

The Diversity Think Tank

My Message to White Women & White Feminists at URI

from Professor Louis Kwame Fosu, Executive Director (October 2020)

With respect and sincerity, we deliberately ask White women and White feminists, who are also rising from a long history of second-class citizenship, to honor and acknowledge the objective fact that rapid gains in the status of women's education, personal wealth and leadership across all sectors, have been possible by White privilege, familial proximity, kinship and inheritance.

With a keen understanding of the positive impact that women's voices have made in politics, business, social justice, innovation, academic leadership and faculty fora, and the classroom—this is a clarion call to White women and White feminists to join us in countering systemic racism and persistent discrimination against African-Americans with a lineage to slavery at URI and other institutions of higher learning. A fair number of people will fight or flee to escape being a slave, and that is admirable. But far greater are those who will fight to end slavery.

White women and White feminists in academia: Presidents, Provosts, Deans, Directors and Department Chairs at universities and other institutions—should not turn a blind eye to the unequal and systemic racist treatment of African-Americans with a lineage to slavery. As of 2019, Whites are overrepresented at 79.6% at the University of Rhode Island [\[click for data\]](#). In light of these egregious statistics, the Diversity Think Tank asks that we collectively respect and honor the unrivaled brilliance and courage of African-Americans in academia, law and jurisprudence, business, arts, medicine, sports and as authentic change agents for a more equitable society. With unapologetic eloquence, the best writer in the world, **Toni Morrison** explains our depth and meaning without the approval of the white gaze and addresses unconscious racism among White intelligentsia: <https://youtu.be/-Kgq3F8wbYA>

For generations, **African-American blood** has been repeatedly spilled on the streets of America. It was a century long sorrowful road of unbearable bereavement, traveled tirelessly to arrive at the **Civil Rights Act of 1964**, which was a deliberate attempt to break the fortified structures of racism. But, the Civil Rights Act welfares primarily White women as evidenced by White overrepresentation at academic institutions nationwide through beneficial affirmative-action programs. Columbia University law professor **Kimberlé Crenshaw** states that: "*The primary beneficiaries of affirmative action have been Euro-American women*": <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/crenshaw.pdf>. (2006 University of Michigan Law Review).

For demanding equality for enslaved African-Americans, **Abraham Lincoln** was **shot in his brain** in **1865** after he approved the **13th Amendment abolishing slavery** to end de jure **institutional racism**. **Medgar Evers**, **Addie Mae Collins**, **Denise McNair**, **Carole Robertson**, **Cynthia Wesley**, **John F. Kennedy**, **James Chaney**, **Andrew Goodman**, **Michael Schwerner**, **Malcolm X our Prince**, **Martin Luther King our Enlightened King of Love**, **Samuel Ephesians Hammond Jr.**, **Delano Herman Middleton**, **Henry Ezekial Smith**, **Robert F. Kennedy**; and **Fred Hampton**, who at only 21—the age of our students—was riddled with bullets in his sleep as he lay peacefully next to his pregnant love. Hampton was silenced and his bright light extinguished at the command of J. Edgar Hoover. They were not all murdered for us to condone and repeat these same unforgivable mortal sins of the past that perpetuate intentional racism and normalized racist inequities through the social, political and economic machinations of **white supremacy**.

We Won't Go Back. This is Our Home. Equality is Our Right Protected by the United States Constitution. Equality is Our Right Protected by the United States Congress. Equality is Our Natural and Inalienable Right Endowed by Our Creator. Amen