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Does the La Salle Curriculum Represent Our Student Population?

Rosemary Barbera PhD

Christian Camacho

Yosibeth Torres

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Does the La Salle Curriculum Represent Our Student Population?

DECOLONIZE

YOUR

SYLLABUS

Explorer Café 3 February, 2021

Yosibeth Torres, Christian Camacho, Rosi Barbera

Guidelines for Discussion

1. Important to provide a safe space for all
2. Center the voices of people whose voices are often not heard or received
3. No talking over people
4. Make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak
5. Respect for all
6. Suspend judgment
7. Listen intently to learn and not to react

Zoom Poll

- How many continents are there?

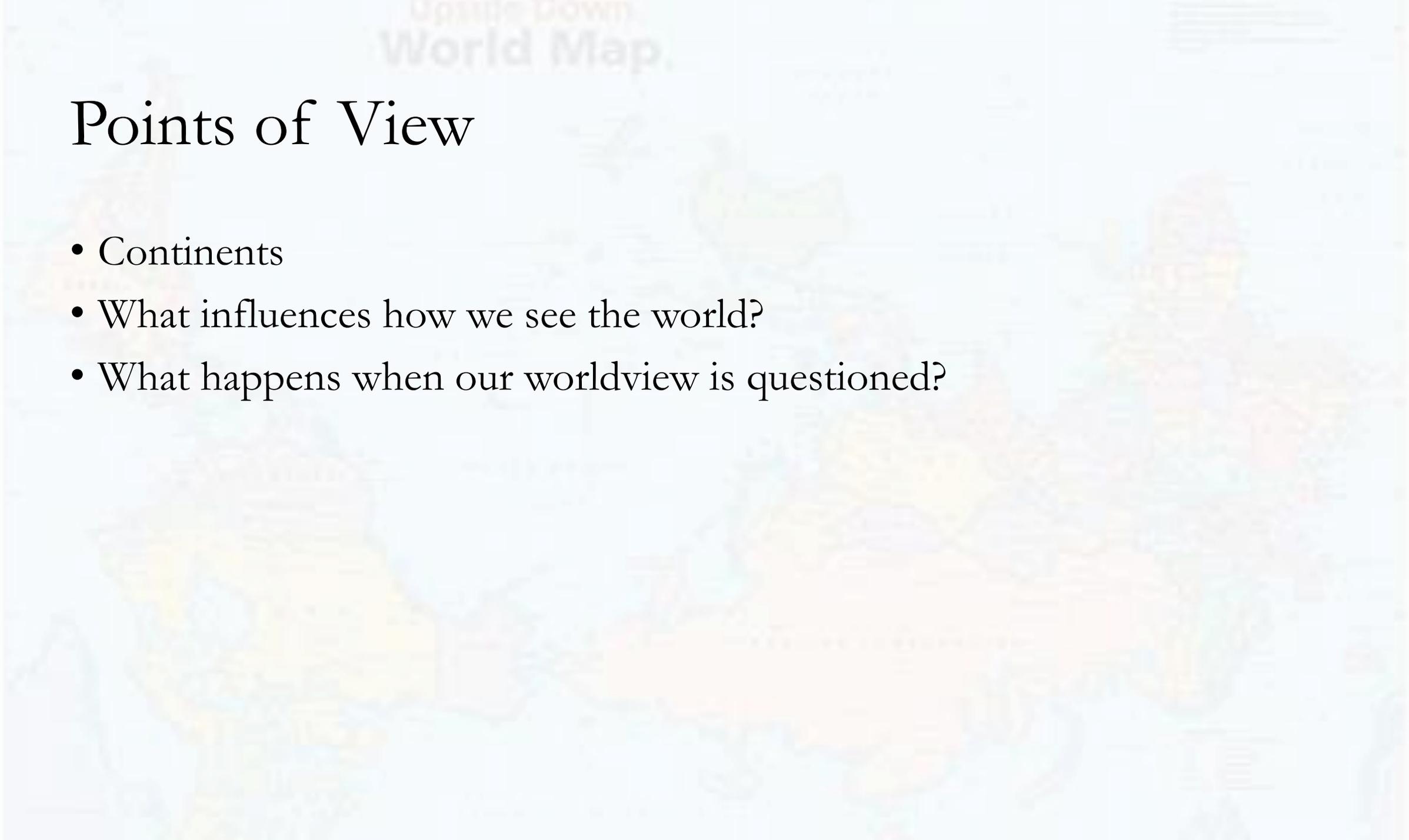


Points of View – Eduardo Galeano

