space for us to tell our narratives, and tell our experiences on this campus, and to kind of say what we bring to this campus and some things that a lot of times the faculty, administrative bodies and the staff don't necessarily know passing by us every day or kind of debunk some of the assumptions that come into our spaces and kind of get this as a space for us to say this is what we want as a campus and this is what we need to feel more comfortable here. And to kind of figure out also where the faculty and the staff stand on these issues. Sometimes it feels like an us against them conversation. And this is the space and the time for us to get to see how the faculty and administration feel and where we have commonalities and where we may not and figure out how we can get to a commonplace to grow from

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here. I kind of see this conversation as a stepping stone in the right direction. Yeah.

DR. JONES: Excellent.

SPEAKER: Do the students agree?

DR. JONES: Thank you. Round of applause.

(Applause.)

DR. JONES: Opening statement about the importance of inclusion on campus and what you'd like to see as an outcome from our time together in this Town Hall meeting. Okay.

SPEAKER: Well obviously inclusion is highly important and the success of our students on our campus. I am grateful to be part of an organization that fosters that type of behavior, especially from the administration side. I'm the director of the EOP program and I'm very grateful for the opportunity that the administration provides to our students because we work as a team and -- for the most part to ensure the success of our students. And I'm very grateful, and my staff is also grateful of that -- those opportunities rendered to our students.

DR. JONES: Very good. Excellent.

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SPEAKER: Collaboration is the key.

DR. JONES: Thank you very much. Round of applause.

(Applause.)

DR. JONES: So here's some quick ground rules that I'll ask us to follow as we hold this dialogue with each other. I'm going to ask all of us to practice listening to understand versus listening to respond. Right? How many of you halfway through someone's first sentence you know why they're wrong and you're just waiting for them to pause so that you can give them your ideas? That's not what we're going to do, okay. We're going to practice learning from diversity of thought, experiences and perspectives. I'm going to ask you to use "I" statements, so really speak from your perspective, your viewpoint, right. We're not asking anyone to represent an entire group but really to speak from your viewpoints and your perspectives, and others will do the same. I'm going to ask you to be brave and really clear that we have lots of levels within the organization, within New Paltz here, right. So we're really going to ask everyone to

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lean in to the discomfort of conflict, right. So lean in and let's have a candid conversation. We talk about put your stake in the ground is really about putting your opinion out there, right. Putting your beliefs, your viewpoints, your experience, your opinion out there and being willing to move it, right. Some people put their stake or their opinion, they dig a hole six feet deep, pour concrete and they're not moving their opinion at all, right. And so we want to invite you to stay open and be willing to be influenced by the ideas and the experiences that other people have.

And then lastly I want to say that when we talk about a dialogue, a dialogue does not require agreement, a dialogue does not require consensus, right. A dialogue requires us to really create the space to explore and learn from both similarities and differences, right. So that's really what we want to practice in our time together today.

So let's dive in. So I'm going to ask our esteemed panelist to let's talk about where do we get it right here at SUNY around diversity

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and inclusion, and then what are some of your experiences or experiences you've seen others have around where we get it wrong, where we miss, where are our opportunities for growth. So we want to hear some of your experiences, some of your perspectives on where do we get it right, where's our area of growth and opportunity.

Who wants to start us off?

SPEAKER: So this is really a good question because I like a mixture of positive things and some things that we could -- some areas for opportunities for growth.

DR. JONES: Yeah.

SPEAKER: So I think that we have a very good example of this in the fact that there were some things that happened on the New Paltz campus about a year or so ago. There were some things that were posted on the campus and so forth that I think had a negative impact on particularly students of color on the campus. And I felt that the administration did an excellent job in it's quick and thoughtful responsiveness to those incidents that occurred on campus. So I want to give the administration

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a big plus for that.

I think, too, that this Town Hall and many of the conversations that we've had on campus, these are positive steps. I want to give applause for you too, Dr. Jones. The fact that you are here tells us that the institution is responsive to the issues of inclusion and diversity on our campus.

So there are a number of things I think when I look around. For example, on my floor I see gender neutral bathrooms as I go across the campus. So structurally there are some changes that have occurred on the campus. When we look at individuals with physical disabilities, significant attention has been placed on that. When we -- in terms of constructing new buildings, we see that attention is being paid to those kinds of issues.

I think that when we look at opportunities, I still think that there are many people on this campus who will feel excluded and they feel different. They don't feel as though they are included in a particular circle on the campus. I was a little bit taken aback by some

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of this because as a faculty member of color I would say that this is a pretty inclusive place. But that's speaking for myself. You said we should use the "I" word.

But I attended a conversation on campus that occurred last semester, and at that meeting there were some students of color, and they said that they feel as though they're not welcomed on this campus and they feel isolated. So to the extent that we still have members of our campus community who don't feel a sense of belonging on the campus, we still have areas for growth in that area, so -- and many other areas. I yield the mike to someone else.

DR. JONES: Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

I want to hear from a student and then we'll come back to you.

Hi there.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is (redacted name) and I'm the student association president. And I think where we get it right is like our faculty, I see a lot of diversity in faculty. I know that the administration and, you know, the

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people in charge of those things are trying to work as hard as they can in order to make it as inclusive as possible for new faculty to come into these departments that have been historically underrepresented in terms of diversity.

