

Recap from Critical Dialogue Symposium on 1/27/18:

(Participant Quote)

*"I learned that many others share similar exclusion experiences
...and that I have a lot to take in too."*

The inaugural "**Critical Dialogue Symposium**" took place in Alumni Hall on *January 27, 2018*. This event aimed to help participants garner an understanding of the various issues that have an impact on the Gustavus community, as well as the effect these issues have on the various identities connected to the College. Topics include, but are not limited to, diversity, equity, inclusion, race, and religion. This particular symposium focused on the theme of **Campus Inclusion**. Approximately 40 individuals participated in the 2-hour event, including President Bergman, various other campus VPs and administrators, faculty, staff, and students representing a wide cross section of the Gustavus community. The goal of the event was to provide a venue for personal journeys to be shared and voices to be heard, as well as create an opportunity for each participant to reflect upon their own role and responsibility in driving **positive social change**, while intentionally striving towards an increasingly welcome and inclusive campus.

The symposium agenda included:

- Registration and Social Time
- Welcome and Opening Remarks
- A Video on "[*Inclusive Excellence*](#)" featuring Damon A. Williams, a widely respected dynamic and innovative leader in strategic diversity and inclusion management, and organizational change
- "Key Notes" address by current Gustie and non-traditional student – Antione "AJ" Hatchett
- "Key Notes" address by 2017 Gustie Alum and current Admissions Counselor – Herchran Singh
- Facilitator led small group table discussions which included the following prompts:
 - a. *One example of a time I felt like I was not included at Gustavus is...*
 - b. *One example of a time when I definitely felt included at Gustavus is...I felt included because...*
 - c. *One of the things I heard today that surprised me, or that I found interesting/important is...*
 - d. *After listening to what was shared today, one thing that I would like to try or change in orders support inclusion on campus is...*
- Table/Group Debriefs
- Closing Remarks & Program Wrap-up



Event Reflection and Harvesting:

Prior to the event concluding, participants had an opportunity to respond to three event reflection pieces. **1) Briefly describe what you learned today. 2) Today's focus was on campus inclusion at Gustavus. What theme or topic would you find beneficial for future Critical Dialogues? 3) What other types of potential/future events would you like to take part in?** Below are some of the quotes shared during the event reflection.

- *I learned that staff and faculty can feel excluded and that they wish to connect with students on discussions like these, beyond the classroom.*
- *There are people here who need, and are willing to work for, an inclusive campus.*
- *I would like critical dialogue opportunities to become regular events on campus, much like small group activities take place with churches.*
- *(Future Topic) How microaggressions are created among groups*
- *Many of us are experiencing similar things, which tells me we have work to do at Gustavus Adolphus College.*
- *The topic I found interesting in this event is mindfulness to others and also knowing about yourself... being in the shoes of others.*
- *(Future Topics) Science communication, Gender, Consent*
- *Training in respectful language of disagreement. We need more training in the language of difficult conversations.*
- *I think this format is good. I think if we followed up and everyone here brought two more people it would be helpful.*



These input and reflections pieces are instrumental as the next steps conversations occur, not only in regards to future Critical Dialogue opportunities, but for other campus inclusion events and/or courageous conversations as well. This was just the starting point for this endeavor. We look forward to continuing and adding more of these types of opportunities as we move forward.

If you have any questions about the **Critical Dialogue Symposium**, or would like to participate in planning for future symposiums, please send an email to Tom Flunker for more information. Stayed tuned, we hope to set a date for the next symposium soon!