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NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

[5:00 pm] Dr. Pam Luster [[@DrPamLuster](#)]

Welcome back to #EquityChat sponsored by @CollegeFutures w/your hosts @IamKeithCurry @DrTammeil & @DrPamLuster. Today, we're excited to have @NASPATweets researchers @alexa_wesley1 @naspajill to learn more about their report on advancing racial justice on campus. Welcome!

[Alexa Wesley Chamberlain @alexa_wesley1](#) · 2m

Thank you [@EquityAvengers](#) for hosting this conversation! [#EquityChat](#)

[@naspajill @naspajill](#) · 1m

Yes, thank you. Excited to be a part of this conversation! [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil](#)

We are excited to have you here!

[5:05 pm] Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson [[@DrTammeil](#)]

Q1 [@alexa_wesley1 @naspajill](#) As you engage in equity-focused work, what is your walk-up song or anthem? [@DrPamLuster @IamKeithCurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers](#)

[@naspajill @naspajill](#) · 28s

[@naspajill](#): Although mine contains spicy language, it would be "It's a Good Day to Fight the System" by Shungudzo. I listen to it whenever I'm headed out to a protest. [#EquityChat](#)

[Alexa Wesley Chamberlain @alexa_wesley1](#) · 1m

Make Your Own Kind of Music by Cass Elliot. To me, it's a reminder to celebrate our differences and to have the courage to imagine a new path when the status quo isn't serving us [#EquityChat](#)

[5:11 pm] Dr. Keith Curry [[@IamKeithCurry](#)]

Q2 [@alexa_wesley1 @naspajill](#) Tell us about your report and what led you to focus on racial justice and racial climate in your work. Was there a defining moment or experience that catalyzed your journey? [@DrPamLuster @DrTammeil @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers](#)

[Alexa Wesley Chamberlain @alexawesley1·1m](#)

(1/3) We often see that student activists repeatedly call for change, while campuses promise action. Our research delves into the perceived gap between these commitments and student priorities and where there are opportunities for alignment

[Alexa Wesley Chamberlain @alexawesley1·1m](#)

(2/3) We also set out to address a call to elevate student voices in decision-making, which was a need highlighted in our 2020 research study on campus racial justice statements and plans for translating those words into actions

[Alexa Wesley Chamberlain @alexawesley1·1m](#)

(3/3) Our hope is that the report's findings contribute to the growing body of research about student perspectives and conditions for achieving a positive campus climate that is affirming and safe for racially minoritized students

[@naspajill @naspajill·1m](#)

(1/4) I come to my work at NASPA after working at three different campuses over the span of 15 years primarily fighting for gender and social justice issues. So my professional background really primed me for this type of research.

[@naspajill @naspajill·1m](#)

(2/4) Personally, I come from a multi-racial family, so I very much grew up discussing racial injustice and navigating the very personal impacts that discrimination had on my family from a relatively young age.

[@naspajill @naspajill·1m](#)

(3/4) I think one of the things I will never forget is something a student said during one of our campus site visits. And that was the fatigue they felt in pushing leadership for change while experiencing racism in their daily interactions with their peers.

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil·4m](#)

I'm sitting with this one.

[@naspajill @naspajill·33s](#)

(4/4) This student said "I don't have time for your racism right now, I have a test in my next class." It made me sad just how much these daily interactions drain students; yet they are out there fighting to change long-standing systems and processes across the institution.

[5:18 pm] Dr. Luster [[@DrPamLuster](#)]

Q3 @alexawesley1 @naspajill Can you share more about how fostering a positive campus racial climate is a critical step towards advancing racial justice? @DrTammeil @IamKeithCurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[@naspajill |@naspajill·57s](#)

(1/3) I think that many institutions tend to look at numbers in terms of how well they are advancing racial equity. And numbers are important - representation of marginalized populations across the institution, among students, faculty, and staff.