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Do you have anything to say, (name redacted)?

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SPEAKER: Just that there's a lot of faculty that helps.

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SPEAKER: There's a lot of faculty that helps, that they do help a lot, and some that I am proud to know and have worked with in the past. So there's definitely a lot of area for improvement, but, you know, there's definitely a lot of faculty that support the students out there.

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DR. JONES: Thank you.

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SPEAKER: Hello everybody. My name is (redacted name). So just to kind of piggyback off of (redacted name), I think that where the school gets it right is we have a lot of programs here at SUNY New Paltz, such as the EOP program, SMP, we have (inaudible) department as well as

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faculty who always assist us any way that we need. I feel that having dialogues like this are really important.

But the ways maybe SUNY New Paltz can improve is what we do after this conversation. Like how do we put what we're talking about into action, and also following through with that? So we can have multiple conversations and we could talk about it, but I think something we need to implement afterwards is concrete work.

DR. JONES: Very good. Excellent.  
Excellent. Thank you.

SPEAKER: So I just took a couple of notes. What we get right, and I think the students are a testament of that, is that students own their experience here at New Paltz. I had the pleasure of being a student some twenty years ago, and that -- it was indicative at that time where I was fortunate to serve as a student leader, and we felt like we owned the experience on our campus and we were able to sort of -- and this is across all areas of student engagement. We were able to move the agenda in terms of what students felt like they were in control of from

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major things like establishing an FM radio station to smaller things like individual cultural based programs. And I want to reflect on that for a point because it speaks to the diversity issue and inclusion.

When I was here in -- and black solidarity, as it is now, is a big event for students of color, for the cultural identity of the community, for the cultural expression of the community. When I was here it was really just Blacks and Latino students who were participating in that experience. Over my twenty short years they keep having me come back to experience it and participate in it and engage in it. What I've noticed and I've been able to really appreciate is the broadening of that audience. So that way in the celebration of Black contribution to society, in the celebration of Black students and African American culture in this community and in society broader, this community has expanded the definition and the audience that participates in that celebration. That is a win I think completely.

I'd like to say that where we need to

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do more is really around -- going back to my

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time, you know, the number of Black students that

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walked this campus, that were enrolled on this

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campus, that matriculated on this campus were

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twice as much as my understanding of recent

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statistics, and that is of great concern for

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many, many, many reasons. So I think we can do a

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better job in terms of creating opportunities for

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Black students. And I say Black students

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particularly because that's the group that shrunk

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over time, and it's -- you can't have the

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increase of one at the expense of another because

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I think we do ourselves a disservice in that

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I'll also say that this campus is very

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responsive to the needs of the students and when

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there's a crisis they stand up, they gather, they

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lock on and they figure out what can we do to

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make it better. I have to echo the students

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saying we need to do this on a more ongoing basis

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so that way it's not responsive but it's

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proactive.

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DR. JONES: Yeah, yeah. Very good.

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Very good.

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I hear some invisible snaps and claps going on. I want you to know that we acknowledge your support and feel free to withhold the snaps and claps. Let's just keep it going in that direction.

Yes.

SPEAKER: Hi. I'm the interim director of SMP. Where we get it right I think is allowing all of these programs to exist. I've worked at this particular college at three particular levels and all the dots are on the board. But what does that look like moving forward when we talk about all of these groups coming together? Could that be or could we envision a cultural center of some sort where all of the groups can come and organically discuss these concerns on a regular basis in a place that we can call or the College can call it's own, to have that forum as opposed to not just having a discussion once a year? I think it would be important to kind of connect those dots, bring all those dots together in some sort of fashion. I don't know if it would take creating a building or finding some viable space that students and

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faculty can kind of utilize to continue this ongoing discussion.

DR. JONES: Very good. Excellent.

SPEAKER: I'm a senior member of the field hockey team, so I'm going to kind of speak on behalf of athletics. I just think from my freshman year until now we've seen a really big increase in awareness with diversity. We've gone as far as last year we really integrated it into our programs. We have the diversity statement that's now displayed all over campus, and we're trying to get it implemented into even like our game time routine so it's put forth before games, the other teams that are coming here know that we're the kind of campus that welcomes this kind of atmosphere. So I think we really may need to do a lot more. But just the fact that since my freshman year until now we've integrated that into our program is really big, and I think that's something we're doing right at this moment.

DR. JONES: Excellent.

SPEAKER: I think in regards to residents' life, we included a position and it's

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cultural advocate. It's really important for the residents of our campus to understand and be able to not only go to programs but help facilitate the residents as well.

And in regards to clubs and organizations, we have what is known as Rainbow Month, and that whole month is filled with different clubs and orgs that represent different cultural background, and they're very inclusive and they allow everybody to join regardless of their orientation.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is (redacted name). I can definitely attest to the University's commitment to respond to crises that occur on campus. I think they do an excellent job in creating like programs. And talks like this help, you know, create that dialogue for students who need it.

But I feel that we need to come up with initiatives that help encourage students who don't necessarily understand the complexity of diversity into those conversations. You can't have those conversations with students who, or faculty members who only get that diversity. You

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need to bring students and other individuals who don't necessarily see it. It's probably black and white for them.