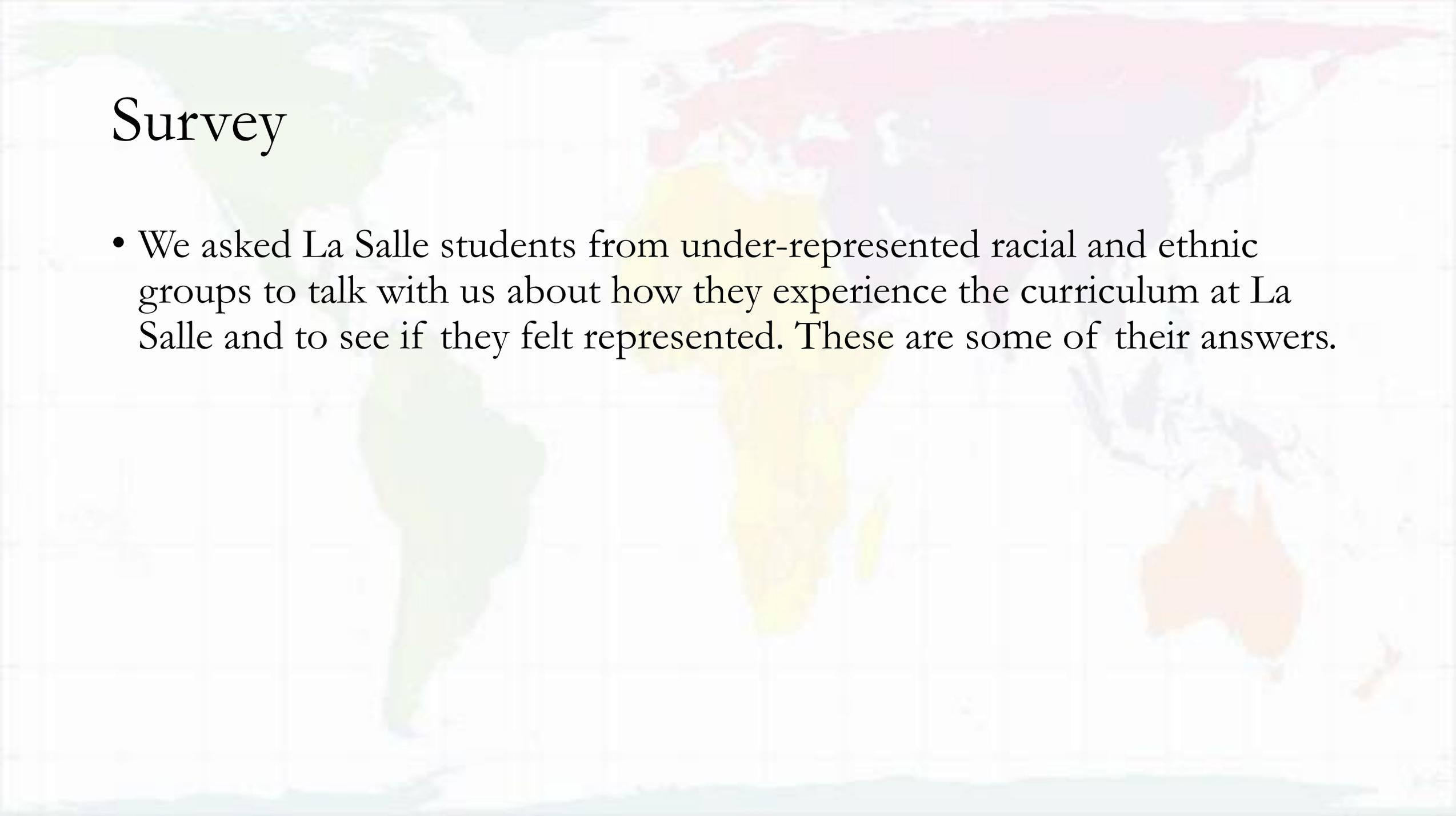
- From the point of view of the owl, the bat, and the bohemian, sunset is a time for breakfast.
- Rain is bad news for tourists and good news for farmers.
- From the point of view of the natives, it's the tourists who are picturesque.
- From the point of view of the Indians of the Caribbean islands, Christopher Columbus, with his plumed cap and red velvet cape, was the biggest parrot they had ever seen.
- From the point of view of the South, summer in the North is winter.
- From the point of view of a worm, a plate of spaghetti is an orgy.
- Where Hindus see a sacred cow, others see an enormous hamburger,
- From the point of view of his neighbors in the town of Cardona, Toto Zaugg, who wore the same clothes in summer and winter, was an admirable man. "Toto's never cold," they said. He said nothing. He was cold, but he had no coat.