[@naspajill @naspajill·50s](#)

(2/3) But according to the students we spoke to, sometimes campuses get stuck there. And they forget about engaging with students directly to better understand how their lived experiences are contributing to the climate they experience at the institution.

[@naspajill @naspajill·37s](#)

(3/3) So our research was designed to get at where those disconnects are happening and give administrators some additional ways to think about improving campus racial climate while involving students in those efforts in a meaningful way. [#EquityChat](#)

[Alexa Wesley Chamberlain @alex_a_wesley1·13s](#)

A key takeaway for me is that students identified multiple factors that contribute to racial climate, but that the value of assessing for it really hinges on whether findings from it sit on a shelf vs are they shared and used to guide campus decisions [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster](#)

There's so much in this statement- actionable, data informed, and relevant

[5:25 pm] Dr. Gilkerson [[@DrTammeil](#)]

Q4 @alex_a_wesley1 @naspajill Students indicated faculty/staff composition and support were essential to advancing racial justice on campus. What recs do you have to further support progress in these areas? @DrPamLuster @IamKeithCurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[@naspajill @naspajill·2m](#)

(1/4) I think this work is getting harder, especially in some states where diversity statements are being prohibited as part of the hiring process. But I think that administrators pointed to hiring and recruitment of faculty and staff as areas of improvement.

[@naspajill @naspajill·2m](#)

(2/4) But students were really focused in on how students, faculty and staff from marginalized communities experience day-to-day campus life. They wanted to talk about retention of those students, faculty, and staff.

[@naspajill @naspajill·1m](#)

(3/4) Students had a really nuanced understanding of representation. They wanted to talk about representation among the highest levels of leadership, including the board of regents.

[5:32 pm] Dr. Curry [[@iamkeithcurry](#)]

Q5 [@alexa_wesley1](#) [@naspajill](#) Change efforts can be perceived as performative. How can #highered leaders best apply your findings to implement meaningful equity & social change efforts to advance racial justice on their campus? [@DrPamLuster](#) [@DrTammeil](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) #EquityChat

[Alexa Wesley Chamberlain @alexa_wesley1·50s](#)

Remembering to close the loop with students by documenting progress, timelines, and rationale for decisions. We heard over and over that students want transparency and follow-through from campus leadership [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil·2m](#)

"Students want transparency and follow-through from campus leadership." [@DrPamLuster](#) [@iamkeithcurry](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [@EquityAvengers](#) [@naspajill](#) [#EquityChat](#)

[@naspajill @naspajill·10m](#)

(1/3) I think we heard from students that they wanted more transparency, more access to leaders, more accountability for those who are causing harm, and more meaningful engagement by leaders.

[@naspajill @naspajill·10m](#)

(2/3) They could clearly identify one-time or performative efforts like town halls or meetings with senior leaders that didn't result in anything. They highlighted task forces that took so long to take action that most students involved would have graduated.

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster·4m](#)

Replying to [@naspajill @equityavengers](#) and 4 others

The long & winding road-I've been in this situation as a leader and know that I've held up progress with process [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil·3m](#)

Me too, Pam. me too.

[@naspajill @naspajill·10m](#)

(3/3) They want leaders to hold themselves accountable for making change. They want to be able to regularly engage leaders and get regular updates from them about progress but also be able to reach leaders to share with them about how they experience the campus. [#EquityChat](#)

[5:39 pm] Dr. Luster [[@DrPamLuster](#)]

Q6 [@alexa_wesley1](#) [@naspajill](#) To do this work, we must continue learning and partnering with others. How do you educate yourself and who is informing your practice? [@DrTammeil](#) [@iamkeithcurry](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) [#EquityChat](#) [#EquityAvengers](#)

[@naspajill @naspajill·1m](#)

(1/4) I am forever listening to podcasts and constantly seeking recommendations for podcasts on topics about which I want to know more (please suggest some here!).

[@naspajill @naspajill·1m](#)

(2/4) I also have a stack of books on a range of equity topics which I don't read with any sort of logical progression. I pick up one and read a chapter or two and then switch to another book so that I am always ingesting on a range of topics.