And I also think from SUNY's system perspective, how does your University respond to incidents that occur on different campuses and how do we, you know, create that dialogue when other incidents occur on different campuses to make us feel more inclusive as to the faculty?

DR. JONES: Thank you. For example, the incident that happened on SUNY Albany campus recently with the three African American women who were assaulted on the bus and the campus's response on Albany's campus. But then the question becomes how do we connect to that is what I hear you saying, because that's safety. Even though it happened there, it brings up issues of safety here. Yeah.

Okay. We're going to come over here.

SPEAKER: One thing I think we do in a really strong way on our campus is for the 1,100 first-year students who enter every year, we go through a hard process of selecting the best orientation leaders, EOP liaisons and SMP

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liaisons because they're role models of inclusion. They're role models of success. And as an administrator who for years was able to do a lot of workshops with folks, I got to know students who on the outside might seem very different than I was, and they all brought their different thoughts, feelings, experiences to the situation, but they become a family which is colorblind, and they're lifetime friends. These are people who were orientation leaders twenty years ago. They're Godparents to each other's children now. And so I think they're role models of inclusion. And we set a tone from the time a first-year student and their family sets themselves on campus for two days to say this is who we are and we don't just tolerate diversity, we celebrate diversity and inclusion.

An area that I think is newer and we have an increasing number of students in that we can always improve working in are the nonvisible differences. I supervise the director of the disability resource center and I think we're seeing students who are coming in who excel academically but may be different than we are,

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2 and people don't know how to be around people who  
3 are different than they are, and they might have  
4 a disability that is not visible. And I think  
5 every campus could work on this new growing  
6 population in terms of issues that people are  
7 coming into college, maybe with racist  
8 experiences as well as bullying experiences  
9 because of the way they were treated before they  
10 joined our community.

11 DR. JONES: Yes. Thank you.

12 SPEAKER: I think something that we get  
13 right is that being a Black woman on this campus,  
14 me, I felt excluded from a lot of the  
15 communities. I didn't feel represented through a  
16 lot of the classes or the orientation or any of  
17 those experiences that others speak on they felt  
18 included on. I felt very excluded from those  
19 experiences. But through that exclusion I was  
20 forced to find a different community and form a  
21 different community with those other Black women  
22 and Black men on this campus that felt excluded  
23 as well. And through that I think that something  
24 we got right is that the Black community on this  
25 campus and for students of color overall, we've

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been kind of the shoulder to cry on and the

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support system for ourselves that we couldn't

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find in the administration and the faculty many

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times. So I'm grateful to be able to say that

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I'm part of a community that I can go to maybe my

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neighbor or if someone my own age that's

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unfortunately going through the same instances of

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exclusion as I am and we'll be able to be allies

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and support for each other within our student

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groups.

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DR. JONES: (Redacted name), did you

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have a sense that the orientation leaders, and

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you mentioned your experience in your student

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orientation, did you have a sense that others

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were aware that you weren't feeling included?

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SPEAKER: So the way orientation works

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is kind of like there's EOP orientation and

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general administration orientation.

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DR. JONES: Okay.

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SPEAKER: It felt like for me I bonded

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very much with my EOP orientation, and a lot of

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them are still my friends, but I wouldn't be able

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to name anyone else in my orientation group

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besides those in my EOP group. During

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orientation we became the EOP family, but it

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always felt like we were a -- the connotation

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always felt like a lot of general administration

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made the comment of EOP are the dumb kids that

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got here because they're of color or poor and

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they're here by luck. And whenever we would be

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during the group it felt like oh, here they come

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back, we're going to get taken out later. And

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whenever EOP came to take us out, it was like

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finally my family came to come get me from like

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what I'm going through.

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DR. JONES: Yeah, yeah. Okay. Thank

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you. Thank you for that.

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I'm telling the group here I've become

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a silent auctioneer. You move, I go sold, you're

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next. Okay.

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SPEAKER: I'm (redacted name) and I'm

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part of the theater department on campus. One

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thing I think that we've been getting right is

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the department has been in the process of hiring

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new professors to include more diversity in our

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department, and we just brought in a new

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professor who I had a class with last semester

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and that just changed my whole experience, having

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someone that understood where I was coming from, what I was experiencing. And I was the only person of color in that class. So to have a professor that was a person -- a woman of color, that was just -- I couldn't have asked for anything more. So that was something that we definitely got right.

But something that I think definitely needs to be worked on is our curriculum. When I'm constantly being taught things that I just feel like I can not relate to in any way. It is hard and it's challenging to want to keep going and to want to keep pursuing what I love when I feel like I'm not seeing myself any way. It's not just for like that department, but in general when I see other classes and I'm like why -- like why not. Why can't we have all these different things? See ya.

DR. JONES: Thank you. Thank you.

You knew I was coming to you, right?

Very good.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is (redacted name), I'm the community mentor at the Communities at New Paltz. I just wanted to share

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how grateful I am every day to be in SUNY New Paltz because of how diverse everyone is and just in general how the school is. I feel like every individual in this school is so diverse from their background. For example, I was born and raised in Nepal. I moved to the United States when I was eight and I grew up with a single mother. I'm an only child. So I can use all these experiences and share with other people, and others who grew up in different backgrounds can share how they grew up to me, and I feel like we can always learn from each other. And it goes this way for like every single individual so far that I've met. I can always learn from them and I can always teach them.

