RECLAIMING *our* DOMINICAN IDENTITY: BECOMING ANTIRACIST & MULTICULTURAL

EDGEWOOD COLLEGE INCLUSION UPDATE

2019-2020
ENACTED MONDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2018

As we begin today’s event, we do so by recognizing the sacred land on which our College exists. Our Dominican heritage, educational mission, and core values call us to be stewards of this land and the Native mounds located throughout our campus. We respectfully acknowledge our local First Nation, the Ho-Chunk, and the additional 11 Indigenous Nations of Wisconsin that have shaped our state’s history and our local community.

Mąąnąkre, hanąąc wąqąćkże aire. Teejopregi, Edgewood Collegera, eegi mįįnąkra, že’e heesge harukosire wa’ųanąąkwi. Waagax hojoci xetera hacijja howaawajiwira, jaagu wagigųsjera, anąga jaagu cooweja hakerewira, mąąnąkre haiš’akikjawi heesgeže wa’ųąąkra, anąga mąąnąkre eegi, wąqąskiks’akra woxoe t’ųųpirera, hanąąc wiirakara ḃįįkjeesge wa’ųąąkšąną. Hoocąkra nągą Wąqąskįhįhjara hanąąc eegi stoo hijjikicihinhawira, že’e hąąpte’e hanąąc hirokikikere wąqąskik ho’įra, hijjikišjek hijwa ‘ąąjawi. Woo’įnąpesge!

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR USE:

The Land Recognition Statement is approved to be used at College ceremonies and events including but not limited to Convocation & Commencement, Groundbreakings & Building Openings, Seminar Days, All-Campus Gatherings, Partnership Signings (that occur on campus), Award Ceremonies, Trustee Meetings, and public events hosted on campus where College officials are offering welcoming comments.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This statement was developed in consultation with members of the Ho-Chunk Community, students at Edgewood College, and senior College officials. It is available to all members of the Edgewood community for use at College events. The President’s Cabinet approved the Land Recognition Statement in the spring of 2018 as an important expression of our commitment to diversity.
FOUNDATIONS of EDGEWOOD COLLEGE:

OUR CORE VALUES

Truth | Justice | Compassion | Community | Partnership

OUR IDENTITY

Sponsored by the Sinsinawa Dominicans, Edgewood College is a community of learners that affirms both its Catholic heritage and its respect for other religious traditions. The liberal arts are the foundation of all our curricular offerings in the humanities, arts, sciences, and professional programs. Committed to excellence in teaching and learning, we seek to develop intellect, spirit, imagination, and heart. We welcome people who reflect the rich diversity of the world’s cultures and perspectives. We foster open, caring, thoughtful engagement with one another and an enduring commitment to service, all in an educational community that seeks truth, compassion, justice and partnership.

OUR DOMINICAN VISION for ANTIRACISM

We have embraced the vision of becoming antiracist and multicultural by intentionally dismantling our racist structures, practices, and procedures. We want to collaborate and work together as a collective with others who challenge racism in the world. Together, we will transform our world into a holy and just society for all.

OUR MISSION

Edgewood College, rooted in the Dominican tradition, engages students within a community of learners committed to building a just and compassionate world. The College educates students for meaningful personal and professional lives of ethical leadership, service, and a lifelong search for truth.

OUR VISION

Edgewood College will be an inclusive model of learning, teaching, and scholarship. Our students, alumni, faculty, and staff will be recognized for their pursuit of purposeful lives, vibrant and sustainable communities, and a just world.
EDGEOOOD COLLEGE PROMISE

What is meaningful to members of the Edgewood College community, experienced consistently enough that we can promise it with integrity? *Connecting learning, beliefs and action.*

INCLUSION

Our mission as a Dominican Catholic institution of higher education calls us to the intentional pursuit of justice. We commit to doing the challenging work of building an inclusive learning community, ensuring students, faculty and staff from underrepresented and historically marginalized populations are present, fully included, and successful. We demonstrate a culture of inclusion by making sure that issues of and actions toward inclusion are central to every aspect of our daily work and by cultivating an environment where all faculty, staff, and students apply the awareness, knowledge, and skills to live and work effectively with individuals across the rich spectrum of diversity. We also recognize our role in setting an example to further advance ongoing efforts toward realizing diversity and inclusion achievements. We strive to recognize, respect, and support the intersections of diverse identities as critical points of strength, learning, and growth.