[@naspajill @naspajill·1m](#)

(3/4) I also just really like to engage with real people, so I learn a lot by doing and volunteering with different groups in my community that are impacted by a range of equity issues.

[@naspajill @naspajill·1m](#)

(4/4) Books are my friends, but I can't say I am pushing for social change meaningfully by just sitting home reading with my dogs. [#EquityChat](#)

[Alexa Wesley Chamberlain @alexa_wesley1·3m](#)

I am constantly learning from the incredible [@NASPAtweets](#) staff + our members. I also find learning from equity educators, researchers, & community activists in other areas (housing, transportation, etc.) help me think differently about the possibilities for reform [#EquityChat](#)

[5:46pm] Dr. Gilkerson [[@DrTammeil](#)]

Q7 @alexa_wesley1 @naspajill We all have a vision of the future we want to live in. What is your freedom dream for higher education and what gives you hope for its future? @DrPamLuster @IamKeithCurry @CollegeFutures #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Alexa Wesley Chamberlain @alexa_wesley1](#)

I dream of a higher ed system that recognizes multiple ways of knowing and creates an environment where marginalized students (and the staff/faculty critically connected to their success) can thrive. Of one that serves as an engine of upward socioeconomic mobility [#EquityChat](#)

[@naspajill @naspajill](#)

(1/2) The students that we met throughout this project are what give me hope. They are passionate and in spite of every challenge that is thrown their way (which are increasing in this political climate, sadly), they keep demanding change.

[@naspajill @naspajill](#)

(2/2) My vision for the future is an entirely revolutionized system of education that is built around the needs, goals, and experiences of ALL students, not just white students. You know, just a minor request. [#EquityChat](#)

[Dr. Tammeil Gilkerson @DrTammeil](#)

😊 Just a minor request.

+100

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster](#)

👍 👍 👍

[5:53 pm] Dr. Curry [[@iamkeithcurry](#)]

Q8 [@alexa_wesley1](#) [@naspajill](#) The road to racial equity is long. How are you sustaining yourself? What practice would you recommend to other #EquityAvengers? [@DrPamLuster](#) [@DrTammeil](#) [@CollegeFutures](#) #EquityChat #EquityAvengers

[Alexa Wesley Chamberlain @alexa_wesley1·2m](#)

Finding opportunities for connection and community And any opportunity to get to directly work with students is always energizing [#EquityChat](#)

[@naspajill @naspajill·2m](#)

(1/2) I have two very cute dogs with whom I have entire conversations. And I take out my frustrations and bad days on my rower.

[@naspajill @naspajill·1m](#)

(2/2) But truthfully, I sustain myself by learning. I thrive on better understanding the world around me. If I ever stop seeking to understand the experiences of others, and examining my unearned privilege and fighting alongside others for change, then I have failed. [#EquityChat](#)

[6:00 pm] Dr. Luster [[@DrPamLuster](#)]

[Dr Pamela Luster #EquityAvengers #RealCollegePrez @DrPamLuster·1m](#)

TY [@alexa_wesley1](#) [@naspajill](#) for sharing your research on racial climate and racial justice w/us on [#EquityChat](#) [@CollegeFutures](#). Join us next week as we host [@MichaelHGavin](#) – President [@DeltaCollege](#) [#EducationForAll](#). [@iamkeithcurry](#) [@DrTammeil](#) [@DrPamLuster](#) [@equityavengers](#) OUT!

[Alexa Wesley Chamberlain @alexa_wesley1·29s](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @naspajill and 6 others](#)

Thank YOU for creating space to discuss and for your dedication to this work. And thank you to those following the conversation!

[@naspajill @naspajill·36s](#)

Replying to [@DrPamLuster @alexa_wesley1 and 6 others](#)

Thank you, our hosts, for the work you do, and for everyone who joined us tonight! [#EquityChat](#)