DR. JONES: Yeah.

SPEAKER: And another thing. I feel that SUNY New Paltz is like having -- like organizing really good opportunities for the students, whether it be like programs or just like experiences that they open to students. There's like leadership opportunities, jobs and like a bunch of other things that professors and like student leaders and -- anyone opens up. So

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yeah.

DR. JONES: Very good. Excellent.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name is (redacted name), I'm an RA in Esopus. Basically going off what (redacted name) said, I definitely feel -- for example, when I decided to come to New Paltz, I decided to come here because the first time I came I saw how nice everybody was and I saw all these different people and I felt like this was a place where I could -- I felt included, where I kind of felt like kind of at home.

As my first year, although I did think New Paltz was very diverse, I saw that there was a lot of struggle with the first-year students trying to fit in, because there's a whole bunch of programs. Once you do get installed and find your place you will find out that people -- for example, you could join like Asian club or the Hispanic/Latino clubs, whatever. You don't have to be of that race or whatever that club is designed kind of, entitled to. But you would feel included. That's one thing I found out. But as first-year students, and I have seen it now because I was an SMP mentor and I saw that

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with my proteges where they many times found it hard getting just that courage to talk to faculty. You know, --

DR. JONES: Yeah.

SPEAKER: -- starting that connection, that's very difficult. But I have seen a lot of progress while I've been here. That's definitely something I think we can still improve on.

DR. JONES: Very good. Excellent.

Thank you. Thank you.

I'm coming to the three of you over here. Decide who's going to be talking and then I'll come over to you.

SPEAKER: My name is (redacted name), I'm a sophomore here, a political science major. I'm a U.S. Marine reserve. I've been in three years. One of the good things that I experienced coming to school was the veteran service member community is very strong here, very tight knit. (Redacted name) runs a great shop and, you know, it really feels like they bend over backwards for me and help me out, help me with my tuitions assistance, that sort of thing.

One of the things I experience

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personally is, you know, it kind of just stops there and I don't have any other experiences with other groups and programs in the school. Once I finish my classes I go home, you know. I don't include myself in anything in the school because I relate more to other service members than I would to other students. I have a hard time like going to speak to professors about anything. If I need help, you know, I'd rather just, you know, work laterally on that and talk to other students than do that. That's something I need to work on personally.

But the school could do a better job kind of learning about the veteran community, even though it is very small. That's pretty much what I got.

DR. JONES: Excellent. Thank you.

SPEAKER: As a teacher I recognize that I get it right when the students experience the classroom is safe, is respectful, is inviting, inclusive. I know that when a lot of people speak up and they feel free to disagree, and I hear a lot of voices, not just a few. I get it wrong when I rely too much on my own perspective

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and my own experience. As a White straight middle class male I've never been excluded. I need to recognize that.

So I've had to listen, I've had to really observe, I've had to hear people so I can get a sense of what that feels like and I can help avoid that for my students.

DR. JONES: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you.

SPEAKER: (Name redacted). I too had the pleasure of being a student here, and now I work here. And one thing that I know New Paltz does well is that we do a great job of identifying a problem when it comes about.

Where I think we need to improve is making the solution to that problem part of our every day lives and not just the lives of those who are being affected but the campus community as a whole, from administration to faculty, staff to students. If it's affecting any group in our community it should be affecting us all.

And when it comes to inclusion, if it's not an entire campus-wide change, odds are it's not going to improve. So I think that that's

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where we need to improve as a campus.

DR. JONES: Excellent. Excellent.

One of the comments that you've made thus far is that the New Paltz community is great at crisis management and crisis response, and I heard you say the ongoing sustainable systems, conversations and structures becomes more of a challenge. So I'm going to ask us to shift and within the next eight minutes I want to hear examples of where do you see people getting it unintentionally wrong. So in the areas of micro-aggression and where do you see people not being aware of their privilege and action. What are some of your experiences of -- (redacted name), you talked about intent versus impact, right, where you see people having good intentions yet the impact is hurtful. The impact causes you to feel excluded or others to feel excluded, because we have to step into that space to get into that learner's edge, right. That's part of that meeting after the meeting. So where do you see -- I'm going to ask all of us to answer this question -- well intentioned people causing pain unintentionally?

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SPEAKER: So yeah. Well intention --  
good intentions but not coming out the right way.

DR. JONES: Mm'hm'.

SPEAKER: So I've had this experience  
multiple times where sometimes I'll straighten my  
hair and sometimes I won't. And when that  
happens it's just like the biggest news in the  
world. And it's good and fine, but when people  
want to come up to you, and that's the only thing  
that they want to talk about, when it's like  
what's up with your hair, what did you do, how  
did you do that, and it's just an endless like  
stream of questions that I don't really feel like  
answering. And I understand like it's  
interesting I guess. For me it's just my normal  
life. But it's things like that, when people  
just comment on your appearance or things that  
are just a natural part of you that I don't feel  
like I should have to explain to anyone.

DR. JONES: Very good. Thank you.

SPEAKER: I think -- I was saying this  
earlier. I love being -- going to be a teacher  
is something I didn't know I wanted to do before  
New Paltz. I'm very thankful that New Paltz

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guided me on to that and taught me what my passion was. I've come across some great professors.