EDGEOOOD COLLEGE COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY and INCLUSION

LEARNING: **ANCHORED IN OUR DOMINICAN HERITAGE ...**

1. Sponsored by the Sinsinawa Dominicans, Edgewood College is a community of learners that affirms both its Catholic heritage and its respect for other religious traditions and spiritual perspectives.

2. Dominicans are called to preach the Gospel as a way to nurture relations among people of every rank and class, based upon recognition of their basic needs, human dignity, and infinite value.

3. A Sinsinawa Dominican education celebrates a diverse and collaborative community. Students are taught to share their talents and insights, to collaborate with others, to recognize diversity and differences in our world with respect.

4. In that tradition, we welcome people who reflect the rich diversity of the world’s cultures, perspectives, and experiences.
BELIEFS: WHAT DOES THIS REALLY MEAN TO US ...

1. Injustices and inequities of power and privilege are a reality in our world, and their existence serves to perpetuate both overt and subtle discrimination, intolerance, hate, micro-aggressions, and attitudes of indifference.

2. Each of us has the ability and responsibility—in our pursuit of justice—to address inequities in all aspects of our institutional life that interfere with the fulfilling of our mission, vision, and values.

3. Diversity is an essential element of meaningful teaching and learning. Its presence deepens and makes more authentic our search for truth through multiple perspectives.

4. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion draws us into the world and invites the world to our College. It acknowledges our mutual dependency and shared responsibility for each other and the common good.

ACTION: WHAT WE ARE CALLED TO DO ...

1. We seek to create inclusive living, learning, and working environments that reflect the demographics of the communities we serve and that foster open, compassionate, and thoughtful dialogue and engagement with one another.

2. We expect all members of our College to assume responsibility for understanding and engaging with the diverse individuals and communities that comprise our learning community, with particular attention to groups that have historically been marginalized in society and institutions of higher education.

3. We will acknowledge and confront inequalities and injustices, including those that negatively impact teaching and learning and those that exist at the institutional level—structures, policies, and practices.

4. We will ensure that ongoing opportunities for learning and professional development around issues of diversity and inclusion exist for our students, faculty, and staff.
The 2019-2020 academic year was a time of transitions, turbulence and major challenges that impacted our community profoundly. In the summer of 2019, Edgewood College President, Scott Flanagan, resigned from his position after serving the College for twenty years, and Sister Mary Ellen Gevelinger was introduced as the 8th College President.

When she took charge, she inherited a large budget deficit, trends of declining enrollment, a significant need to reduce the size of the workforce, and opportunities to redefine the academic structure of the College. Administration began addressing each of these issues over the fall term; however, no one could have predicted what the spring semester had in store: two viruses which now plague our community & society.

At the 2019 August Seminar, Sr. Gevelinger spoke strongly of the need to address racism at Edgewood College and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the most vulnerable groups of our community. It was at this time that she also introduced the addition of a new Cabinet member, Dr. Willie Larkin, Chief of Staff/Diversity Officer, to create and implement a plan to center equity, inclusion & diversity at the heart of the College.

In the spring of 2019, campus life came to a grinding halt as a new virus and pandemic took over the world. Classes, instruction, and support services all moved to a virtual platform as our country went into a lock down to stop the spread of the Coronavirus. Simultaneously, a familiar virus, racism, which has plagued the United States since its birth, reemerged with a vengeance.

At the tail end of the 2019-2020 academic year, Dr. Andrew Manion was introduced as the 9th President of Edgewood College, and within his first two months, he boldly declared the need to eradicate racism from our campus, and also created an inaugural role, Vice President of Mission, Values & Inclusion. It is clear that Dr. Manion’s intention is to courageously lead Edgewood College through a time of racial division, overt racism locally and nationally, a worldwide health pandemic dramatically changing higher education, and to set a new vision for our beloved community.

