

Social Justice Training Institute

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The Social Justice Training Institute (SJTI) was held December 4 – 8, 2007 and provided a forum for the professional and personal development of social justice educators and practitioners to enhance and refine their skills and competencies to create greater inclusion for all members of the campus community. The institute focused on race and racial dynamics. Cross cultural dialogue as well as work within cultural groups was a major component of the experience. It was a unique opportunity to work very intentionally on a topic that impacts our daily lives on both personal and professional levels.

The institute was an experiential program that encouraged sharing of personal experiences, challenged participants to understand the impacts of their actions and take responsibility, as well as provided opportunities through group and one on one interactions to cultivate connections with Student Affairs professionals from across the country. By fully engaging as a participant I was able to critically assess my actions as an individual and professional, challenge my biases and beliefs, and develop new strategies around cross cultural communication. SJTI was a very personal experience that has helped me to view myself and the world through a different perspective. There were many lessons learned and/or reaffirmed: the importance of authenticity in communication, understanding how oppression costs each of us regardless of status both personally and professionally, that individual diversity directly affects how people engage in the campus community, and so much more.

As the Associate Director of Residential Life it is my responsibility to work with my staff to create inclusive communities throughout our residence halls. I will incorporate what I have learned into staff training, diversity education, and the overall residential life program. I have gained and refined many skills which I utilize each day in supervision, training and facilitation, and policy development. I now receive information from the SJTI alumni network across the nation about various diversity issues which helps keep me abreast of current events and I share this information, articles, and more with colleagues and students at SJSU.

Those interested in attending the institute should log onto <http://www.sjti.org/> to get more information. The institutes are held twice a year in June and December. I would be happy to talk with anyone who is considering attending the Social Justice Training Institute.