

DIVERSITY WORK REPORT- BACK

Working on campus and off toward a civilization worthy of the name

THE PUTNEY COMMUNITY participates in conversations, workshops, trainings, and conferences, as we strive to be truly inclusive community. We also reflect on teaching practices and work intentionally to make meaningful change.

Three examples of recent work are curricular (history department story, p. 12), on-campus, all-school meetings and workshops (MLK Day, next page), and professional development, which offers a combination of community and the ability to enact meaningful change in the classroom and on campus. Our engagement is varied and frequent, and we want to share some of it with you in this issue.

Recent examples of changes made at Putney following professional development engagement include the following:

AISNE TRAINING ON HIRING PROCESSES AND PRACTICES

Taking everyone on the school's hiring committees through anti-bias training so that we normalize calling one another out on our own bias during the hiring process.

PEN CONFERENCE 2019, WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER DR. BETTINA LOVE

Her book *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom* (faculty/staff summer reading that year) changed the way we were/are thinking about how best to support BIPOC students and faculty here. Specifically, the re-evaluation of the concept of "grit."

LIBRARY JOURNAL'S HOW TO BUILD AN ANTI-RACIST LIBRARY CULTURE

"Own voices" catalog review, including stories by and about BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other historically marginalized groups." See story p. 14.

FACULTY-LED ON-CAMPUS WORK: (1) The meeting of anti-racist groups during 2020–21 had adults reflecting on and examining grading expectations and communications, particularly effort grades as culturally mysterious to some of our students, particularly students of color. From one of that group's founders: "I talked with white people from other schools about organizing and running a white anti-racist group, which we began in January of 2020. The visuals I made for the Putney group pulled a lot from trainings and conversations with people at various workshops." (2) "We have worked to make vendors more diverse. When I need to purchase something, I prioritize local and BIPOC owned businesses. This was a big part of the school to begin working with a local bookshop, for book orders rather than a large clearing house. It was a few years of pushing for this and now it's a thing."

FACULTY REFLECTION ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

"I was chatting with a woman I had met at a conference and she was asking me about our American Studies curriculum. I offered a nutshell version, and she simply said, 'If you are teaching

oppression but not brilliance, resistance, and joy, your curriculum is racist.' It was exactly what I needed to know. That conversation has guided me in every curricular decision I've made (in all my courses, not just American Studies) since then."

NAIS PEOPLE OF COLOR CONFERENCE

Putney students, faculty, and staff, both BIPOC and allies, attend annually. Since going online, more attendance has been possible. See conference description below to get a sense of its reach.

FROM A BIPOC FACULTY MEMBER:

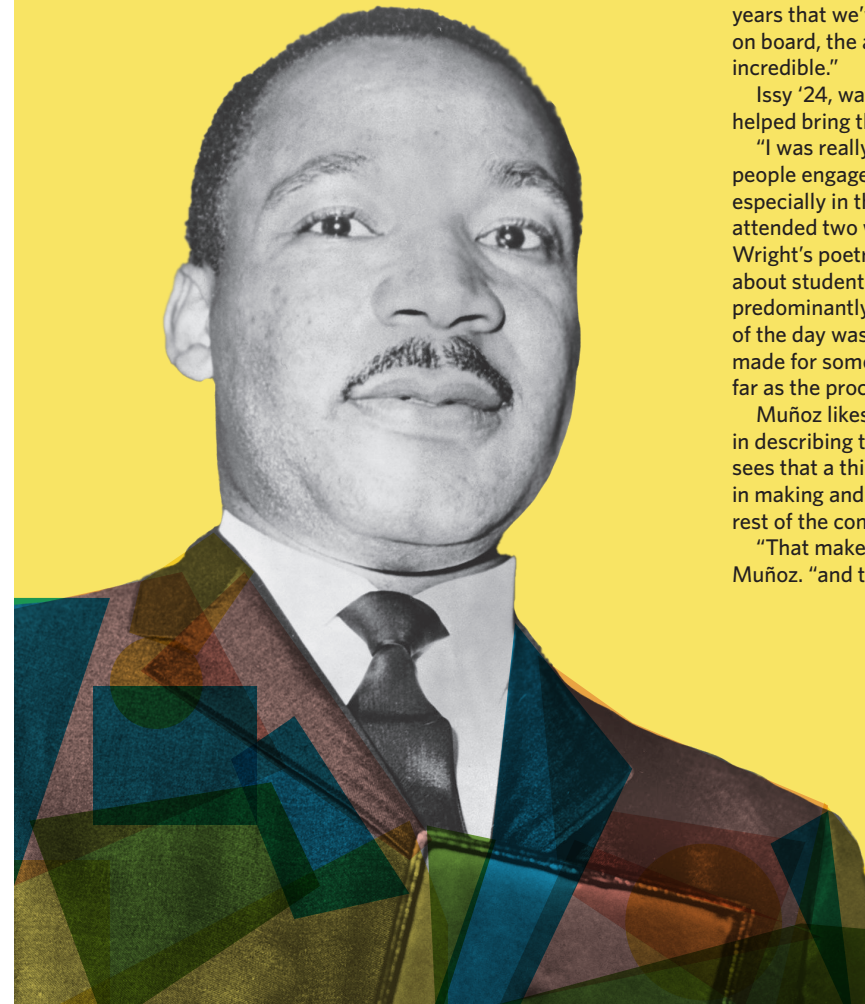
"Attending the PoCC is validating and re-energizing, especially when you're working in a largely white space. For BIPOC faculty, it's a chance to be in a community with other BIPOC educators and to have a shared experience among Putney's BIPOC faculty. That alone makes it worth it. The workshops are icing on the cake."