Points of View

- Continents
- What influences how we see the world?
- What happens when our worldview is questioned?



Survey



- We asked La Salle students from under-represented racial and ethnic groups to talk with us about how they experience the curriculum at La Salle and to see if they felt represented. These are some of their answers.

Christian

- “As a student in STEM, I do not feel like my classes represent me nor my identity. There is a very small amount of POC staff and faculty, which makes I think makes it difficult for them to connect to students of different ethnic backgrounds or even difficult for them to relate the material to students of different ethnic backgrounds (especially when trying to use course material in real-life application). Even when inviting outside professionals to speak to students, nine times out of ten it is not a POC. In the case where it is a POC, we make it a super big deal about the speaker being a POC, which I think almost limits.”

Yosibeth

- “The STEM classes perpetuate racism in that they have that weed out mentality and tell students that they will not pass. This especially affects BIPOC because they students are already isolated in these classes which leads them to be unsuccessful. In art classes much of the art was created by white people of European descent. It always comes to the idea that whiteness is beauty when that is not always the case. In humanity classes much of the ideas and theories they have are based upon white people and how life affects white people.”

Christian

- “Not when the professor inhibits students to share other perspectives and points of view, especially when they are BIPOC and the teacher is Caucasian, perpetuating stereotypes that BIPOC students struggle with certain topics or materials.”

Yosibeth

- “No, most classes are based on the thought that all students had the same easy life.”
- “No, I do not think so because online school gives me other distractions like work, family, and more at the same time that classes are happening, Especially now I feel that as POC there is not much that respects who I am.”

Christian

- “My major is business so I’m more concerned about learning the adequate and up to date business material to sharpen my skills rather than think about what does or does not represent me.”

Yosibeth

- “Well my classes are mainly about accounting and I believe it’s universal so I don’t really know how to answer that question.”
- “Again, I haven’t experienced this.”

Christian

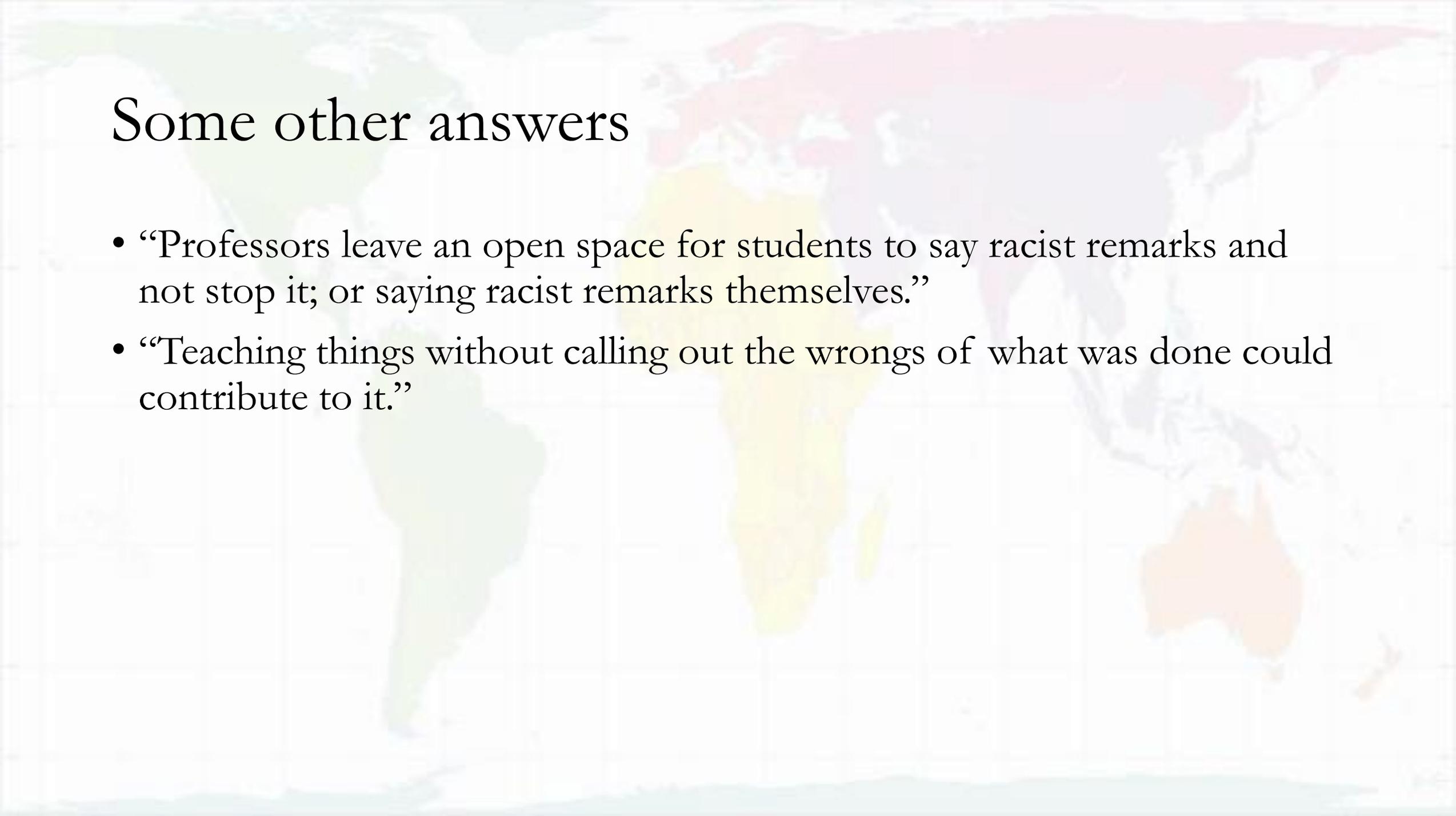
- “The departments that have leaders with distinct backgrounds tend to be more student-friendly than the ones that are not. They also understand how students may feel in those departments and therefore they provide the support needed for the students to succeed while in school.”

