

The Student Affairs Diversity Council (SADC) strives to cultivate an environment that embraces and promotes the broad scope of diversity within the division.

What I've Learned From Being Black and Blue

By Jennifer C. Jones,
Bennion Center

In the pre-dawn darkness of a November morning, I face-planted on the sidewalk while walking my dog. I smashed my face, my eye glasses and my knees. As I rolled from the walkway onto the grass I took a slow inventory of which parts of my body still worked. If my accident had been illustrated cartoon-style, I'm sure you would have seen those little birds circling my head. Thankfully, nothing was broken. My bloodied mouth and face were scraped and sore and about to become the catalyst for a better understanding of diversity.

What began as a knock on the noggin started a transformational process that altered the landscape of my face. The swelling ballooned the entire left side of my face, sealing my eye shut and turning the skin into a huge, hard mound of grotesque green, black and purple. Within a day of my accident purple crescents formed over and under my right eye as well.

I took two days off to rest and recover and realized the bruising was not going away anytime soon. At some point, I would have to face the world. Here's what I learned when I did:

Different from what you're surrounded by can make you hypersensitive. Example: Did that woman on the train smile at me because she's a nice person or because she feels sorry for me? Is he looking at me thinking I'm a victim of domestic abuse? Did that teen look away because I look so awful or because something else caught his eye? Did the food service worker give me extra chicken in my salad because she felt sorry for me or is that the usual amount? Do people



who identify as something else go through this same kind of social cross-examination every day when they are surrounded by folks who are different from themselves – whether that be race, religion, gender, sexuality, age or anything else? I hope not. It's making me crazy and sometimes cranky.

Handling comfort-givers can be problematic. It's pretty understandable that people who see me may feel some sense of sorrow or pity. My co-workers at the Bennion Center, who I also consider my friends, were wonderful. They knew the details of the accident and had seen a photo I shared with them prior to my arrival back at work. Once I entered the office they were supportive and respectful. I appreciated the fact they did not act like nothing had happened. (That would have been awkward.) And they were honest in their

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inquiries about what accommodations I might need. Similarly thoughtful on the opposite end of the age scale, the four-year-olds in the Sunday school class I teach helpfully volunteered, “You should take a flashlight when you walk in the dark!” One preschooler, carefully cupping her hands around my cheeks cooed, “You should just do this for Halloween.” How can anyone be offended by that? But I had prepped these little ones by sending their parents a text and photo and asking them to initiate a conversation before Sunday. My grandson’s basketball game was less successful. A startled child nearly burst into tears when she saw my scary face.

On the bus and the train and at the grocery store I felt I needed to give people space to stare so they could do so without them feeling awkward. My thinking was once they had finished staring we could both relax. But these people were strangers to me. Did I really need to hide in my book or a jar label? Why didn’t I just smile back? I was different. And when a teenaged bagger politely said, “If you don’t mind, may I ask what happened?” I was glad I didn’t respond with, “None of your damn business, kid!” My quip, “MMA cage fighting,” made both of us laugh. As the days rolled by I found I could either start them with dread and end with disgust at the way people treated me (or didn’t treat me) or I could try and keep some sort of sense of humor and just roll with it. Either way, it was emotionally exhausting. Is that how it feels to be asked about wearing a hijab? About being gay or Latino or anyone other than the majority? Because you are different, does that automatically make you the poster

child or spokesperson for a particular group? Will people wanting to know what it’s like to be a really clumsy dog-walker seek me out? Does that piece of my identity become the only way I am seen?

The diversity lectures (and several nights sleeping in a recliner to reduce swelling) have given me lots of things to think about. When I began my engagement in diversity awareness I considered myself an outlier on our campus. As someone who self-identifies as white, female, straight, old (I’m 60) and Mormon, I often felt “different” from most people on our campus – especially since I am just beginning a career in student affairs. While I never intended to use language that was not inclusive, I was thoughtless and sometimes clueless as to why a term or phrase might be offensive. I fell into the camp of, “Is it really necessary to say Winter break instead of Christmas? Folks, instead of ‘you guys’?” and probably dozens of other similar sayings. I sometimes wondered if this wasn’t taking political correctness to new and unnecessary heights. Now I find myself asking, “How would I feel if...?”

In a few weeks my face will return to “normal” (I’m using that term loosely.) I hope my heart does not. I hope I will routinely ask myself, “Am I an ally to anyone who feels different for any reason? Do I thoughtfully and consciously create a safe space for students and colleagues to just ‘be’?” My experience has left me with more questions than answers. But maybe that’s the best way to continue the conversation and a further exploration of diversity as it relates to me. This time I’m taking a flashlight.

