

Lawrence University Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Truth & Reconciliation at Lawrence: Enhancing trust, empathy and learning

Campaign mission statement:

Lawrence is committed to authentic inclusion and to learning as an institution as we strive to create a welcoming community that is respectful of all its members. Fostering an atmosphere of inclusivity involves dialogue across differences, acknowledging the struggles that these differences have caused, and working to heal the wounds caused by those struggles. As part of that process, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion is launching a Truth & Reconciliation campaign during the 2018-19 academic year.

What does “Truth & Reconciliation” mean?

Truth and reconciliation is a restorative process for initiating healing in a community. Core elements of truth and reconciliation are truth-seeking, the acknowledgment of past conflict, struggles, and pain, and community-based forgiveness and healing. We will work together to face the history of division and exclusion on this campus, to acknowledge how these have marginalized members of our community, and to join together in rebuilding trust between students, faculty, and staff. Conversations will address class, political affiliations/belief systems, gender, sexuality, ability, and race, among other topics.

Both truth-seeking and reconciliation require courage—from individuals and from our institution. Over this year, we ask you to join with us and with each other as we confront past mistakes, acknowledge our roles in making or perpetuating them, and move forward together in a spirit of betterment, equity, and love.

Our plan for the year:

In Fall 2018, we will begin a systematic process of truth-seeking and confronting our history. Initiatives include exhibits on the history of diversity on campus and race and racism in Appleton, as well as town halls, sharing circles and departmental/organizational discussions about the Campus Climate survey, intergroup dialogues, and presentation of educational materials about our campus process of truth and reconciliation.

In Winter 2019, our community will come together in a spirit of reconciliation. We will participate in community-wide dialogues, hear practical suggestions for inclusive interaction, and share ideas on how to move forward in a sustainable way that enhances everyone’s sense of belonging and community.

Resources:

- https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/ethics_online/0102
- https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/can_love_change_the_world
- <https://www.wkkf.org/what-we-do/racial-equity/truth-racial-healing-transformation>