Yosibeth

- “For most of my classes yes, given that we usually tend to analyze data that includes rather socially and economically diverse populations. Also, I felt represented in my Modern Africa class given that we analyzed key sources that originated from direct African perspectives and we consistently discussed events occurring in Africa that I could personally relate to.”

Some other answers

- “Many classes are White-American centered.”
- “I’ve only felt like the content in my class is represented me 20% of my entire four years of college. This 20% came from my recent ethnicity course.”
- (Classes/Professors) “need to be culturally aware and taught by people from that culture.”
- “Racism is perpetuated by teaching classes that are Euro-centric and allow the dismissal of colonialism and all its racially motivated atrocities.”
- “Professors are anxious about speaking on race.”
- “Classes are mostly about American culture.”



Some other answers

- “Professors leave an open space for students to say racist remarks and not stop it; or saying racist remarks themselves.”
- “Teaching things without calling out the wrongs of what was done could contribute to it.”

Group Work

- What did you learn from the responses of some La Salle students?
- Whose voices, perspectives, or experiences **are heard** in your classes?
(This might be through texts, quotes, stories, examples, primary sources, video, social media, articles, etc.)
- Whose voices, perspectives, or experiences **are centered** in your classes?
- Whose voices, perspectives, or experiences **are marginalized** in your classes?
- What groups of people are shown making positive contributions to the world?

What can we do to change the curriculum?

- Report out on group discussions
- What are some suggestions you have about how we can change the curriculum to make it more representative?