But I think a lot of it is like something that a lot of what New Paltz is talking about, kind of like the socioeconomic. Like some students come in with more money than other students, and a lot of times the departments kind of have an assumption of you have the funds to do certain things. Like they'll just send us an e-mail like you have to do your workshop, you have to get this done by tomorrow, and I'm just like I can't get \$50 by tomorrow. That's just something that I don't have in my funds to do. And then instead of -- when you go and you tell them like oh I can't, they kind of -- you get penalized instead. Well now you have to pay a late fee or something like that. It's like you're penalizing me for me not being able to afford it and there's really not much I can do about that. That was my experience as education. You spend so much money on certifications and tests and things like that. I realize that like me being able to graduate on time is being

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jeopardized because of my family's socioeconomic kind of crisis, and it's something I really don't have control over. And I work two jobs and I still can't afford it.

DR. JONES: Mm'hm'. Very good. Thank you.

Did you want --

SPEAKER: Hi again. So I'm a psychology major. I'm a junior. There are very few students of color in my psychology major. It's just the way it is. And I often feel like the token person of color in my class. I feel like I'm speaking for everyone. I know you're a theater major. The theater department can use some revamping in that aspect, which I know the administration is working very hard on with the hiring of that professor. Pretty cool. Awesome.

So a psychology major in a predominately White setting. I'm in class, you know, four times a week let's say. I've kind of been tasked with the job of speaking for everyone. I can't do that. I can't speak for the whole Black community. We were learning about African American -- the African American

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2 experience in the United States and kind of  
3 coming from all that psychological trauma and  
4 trying to live in a society that doesn't want you  
5 there, and I forgot what question was asked and  
6 the professor just looked straight at me like so  
7 you're going to -- are you going to raise your  
8 hand, you know, comment on this. And I didn't.  
9 And, you know, as a Dominican American, as an  
10 Afro Latino woman, as an immigrant coming to this  
11 country, there are certain narratives that I  
12 can't speak for. I can't speak for everyone, I  
13 can only speak for myself, which is why I really  
14 appreciated that you put use "I" statements  
15 because that's where a lot of our problems come  
16 from.

17 Like, you know, I went to the rally in  
18 Albany for the three women that were assaulted on  
19 the bus by -- you know. So I went there, I went  
20 to Albany, and there were -- at the end they were  
21 telling people, you know, they had an agenda,  
22 they had speakers and they told people to come  
23 and speak. There was this girl, she was a woman,  
24 she was White, and they told her like this is not  
25 your time. Know when to speak. Sometimes it's

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not my time to speak. I'm not going to speak for everybody. That's a like general message for everyone in this room. If you're a White person in a Black space, do not claim that space as your own because you don't belong there. It's not your space. I'm sorry if I'm making anybody uncomfortable. You've got to learn how to be uncomfortable. So, yeah.

The same thing for men in women's spaces. If you're a male, you know, there's not space for men in the discussion about abortion. It's not your body. There's no place for a lot of things but people put themselves there and you're not supposed to, so --

DR. JONES: Yeah.

SPEAKER: -- that was my two cents.

DR. JONES: I think your point is so important around the dynamics of power, right, and the idea of sometimes being an ally and being support looks like silence and looks like creating the space for other people to engage and not have to translate, or code switch, or take care of because often times the nondominant group is given the challenge of taking care of the

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dominant group and the feelings and emotions of  
3 the dominant group. And so part of that idea of  
4 as you enter being willing to listen and sit with  
5 the discomfort because often times in other  
6 spaces I'm uncomfortable and that goes unknown,  
7 unnoticed and unaddressed. Right? So I really,  
8 really appreciate you bringing that up very much.

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SPEAKER: Thank you. My name is

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(redacted name) and I'm an associate professor in  
11 the theater program. I'm not an actor so I'm  
12 actually uncomfortable with microphones. And  
13 these are hard topics and so I'm actually going  
14 to respond and I'm using "I".

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I think a challenge that we have is

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that there are a lot of people who are quietly  
17 trying to do the right thing and there are  
18 programs that are doing things, meetings that  
19 have to be confidential a lot of times.

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Sometimes things are happening that take a lot

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longer than I know students have the patience

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for, and I really understand, as an advisor, who

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deliberately spends a lot of time with my

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students, not just on what your schedule is going

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to be but what is your life like here, how can

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your life be better here as a student. So I understand the sense of urgency, this is my only four years I have here as a college student. I get that perspective and I respect it and I love it.

But on the other hand, sometimes when you say things like the theater department needs to, and people make big grand statements where they maybe don't understand what's going on in committee meetings with students from student to student with a faculty member and that we're working from the individual level, and we're working with the administration, and we're working on curriculum, and we're working on student life issues, and we're working on mental health issues, and we're working on issues for the LGBT community, and we're working on issues for the women in our community, and we're working on issues for every demographic within our community, right. And I think it's really easy to say -- to make statements about this group needs to do better or those people are the ones that need to be here for this training, why aren't they here. And that overwhelms the quiet,

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day-to-day, behind-the-doors, hard and sometimes time-consuming work that many people are putting in on campus and not being recognized for. And so, you know, my heart gets racing a little bit because I know there are a lot of people who really are working hard on this issue. Anyway, I'll shut up now.

