

K Community Gathers to Dismantle Racism

By Viola Brown, News Editor

Published on January 21, 2015

Seventy people on campus, which consisted of 30 students and 40 faculty and staff, underwent ERAC/CE (Eliminating Racism and Claiming/Celebrating Equality) training, this past weekend. The event was sponsored through the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership (ACSJL) and each individual student was sponsored by their student organization in order to attend.

The two and a half day workshop was titled, “Understanding and Analyzing Systemic Racism”. The training was facilitated by Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training, whose mission is dismantling racism and building racial justice in institutions.

The staff and faculty training took place in the ACSJL and the student workshops were held in the Stone Dining Room. The leaders for the student workshop were PaKou Her, Founder and Principal Organizer/Trainer for the Tseng Development Group, Joy Bailey, Director of Organizing and Training for Crossroads and Lillie Wolff ‘04, Co-Executive Director of ERAC/CE and Core Organizer /Trainer for Crossroads.

Before starting off with the first training activity, Her read the South African proverb, “Until lions have historians, hunters will always be the heroes.”

Many of the workshops dealt with defining racism and power and the historical and societal implications of white supremacy and how it affects internalized racist oppression and superiority. It also dealt with ways to organize effectively in dismantling racism.

Wolff, who described her “complicated” relationship with Kalamazoo College, claims she is now a “critical lover” of the institution, which is needed in making effective change.

Students as well as faculty and staff and faculty share the idea that Kalamazoo College is a “passively multicultural institution” which recognizes that their needs to be change, but the institution is historically white. During Introductions, people made noticed of 2 white males attending, and wishing that more people attend.

“The people that know about these issues are already here, it’s the people that don’t know that need to be here,” was the sentiment given by many.

There are many ways for students on campus to get involved in issues on antiracism and multiculturalism. The Multiculturalism and Diversity Committee meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m. in the Leadership Lounge in Hicks, for more information contact Committee Chairs Samantha Weaver ‘17 and Jose Lopez ‘17. Also, every second Monday of each month, ERAC/CE holds racial caucuses at 6:30 p.m. on 525 East

Kalamazoo Ave.