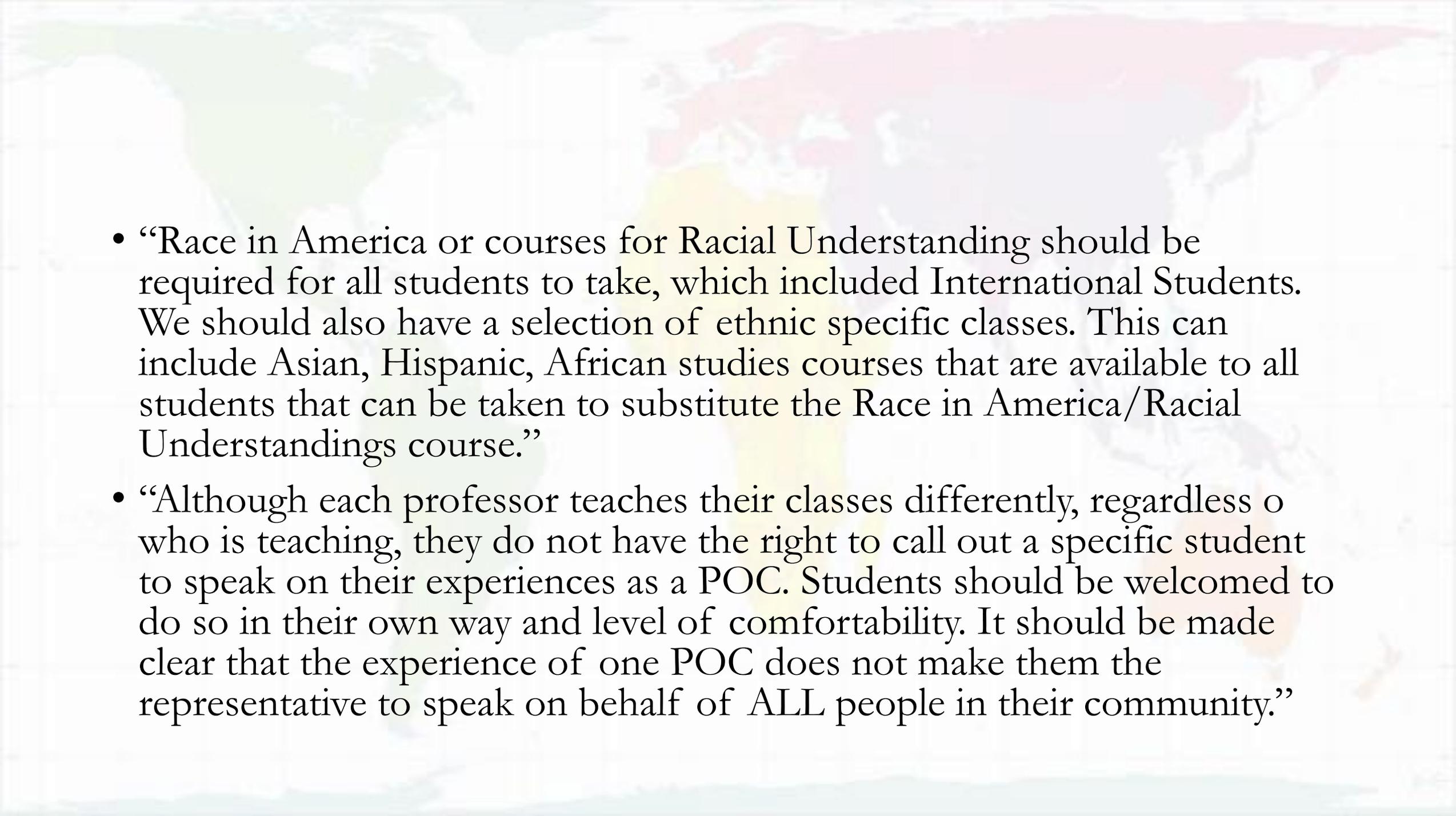


What some students think we might do

- “Less Eurocentric curriculum and focus”
- “Discussing topics directly related to racism, and other types of discrimination”
- “For triple courses in the Honors program, the focus seems to be to instruct students on the classics of Western literature, philosophy and history. Diversifying this curriculum and including perspectives from global scholars (ex: African, Hispanic etc) could provide freshmen Honors students with an even stronger academic foundation at La Salle”

What some students think we might do

- “Different professors of different races could teach different classes. In my experience is my white professors have always felt uncomfortable speaking on issues of race”
- “Teach ethics and social understanding; have better ways of dealing with racism in all departments”
- “Maybe some required courses on global civilization or different cultures, food attached to traditions etc. To “force” all students to be more exposed to diversity”
- “Professors need to learn how to facilitate conversations around race”

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- “Race in America or courses for Racial Understanding should be required for all students to take, which included International Students. We should also have a selection of ethnic specific classes. This can include Asian, Hispanic, African studies courses that are available to all students that can be taken to substitute the Race in America/Racial Understandings course.”
 - “Although each professor teaches their classes differently, regardless of who is teaching, they do not have the right to call out a specific student to speak on their experiences as a POC. Students should be welcomed to do so in their own way and level of comfortability. It should be made clear that the experience of one POC does not make them the representative to speak on behalf of ALL people in their community.”

Pledge for Action

What will you do?



Some Initiatives

- SGA
- Joint Commission
- ARWG of Faculty Senate