DR. JONES: No. Thank you. Thank you.  
Multiple perspectives.

Now I'll come back to you.

SPEAKER: Thank you. So just to address that briefly, that's one of the reasons why we're here, is because we want to open those lines of communication. So there may be a lot of things that administration is doing that we don't know about. I feel like that would be a great opportunity to open those lines of communication so that maybe we're not having these miscommunications and we know what's going on so we can make more -- so we can make more accurate statements that are less broad.

I forgot my point.

DR. JONES: Okay.

SPEAKER: So something else I wanted to

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address was I guess micro-aggressions on campus.

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Those are things that people say sometimes as

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compliments but they end up being backhanded

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compliments. You know, I've heard on campus

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well, you know, you're so articulate or you're

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pretty for a Black girl but you're light skinned.

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Those are things that people may perceive as

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compliments because maybe they've never been told

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that that's not okay to say or that that's not a

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compliment and that's not something you should be

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saying. And, you know, there are ways of working

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around that by having communication, by being

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more open and not holding your tongue, and that

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comes with feeling comfortable in your

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environment. You should feel comfortable enough

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to tell somebody -- if they say something to you

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that you don't like, you know, you maybe feel

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uncomfortable and here's why.

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As well I wanted to know are we going

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to open the floor for other students to speak

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now --

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DR. JONES: Yes.

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SPEAKER: -- since we're coming kind of

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to a close?

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DR. JONES: You're reading my mind.

Thank you very much.

Yes. It's 3:46 and so I want to invite the audience -- any audience member, if you would like to come up to speak, we can create a line here, or if you'd like to raise your hand I'll come over with the mike as well.

So let's hear from -- we'll start on this side. Two individuals. And I open it up in this way. Either if you want to share experiences of where we get it right, where we miss. As well I'll ask you to speak to what does progress look like from your lens. So what would you want to see happening on campus that would tell you that there is a true commitment to diversity and inclusion here at New Paltz. So you could enter in any of those spaces and you don't have to follow the statement that the last person just made. Okay.

Yes, stand up for us.

SPEAKER: Okay. Hi, everyone. My name is (redacted name) and I just wanted to comment on something that we do really, really well as a campus. So I'm a first-year student. As a

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first-year student I can definitely say that we have many great first-year programs. We have emerging leaders, a first-year internship, we have communities at Esopus Hall, and then we have initiatives that we are required to attend as a first semester here, we have a key issues class, we have a peer monitoring. The list just goes on and on. So I think that's a really good thing. And my involvement on campus as a first-year student has been unimaginable. I did not see myself participating in so many events, being in so many clubs. And now as, you know, a second semester student all these student leadership positions are opening up and I'm so eager to apply to all of them, which I am, with the support of my mentors, my advisors and upper classmen who have been pushing me since day one, since orientation I'll say.

And something that we need to improve on that was touched upon here by one of the students was at orientation when we are with our group and then our, you know, EOP leaders come to pull us out, it's just kind of awkward and definitely makes me feel a little bit, you know,

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not included in the group. With the EOP students in my orientation group, we were always together for some reason. There was always, you know, the vision. And I feel that having an OL that is very strong and involving everyone in the group and making sure that we're all, you know, together during that time because those are our first few days on this campus and we want to feel like we are included. So definitely having more -- you know, stronger OLs and things like that. That's something that I wanted to hopefully get the privilege of working on this campus over the summer so I can know to include everyone in the group, not only, you know, regular admission students but also SMP student and EOP students and things like that. Thank you.

DR. JONES: Excellent.

AUDIENCE: Whew!!

DR. JONES: Was that a request for the mike? He said no, no, no.

SPEAKER: Hi. Good afternoon.

DR. JONES: Stand up for me.

SPEAKER: Hi. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is (redacted name). I'm an RA

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2 on campus, and something I've seen -- I've been  
3 involved in a lot of leadership positions. I  
4 have to say that there's a lot of diversity with  
5 students, a lot of students of color who are also  
6 participating in these leadership positions and I  
7 feel like for the community of color here on  
8 campus we are beginning to see that, because I'm  
9 seeing a lot of students are coming in as first  
10 years jumping at this opportunity. I was able to  
11 have the opportunity to work here over the summer  
12 and it was amazing, the diversity on campus.

13 But I do feel that somewhere we can  
14 progress on -- I'm an EOP student, a proud EOP  
15 student. I am obsessed with the program. And  
16 basically just -- I'd say bringing up the number  
17 of how many EOP students are accepted on this  
18 campus. Right now since I've been here it's  
19 always been 125 students who are accepted. Why  
20 not increase that number? Allow the opportunity  
21 for other students around the city who don't have  
22 the financial opportunities to actually attend  
23 college, who don't get that opportunity to  
24 actually come . Like raising that number, giving  
25 the opportunity to students, because sometimes

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people miss out on going to college because their families don't have the financials to do so, their grades may not be there. I feel like this program is something that has helped me grow as a person, has helped me become a leader on this campus, and it could give the opportunity to so many other people that need it. So I feel like that's something that can be progressed on this campus, and I hope to see some change.

DR. JONES: Very good. Thank you.