Sincerely,

Tony R Garcia
Executive Director of Diversity & Inclusion
Special Advisor to the President’s Cabinet
On June 1, 2020 I had the honor and privilege to assume my position as the 9th president of Edgewood College. Prior to my arrival, I had invited all the faculty and staff to write me a letter introducing themselves and telling me a little bit about their experience at Edgewood College. I was very pleased to receive over 160 responses to this invitation, and the stories I read were at times inspiring, moving, and admittedly alarming. I was inspired and moved to read of the commitment of the Edgewood College faculty and staff to our students and our community. I was alarmed to read the stories of many of our ALANA faculty and staff, whose experience too often included encounters with racism.

A week before I stepped into my role as College President, George Floyd, an unarmed black man, was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, begging for his life and calling out for his mama. The video footage was horrifying and the impact across the world was profound. I am proud of our students and faculty to have organized a demonstration in support of black lives, and I made sure my presence was known, as I too, believe that black lives matter. Sadly, the violence against black people continues and another black man, Jacob Blake, was shot seven times by the police in front of his kids. The racism—and the violence it produces—must end, and I believe Edgewood College has an opportunity to educate future generations that will change this world.

This year we have dedicated ourselves to intentionally living our core value of community. It is especially fitting that this year is devoted to this value. Our community has already come together to address some of the concerns I read about in those first letters. As you will read in this report, we have undertaken several important initiatives to build on our existing structures to address systemic racism, commit ourselves to being anti-racist, and work for justice. While we are faced with unprecedented challenges, we are simultaneously presented with unprecedented opportunities to become the community we were intended to be by our Dominican founders, where our learning, faith, and reflection produce action and where all are welcome and valued.

Cor ad cor loquitur.

Andrew P. Manion, Ph.D.,
President
The demand for Black lives to matter was heard loudly as the unsettling pattern of black men being killed by white police officers continued across the United States. Following the murder of George Floyd, national outrage and worldwide protests occurred as a call to action to ensure every Black person has the social, economic, & political power & safety to thrive. Students & Faculty at Edgewood College rallied to organize a grassroots demonstration, writing in a public statement:

*We support the protests & strongly believe it is crucial that we ALL come together to end systematic racism & violence towards our Black community... We stand with truth, compassion, justice, community & partnership... As a community of life-long learners, it is our responsibility to have these difficult conversations with family & friends that have anti-black ideals & guide them with resources to better educate them about the history of racism in the United States... We see you, we hear you, & we are here for you, always.”*
President Gevelinger & President-Elect Manion echoed their frustration of the killing of George Floyd in a public statement & committed to transforming the College’s culture into a model of community & social justice:

“…We’re saddened and angered by the death of George Floyd, who died in police custody in Minneapolis on Monday night - suffocated by a police officer as he lay on the ground in restraints begging for his life. We’re struggling with how we should talk about this tragedy - this outrage - with the Edgewood College community, especially with our community members of color... Our Sinsinawa Dominican roots & Catholic identity demand that we reaffirm our community, that we stand with our African American sisters & Brothers... We believe that, as the Edgewood College community, we must recommit ourselves to peace & to justice. We must be a living example of how a community cannot be satisfied with mere diversity, but must work every day to be genuinely inclusive. We recognize that we have work to do, & we must hold ourselves to the highest standards... Together, let us be the leaders that our society needs. Let us honor our founders by living our values. Let us honor the memories of George Floyd & other unjustly taken from us by setting the standard for civility, mutual respect, & love.”

This important message, published shortly after the killing of George Floyd, set the stage for Edgewood College to reshape their commitments to antiracism & multiculturalism.
PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

Within the first month of President Andrew Manion leading Edgewood College, he shared three important commitments:

1) To hire an inaugural Vice President of Mission, Values & Inclusion
2) To organizationally restructure Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
3) To convene a taskforce to eradicate racism from campus.

The work of the taskforce, restructuring of inclusion, and the hiring of the Vice President will be shared in next year’s inclusion report, but these commitments build on our sponsorships’ vision of being multicultural and antiracist.

