Interpersonal Scenarios

Scenario #1: Your institution is celebrating the twenty-fifth year of successfully educating children from diverse communities and prides itself on being progressive and inclusive. In celebration of the great achievement, an endowment has been granted to the school for the construction of new tennis courts. During this process, the construction crew discovers Indigenous artifacts including textiles and pottery, subsequently causing a brief excavation. During this process, several items become the personal possession of a colleague and very little mention of the overall event is discussed or recorded. Ten years later a new batch of people of color is hired including two Indigenous Folks/Native Americans. Working at their new institution they notice that very little mention of Indigeneity exists throughout the campus, curriculum, or in community gatherings. Not to mention that the excavation site is merely tapped off and after heavy rain fragments of artifacts wash up to the service. The new teachers bring this issue up to the school as a whole during a faculty gathering, acknowledging the occupied land and insisting that the school adopt the practice at all community gatherings to better acknowledge the institutional history while simultaneously honoring all segments of the community. The colleagues all say that they understand and nod their heads in agreement but the administration seems pensive and somewhat dismissive of the request.

Graduation is less than two weeks away and in the commencement program and organizing committee, there is no mention of recognizing the occupied ancestral land.

➢ What do you SEE as instances of white normative thought?

➢ What do you THINK would be the most optimal outcome for both your colleague and yourself given your positionality within the institution (faculty or administration)?

➢ What do you WONDER about this situation in relation to your own institutional history, are there similarities in terms of memorialization or recognition of truth?

➢ How you can either ACT as an ally, accomplice, or bystander in this situation?
Interpersonal Scenarios

**Scenario #2:** Your institution has hired a new Arab American history teacher. She is tasked with specifically restructuring the course curriculum to be more inclusive and representative of world history, where the dominant western narrative is decentered. During a class about European colonialism in the Middle East, several students start to justify and celebrate the legacy of such an abhorrent practice and make claims of its brilliant design. Further, claiming that the indigenous Arabs did not have the technology to exploit their own resources nor adequate military power to protect their borders and thus deserved to be colonized. The room is tense and several Arab students and children of color are physically disturbed. Seeing this as a teachable moment you try and illustrate that the logic behind this claim is dangerous and historically inaccurate. The following day the advisor of the antagonistic students comes to speak to you about his concerns regarding his advisees not having a safe space to articulate their thoughts/frustrations freely and feeling that as young white men their voices are being silenced. The female history teacher assures her colleague that the classroom environment has been toxic and contentious due to the incentive and unfounded remarks from his advisees. She assures him that they are not being silenced, just that they required to show respect for fellow classmates and substantiate any claims made with empirical evidence or ancestral knowledge. The contentious behavior continues and every week the advisor returns to tell the woman how his first-year experience was far more stressful and the kids are just testing her, briefly mentioning that he doubts it's about race. He explains what worked for him and suggests that she should let her guard down and not be so sensitive when interacting with the students. Finally, the woman informs her colleague that his visits and patriarchal remarks have been extremely patronizing and are not appreciated—subsequently creating a visible rift in their relationship.

➢ What do you SEE as instances of white normative thought?

➢ What do you THINK the advisor's intentions were in trying to justify the problematic language used in class?

➢ What do you WONDER about this situation in relation to your own institution and problematic language or actions?

➢ How you can either ACT as an ally, accomplice, or bystander in this situation?