MR. CHRISTIAN: I'd like to say one thing. First of all, I echo everything you say about EOP. Many in the community are aware that New Paltz submitted a proposal for some SUNY funding through the -- it's called a performance funding program, and we specifically sought funding to increase the enrollment in our EOP program by 100 students over a four-year period, and that includes hiring additional counselors. Part of the reason the EOP is so successful is the dedicated work of the advisors in the program, increased stipend financial support for students, funding to remodel some space for an expanded program. So we're still waiting for

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that proposal. But I wanted to respond to let you and other members of the community know how much we agree with everything you said about EOP and what it brings to opportunities for students.

Thank you.

DR. JONES: Very good. We've got about eight more minutes. I want to take about six more minutes --

SPEAKER: Over here.

DR. JONES: Over here. Thank you.  
Stand up for me.

SPEAKER: I think the issue that I -- how to phrase this? I believe that sometimes as a student I feel discouraged and I feel like as -- as a student I feel discouraged when I hear that type of administrative response. Just because as students we're telling administration we're hurting. Like this is not okay, we do not feel safe and comfortable in the environment we pay to attend. This is my home now. I spend the majority of my time here on this SUNY New Paltz campus and I feel like administration -- that administration response, what I got from it, I don't know, that was my interpretation, it was

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like well you don't understand, we're kind of the victims too, you don't see what we're doing. But the thing is we're the students right here saying there's something wrong. Like we don't feel safe. And I understand sometimes you try to put your best foot forward, but I also think it's to be receptive of someone letting you know that what you're doing right now is not enough. You need to place a higher standard on your work. You need to surpass what you have done in the past so our future can be better. And with that administrative response, I just feel saddened.

DR. JONES: Yeah, yeah. I think your point is so powerful because one part of it is to say -- and I hear you saying I understand that there's some steps that they have to take for change to happen. I also hear you saying I don't know that you heard my pain. I don't know that you heard that you may be working on a five-year clock, I'm working on a daily clock. Right? You may be working on a strategic clock. I'm working on a second-by-second clock. Does that make sense? It's not one or the other. And I hear you saying so when that second-by-second clock

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doesn't get acknowledged, right, even though that's not the intent, it has an impact, and the impact is you didn't hear what I just said, that I felt, that I experienced, and where is that on the priority list in the strategy. Is that fair?

SPEAKER: Yeah. Just to add something. I feel like sometimes administration wants to be applauded for doing the right thing. It seems like you want Black students on campus to clap every single time you go by saying ooh, you finally took a step in the right direction, you're finally righting your wrongs. It's not like -- it is -- it is the time, because someone mentioned it. These are our only four years as an undergrad. The thing is everything I've done here on this campus, I recognize that I won't see a lot of this -- a lot of like our impact come to the front just because. Hopefully if the work doesn't get done in my four years, I've at least helped pave the way for other students to pick up the struggle and so one day we can -- we can have the perfect campus environment.

DR. JONES: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Thank you. Thank you.

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We'll go over here.

SPEAKER: Thank you. Hi, everyone. My name is (redacted name). I'm also a proud student of the EOP program here at SUNY New Paltz. I'm a junior communications major.

Just to piggyback off of (redacted name). I agree with the discouragement by the administrative response. To hear from -- I'm sorry, I don't know your name next to Professor Winn. That we accept 1,100 new students every year and that we're still waiting for funding to accept 100 more EOP students doesn't really add up to me when I live in Shango Hall and I'm in perfect view of the two new science buildings that are being built. And I also work for Sodexo over at Ridgeview at the new residence hall that was built with, I'm guessing, funding by some other place.

I'm sorry that my wrist is a little shaky.

DR. JONES: That's okay.

SPEAKERS: These things emit an emotional response out of me because this is also my home and I come from somewhere where the

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economic portion of our little divide here is not really talked about. So when you say that you've been requesting money for the additional students, well where is that ledger because I'd love to see it as a student who pays to be here. I want to know where this money is coming from and I want to know the exact numbers because it doesn't add up to me.

(Redacted name) and I met at orientation and we're still good friends to this day, and I'm thankful every single day for the connections that I have through EOP and I'm thankful for the strength in our community. But also these conversations don't happen until we have to all put our faces and names out there and rally in front of the sub and rally at the police station. You know, this doesn't happen, you know. And it's just -- I guess I'm talking -- I came in late so I didn't know the guidelines --

DR. JONES: That's okay. That's okay.

SPEAKER: -- about what we can improve on. I guess something to be improved on as a student here, I don't see the money breakdown, you know. I know the issue is Black versus

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White, and I've known that my entire life as someone who identifies as a Latina. So I want to know about money now, you know. I want to know where this is coming from and when is it going to get here. Because like (redacted name) said and like you explained, you all may be working on a five-year clock, ten-year clock or how ever many year clock. We've been oppressed for --

AUDIENCE: Five hundred years.

SPEAKER: If that. So, you know, to me it just seems -- it's like (redacted name) said, there's no better way to put it, it's very discouraging.