DEVELOPING a CULTURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION PLAN & POLICY

Edgewood College is built on Ho-Chunk land and is surrounded by several conical, linear & effigy burial mounds (cultural resources). Prior to this academic year, there was not a formal cultural resource policy or care plan that was both co-created by the Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Heritage Preservation and vetted by the Wisconsin Historical Society. During the 2019-2020 Academic Year, there were several meetings with the Ho-Chunk Nation to address this gap and ensure that our grounds maintenance did not disrupt or lead to the erosion of any of these cultural resources.

Pictured below is the largest effigy mound on campus, the Bird Effigy Mound. The placement of effigy mounds often tells a story, although the story of the Bird Effigy Mound is unknown. The Bird Mound was originally surveyed with a wingspread of 260 feet, but now measures 200 feet due to previous construction of the sidewalk and Woodrow Street.
Supporting diverse and underrepresented students continues to be a top priority for Edgewood College. During the 2019-2020 academic year, we saw the expansion of the Office of Military Veteran Services Student Center, Edgewood College being named as a “Top Ten” Military Friendly School, the dedication of the College’s first Queer Student Center, and an analysis of the Campus Climate Survey.

The Queer Student Center (QSC)
The Queer Student Center serves as a space for students to be their authentic-self, host meetings and study groups, & is home to the offices of the Women’s & Gender Studies Program. The day-to-day operations & programs are overseen by the Office of Student Inclusion & Involvement, in partnership with Women’s & Gender Studies.

‘Top Ten’ Military Friendly School
For the past ten years, Edgewood College has earned designation to be on the list of Military Friendly Schools, & for the first time in the College’s history, Edgewood College was named as ‘Top Ten’ in the country. Institutions earning this designation are evaluated by both public data sources & responses to a proprietary survey. More than 1000 schools participated with 695 earning the designation of ‘Military Friendly.’

Campus Climate Survey Results
The third iteration of the Campus Climate Survey was administered in Spring of 2019, and an Executive Summary was prepared for the President’s Cabinet in fall of 2019 and included over 30 suggested actions to improve the climate. The 30 actions were grouped into five themes:

1) Increase ALANA student recruitment, enrollment, and retention
2) Create an inclusive environment for our students to succeed
3) Create opportunities to gather, build community and talk across difference
4) Enhance our skills and competencies on topics of diversity
5) Center diversity, equity & inclusion as a central part of our culture
With our unwavering commitment to diversity and our core values of truth, justice, compassion, partnership & community, we continue to strive to strengthen partnerships with organizations that promote equity and social justice. Two important local partnerships are with the nonprofit organization, The Hmong Institute, and Cultural Practices that are Relevant, LLC.

**HMONG AMERICAN COMMUNITY CERTIFICATE**

This Certificate Program is a joint partnership between The Hmong Institute and Edgewood College and is designed to further enhance providers' knowledge and skills as they invest in providing culturally competent services to the Hmong American community. Upon completion of the program, participants are equipped with the fundamental knowledge of Hmong history, the refugee experience, belief system, family/ clan structure, rituals/customs, and the ever changing roles of youth, elders, men and women. CEUs and Graduate level credit are available for those that complete the program.

**BLACK HISTORY EDUCATION CONFERENCE**

The 2019 Black History Education Conference emphasized social and emotional learning, and universal literacy instruction. Breakout sessions focused on 9-cultural values that promoted self-love and identity development, discussed how to utilize culturally relevant pedagogical approaches, highlighted successful family engagement practices, shared culturally relevant leadership strategies, demonstrated the importance of utilizing the arts to increase the possibilities for our collective behavioral and academic outcomes, and drew upon on student’s personal experiences. Over 200 people participated in the conference and CEUs and Graduate level credit were available for those that attended the conference. The conference is hosted in partnership with Cultural Practices that are Relevant, LLC.
The 2019-2020 academic year was a time for the history books, and it is clear that even as we write this annual report, the world of higher education will never be the same. As our College sets a new vision to guide us through this pandemic (and beyond), one thing remains clear-- we are a Catholic College rooted in the Dominican tradition and our commitments to our mission, to social justice and to antiracism are unwaivering and define the ethos of our community. We are excited for what is it come and to contribute to the unfolding story of Edgewood College.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT

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