The Race and Ethnic Relations Committee

Mission

The Race and Ethnic Relations (RER) Committee is committed to increasing awareness of issues related to race, ethnicity, and nationality within the IU Department of Sociology and the University at large. It is also committed to fostering positive professional and social interactions among graduate students, staff, and faculty of diverse racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds within the Department, maintaining an academic environment of collegiality, respect, and appreciation for racial, ethnic, and national diversity. The RER Committee will collaborate with the Graduate Student Association (GSA) and others in the Department of Sociology to effectively achieve its goals of increasing awareness and fostering a diverse and collegial environment through events, collaborative projects with groups inside and outside the Department, and other ongoing efforts.

Goals

The RER Committee seeks to execute its mission through the following short-term and long-term goals:

1. Collaborate with the GSA on social events that foster social and academic environments in which students, staff, and faculty feel comfortable to discuss issues of race, ethnicity, and nationality.

2. Collaborate with the Department of Sociology (e.g., Politics, Economy, and Culture Workshop; Social Psychology, Health, and the Life Course Workshop; Gender, Race, and Class Workshop; Public Sociology Forum) on bringing speakers and coordinating events that will bring awareness to issues of race, ethnicity, and nationality.

3. Provide teaching and research resources to actively engage race, ethnicity, and nationality in the classroom (e.g., readings, discussions, projects, in-class activities) and to interact with students from diverse backgrounds. These resources can include ways of bringing up issues of race in the classroom or to diffuse tensions that may arise as a result of such issues. RER may make use of the Department’s webpage or RER’s OnCourse site to make some of these resources available.

4. Serve as a space to bring up issues of race, ethnicity, and nationality within the department, at the university level, and outside the university. These issues include, but are not limited to:
   a. Recruitment, hiring, and tenure of qualified faculty from diverse racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds, as well as those faculty members who specialize in research and teaching of race, ethnicity, and nationality.
   b. Recruiting qualified graduate students from diverse racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds.
   c. Inclusion of race, ethnicity, and nationality in sociology courses, particularly those that are required (e.g., Social Theory).
   d. Making suggestions to co-curricular workshops/seminars (such as the Indiana Intensive Didactic Seminars (IIDS) or the Bureau of Social Science Research’s Workshop in Methods (WIM)) for ways to engage theoretical and methodological debates in race scholarship, or methods for studying race, ethnicity, and nationality.
   e. Getting faculty and staff involved in the mission of RER.

5. Discuss with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) ways to make RER more available to first-year graduate students. This could include organizing a panel of faculty and/or RER members who can speak to issues of race, ethnicity, and nationality in the department or academia more generally.

6. RER Facilitator(s) may serve as liaison between the RER committee and other leadership in the department, including the Chair, DGS, faculty in charge of the PFF program, etc. Additionally, facilitator(s) may bring concerns addressed in RER meeting to graduate students at large via GSA meetings or discussions with the GSA president. N.B.: This is not to say that RER members are not entitled to bring concerns to members of the department on their own, only that the facilitator(s) of RER acknowledge a responsibility to make the concerns of the committee members known to the appropriate people.

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