Also, I don't mean to take up everyone's time but in terms of orientation, the perception about EOP to general admission students is one thing, but the perception about EOP from SMP students is a whole other thing. There is a divide within our community that no one is addressing, that no one gives a -- excuse my language -- damn about. That to me is discouraging because one of my closest friends is an SMP student and our whole first year was oh, but you're EOP, I don't get that, I don't get

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that extra tutoring, I don't get that extra 500 to my tuition. As messed up as that made me feel as an EOP student, I didn't get mad at that person, I got mad at the institution because what makes an EOP student and an SMP student different that now other people can disregard us, and this is the divide within our community now. This is the conversation that we're having instead of how can we rise up and collaborate as students of color who are oppressed in this place to continue, because that's when we're going to start getting some kind of mobility.

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DR. JONES: Very good. Thank you.

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Thank you very much.

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I'm aware of time. And as these conversations go, we're just getting started and it's time to close our time together.

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We started out saying that there is a need for ongoing sustained dialogue. Right? That we wanted to practice some position Bs as we listened, as we spoke, as we leaned in. I hope you have heard something, an idea, a statement, an experience, that is either new to you or that you disagree with, because that's where learning

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happens. That's where we're able to see multiple

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faces. That's where we're able to understand

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multiple experiences and perspectives. You all

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have heard the saying it's a marathon, not a

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sprint. Right? This takes ongoing work.

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I love your point around communication,

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right, and how do we -- I work with this one

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university where there was a lot that was

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happening in many places and spaces. The

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communication around the progress being made, the

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priorities and the monies being placed and where

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that was happening wasn't being communicated.

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And so there was this gap in an understanding of

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the current state. And there were many rigorous

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conversations about that commitment and short and

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long-term goals, right. And at the same time,

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while there was so much work being focused on

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moving the needle, if you will, there wasn't as

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much communication about how do we let the rest

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of the community know that we're moving on our

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commitment.

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There's another part of this that also

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says -- there's a great author by the name of Dr.

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Ronald Heifetz. He talks about adaptive

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leadership and he uses the analogy that I love.

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He talks about it's important for us to look --

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when we're looking for adaptive challenges, it's

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important for us to pay attention to the dance

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floor and the balcony. On the dance floor is

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where we're looking at the day-to-day, we're

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looking at what's happening in our classes, in

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our departments on that second-by-second basis.

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On the balcony is where we look up to see what's

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happening on the dance floor. Right? And part

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of what I heard today was we need to make sure

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that we're acknowledging when we're on the

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balcony the experiences that are happening on the

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dance floor, and when we're on the dance floor I

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heard people saying we want to know the data that

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you're using on the balcony. Right? That it's

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important for us to look at both of those and

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make sure we're exchanging information.

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The other thing I want to say and then

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I'll hand it off for some closing comments from

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President Christian, the other thing I want to

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say is this is hard work. Like we say that every

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faculty member is the director of diversity in

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her classroom. Every department chair is the

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director of diversity and inclusion in their

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department. Every RA is the director of

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diversity in her floor. But this is shared

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responsibility, right? On every team. It's

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about leadership and it's about engagement and

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leadership at all levels. Right?

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So I'm really excited about our

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dialogue today. I saw folks taking risks, I saw

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folks leaning in. And I'd like to say if you

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leave with more questions than you have answers,

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we have done our job well, because often times

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it's not about the right answer, it's about

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knowing the right question to ask and which

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questions not to ask, right, that move the

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community forward.

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So I'm going to ask you to give

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yourself a round of applause for attending this

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Town Hall on Inclusion and really leaning in and

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taking some risks.

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(Applause.)

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DR. JONES: A little bit louder. A

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little bit louder. No courtesy claps. No

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courtesy claps.

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(Applause.)

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DR. JONES: It's been an honor and a privilege.

I want to invite you -- each of you have index cards on your chairs. I want to invite you, if there's a question or a topic that you feel you'd love to still have us engage in dialogue about or some changes you'd like to see again that will let you know that real commitment is going on, we'll invite you to write those and just leave them on your chair and we'll collect those, because we want your input as well. It's been a pleasure and honor being with you.

President Christian.

MR. CHRISTIAN: First I want to thank Dr. Jones for your exceptional leadership of this conversation.

DR. JONES: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. CHRISTIAN: As always, thank you. I want to thank everyone for being here today. A special thanks to members of our smaller group up here. I appreciate you sharing your insights, hearing the affirmation of things that we're doing well. I learned much about your

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perceptions of things that we can do better at.

Many members of this community I think are aware that we're undertaking a plan to develop a diversity and inclusion plan. That will be happening this spring. Part of the goal there will be to create an ongoing structure so that we have these conversations on a continuous basis rather than episodically. Very important for us to do. That will be a broad-based committee that we hope will have tentacles out to the rest of the community, creating some structure to have these conversations be engaged much more broadly, having all of us recognize our roles as diversity officers.

One person I have not acknowledged and want to thank for her role in leading this particular effort as well as many of our broader diversity and inclusion efforts is (redacted name). Many of you I think have worked with (redacted name). I thank you for your work and leading us.

So thank you all again for being part of this really important effort that we need to continue.

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Thank you.

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, MICHELLE CONERO, a Notary Public  
for and within the State of New York, do hereby  
certify:

That hereinbefore set forth is a  
true transcription of the audio recording provided  
to me by SUNY New Paltz.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto  
set my hand this 17th day of February 2016.

\_\_\_\_\_  
MICHELLE CONERO