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Politically Speaking: Talking To Each Other With Civility

Learning to live together after our nasty election: if a house divided against itself cannot stand, then America right now feels pretty shaky. Joshua Johnson asks how we get past the name-calling, and treat each other like human beings.

[Listen to this episode of 1A on NPR](#)

Thirteen Immediate Responses — Update

THIRTEEN IMMEDIATE RESPONSES – Update November 14, 2016

Nearly one year ago, on Nov. 20, 2015, we held an Open Dialogue on Racial Climate at the University of Utah in the ballroom at the Student Union. We came away from that meeting humbled and moved by the personal stories and requests for action. Six days later we committed to accelerating the pace of change with [13 initiatives](#) designed to improve the racial climate at the University of Utah.

[Read the Update on the Student Affairs Diversity Council website](#)

TED TALKS



[Sisonke Msimang:](#) [If a story moves you, act on it](#)

Stories are necessary, but they're not as magical as they seem, says writer Sisonke Msimang. In this funny and thoughtful talk, Msimang questions our emphasis on storytelling and spotlights the decline of facts. During a critical time when listening has been confused for action, Msimang asks us to switch off our phones, step away from our screens and step out into the real world to create a plan for justice.

[Explore more TED Talks on www.ted.com.](http://www.ted.com)



[Suzanne Barakat: Islamophobia killed my brother. Let's end the hate.](#)

On February 10, 2015, Suzanne Barakat's brother Deah, her sister-in-law Yusor and Yusor's sister Razan were murdered by their neighbor in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The perpetrator's story, that he killed them over a traffic dispute, went unquestioned by the media and police until Barakat spoke out at a press conference, calling the murders what they really were: hate crimes. As she reflects on how she and her family reclaimed control of their narrative, Barakat calls on us to speak up when we witness hateful bigotry and express our allyship with those who face discrimination.

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Lead, Landfills, and Low-Income Neighborhoods

The [water crisis in Flint, Michigan](#) is ongoing, and there have been even more devastating discoveries of contaminants like lead in water systems across the country. Many of the affected communities are poor and people of color. Why are these neighborhoods so often victimized when it comes to environmental health issues?

[Listen to this episode of 1A on NPR](#)



Self-Care: 7 Self-Love Resolutions To Ring In the New Year from Wear Your Voice Intersectional Feminist Media

Upcoming University and Community Events

February 1 @ 5:30-6:30PM

Curie Club: Inspiring Women, Supporting Science
Thatcher Building Room 4429 [[more info](#)]

February 14 @ 3-4:30PM

Ana Maria Lopez: Specific Medicine
Law School Room 6623 [[more info](#)]

February 14 @ 12-1PM

"#BlackLivesMatter and the Politics of Racial Mis/
Recognition" by Rachel Griffen
CTIHB Room 143 [[more info](#)]

February 15 @ Time

Conference on Diverse Excellence (C.O.D.E.)
Union [[more info and Registration](#)]

CLAUDIA GEIST

TUESDAY FEB 21
3:00 PM TO 4:30 PM
LAW SCHOOL RM 6623
"MEASURING GENDER INEQUALITY"

February 21 @ 3-4PM

Claudia Geist: Measuring Gender Inequality
Law School Room 6623 [[more info](#)]

February 22 @ 12-1PM

Patient Voice—African Americans
[[more info and RSVP](#)]

Upcoming Seminar



Multiracial Student Experiences
Jacqueline Chen, Assistant
Professor, Dept. of Psychology

Wednesday, February 15, 2017
12:00-1:30pm, Union Pano East
[[more information](#)]

MED SCHOOL PANEL

TUESDAY FEB 28

February 28 @ 3-4:30PM

Med School Panel: Additional Issues In Gender
Specific Medicine Law School Room 6623 [[more info](#)]



Debra Daniels (Co-chair), Women's Resource Center
Kari Ellingson (Co-chair), Student Development
Michael Bard, Registrar's Office
Gabriella Blanchard, LGBT Resource Center
Ella Butler, Career Services
Branden Dalley, Union Administration
Tim Davis, Housing & Residential Education
Kyle Ethelbah, TRIO Programs
Cairisti Flatley, Campus Recreation Services
Jonathan Holloway, Student Health Center
Darrah Jones, Center for Student Wellness

Jacquelyn Ledford, Student Leadership & Involvement
Fatima Liaqat, Office of Admissions
Carol MacNicholl, Center for Disability Services
Chuck Masoka, Assessment, Evaluation, & Research
Paul Morgan, Veteran Support Center
Belinda Otukolo Saltiban, Office of Inclusion Excellence
Matthew Plooster, Scholarships & Financial Aid
Catherine Riney, University Counseling Center
Noman Satuala, Center for New Student & Family Programs
Tricia West, Student Development
Bryce Williams, Bennion Center