FROM A WHITE FACULTY MEMBER:

"Hearing directly about POC's experiences with racism, I learn a lot from listening, and I can identify things I've said or done without recognizing that they were racist. Having those statements reflected back to me gives me the opportunity to ask, 'Have I ever done that?'" As a national conference, it's a deep place of learning with other white people."

PoCC is designed, developed, and executed through the lens and prism of experiences of People of Color. PoCC convenes as a sanctuary to offer BIPOC immunity from the marginalization and stress that can flow from the daily burdens of occupying a minority status in schools and society. Through workshops, institutes, keynotes, wellness activities, and other programming, the conference equips and fortifies educators of color with knowledge, skills, practices, and mindsets to lead in their chosen disciplines and roles. All educators and thought leaders who attend the conference benefit from a context that centers People of Color, their research, expertise, and diverse lived experience to interrogate educational practice and advance racial equity and social justice in independent schools and the communities that support them.

“Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope.”



MLK DAY

It's become something of a tradition, in recent years, for the Putney community to observe and honor Martin Luther King Jr. Day with a day full of learning and workshops for the community, by the community.

Lisa Muñoz, director of diversity and inclusion, worked with the students on the diversity committee to help shape the day, which this year focused on ideas of belonging, community, and learning.

"In my experience the Putney community comes through," said Muñoz. "In the two years that we've done this since I've come on board, the array of workshops is pretty incredible."

Issy '24, was one of the students who helped bring the event to life.

"I was really excited to see how many people engaged with what we had planned, especially in the all-school assembly. I attended two workshops in the day—Rashad Wright's poetry workshop and testimony about students' experience working on a predominantly white campus. The experience of the day was different for everyone, which made for some really interesting feedback as far as the process will go in the future."

Muñoz likes to use the word "co-creating" in describing this event. She steps back and sees that a third of the community is involved in making and leading the workshops, and the rest of the community is learning from them.

"That makes everyone more invested," said Muñoz. "and the whole day more powerful."

MLK Day Workshops: Full List

Racial Bias in Access to Home Ownership

Food Justice

Reading Living Poets

Deconstructing White Identity

Trapped: Cash Bail in the United States

"The Mountaintop" — Imaging Martin Luther King Jr. in Drama

Tell Me Your Story — Tell Me Who You Are

A Testimony Around Working at a Predominantly White Institution

Voter Suppression: Race Discrimination in Voting

Climate Justice = Racial Justice

Embodied Anti-Racism Workshop

Global Patterns of Systemic Inequality

Social Justice and Mindfulness Through Clay

Whose Land is This Land?: Investigating Equity in Public Land Use and Access

How Inequality Shows up in Everyday Life

Addressing Discrimination, Bias, and Inequality in the Mental Health Field; Toward a More Equitable System of Care

This Land is Whose Land? Origin Stories and Vermont Land Reparations

Stuff That White People Do

The American Dream: Boardgames

Overtuning Roe

I've Been Tokenized.

Putney Tradition Freedom Dreaming

The Great Migration

Understanding Gerrymandering

How are Contemporary Artists Altering the Narrative?

Is Music Theory Racist?

Unpacking White Privilege