It's 2015, but are we really over it?

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Racism is still a problem. Yeah, I hate saying it too. Just hearing the word racism is like a fire alarm for every social justice warrior in the vicinity to start loading their opinion AK's. But it's not their opinion that's the problem with racism; it's our attitude that is.

A couple weeks ago, the Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) chapter in Oklahoma University was shut down due to a video of members chanting a racist hymn about not letting black people into their fraternity. What made it really racist was that they didn't say 'black people,' if know what I mean. Now, the school and national fraternity did handle the situation correctly and quickly, but the incident brings up an important point about post-modern racism. Looking at the reaction, it seems like we are finally putting racism behind us, but is that what's really happening? From a social lens, what were the students really guilty of, racism or public racism?

We live in a society where it's one thing to be racist, and another to show it. Over 50 years since the civil rights movement, our society has grown passive and tired of the race debate. Rather than form an individual culture of race neutrality that was intended, our society has tricked itself into thinking that dismissive behavior is the same thing. One can argue that the only reason why the reaction to SAE was so strong was because someone put that video of the bus on the Internet. Without the video, the people of Oklahoma and the students of the university would be completely oblivious. Would anyone choose to target fraternity racism if had not been publicized in such an isolated incident?

In truth it doesn't take a YouTube video to see racism, you just have to open your eyes. Every day black, Hispanic, and Asian people face micro-aggressions and small disadvantages that are wholly a result of race. These disadvantages are nothing close to what they used to be, but that doesn't make them any less real. No matter how much we try to deny, white people still benefit from a good amount of advantages based mostly on the fact that they're white. Even racism as an ideology is still around. Racist undertones exist in every race in America today. Black people are in most ways just as racist as white people, the only difference is which side of the fence they're on.

The truth is dismissiveness does not work. Simply ignoring racism does not make it go away, like how forgetting the milk in the refrigerator isn't going to make it magically drink itself. An ideology like racism is a result of social change combined with time to set into the subconscious of our society, so to deal with racism we have to do more than just pretend like it's not there. Yet so far that's all we've been doing, giving archaic racist cultures a chance to survive in setting like fraternities and more dangerously, our power elite.

What can we do to change? After identifying the problem with our post-modern attitude on racism, it is apparent that we can't keep on this track, but what else then? Is there any way to more efficiently snub race as an impacting factor in our society? The hard truth is no. Racism has historically made such a huge impact on our society that it's too late to pretend that it didn't happen. The truth is, we have to embrace race to stop racism.

Take IIT for example, we are arguably one of the places in Chicago, so how do we face the challenges of racism? The answer lies in race itself. Rather than shun the subject of race, we embrace it. Praising our diversity and seeing it as an advantage to progress is the way to go, rather than trying to accommodate it for progress. Why try to be color-blind, when we are all so many beautiful colors?

So here's the solution. If you're black, blast hip-hop in the streets and shout stories of black civil rights heroes. If you're white, tell tales of the amazing feats the Americans have accomplished and if you're Hispanic, share your delicious food and beautiful music with the world. It's time we stopped trying to hide our race and instead, praise modern diversity. It's time to make race a positive mark in our society, so years from now when our kids are in school and notice they're different from the other kids, they'll celebrate, anxious to go back to school and share their culture with classmates. Being united doesn't mean we have to pretend we are the same.

ASB: A bond like no other

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Yet another successful year for Alternative Spring Break! Of course, the team never would have made it to North Carolina without the support from all the wonderful people at IIT. With this support, the ASB 2015 team of 24 awesome and inspiring students and staff were given the opportunity to journey to a suburb of Charlotte, North Carolina and join forces with the Habitat for Humanity of Cabarrus County for an entire week. How humbling it was for them to help build a home (not just a house) for an unbelievably welcoming, excited, hardworking woman, alongside other future homeowners. A few "weekday warriors" also worked with the team on the site. These older and extremely wise men provided advice not just about the construction, but also about life (like female empowerment through a few lessons in self-defense). The best kind of fun was definitely the type experienced during that week: the fun had while working with an amazing group of diverse people on one common goal–providing a safe and welcoming home for those without.

But, just what does this kind of fun actually entail? Only those on the ASB 2015 team will truly know the extent of this fun. Over the past two semesters, and especially over the week of Spring Break, the team this year has bonded in extraordinary ways. From the first leg of the two-day ride to North [insert the face of ASB president, Caroline Johnson], two individuals were already "shipped," against the wishes of one of them of course. There was so much shipping occurring that "aggressively, accidentally bumping" into any equipment on the site meant that you were effectively married to that piece of equipment. By the end of the trip, nearly everyone on the team had been shipped with another team member, usually against their wishes. Oh, and let's not forget about the puns, all the lame puns, so many that, unfortunately, they will never all be fully recalled. Subarno Saha contributed greatly to this plague of puns that eventually spread throughout the entire team, until everyone was spewing out pun after pun while working on the site, and still now after returning to Chicago.

Despite the team coming down with the pun plague, the three staff members on the trip drove us all back to Chicago safely in the three vans, each van with its own unique character. Although this year's trip has been completed, the bond created during Spring Break 2015 was held together so tightly for that week that the glue might stretch, but it will never break. Moving on will be difficult, but the memories will live on, and next year's trip will soon be here. Next year, here we come!

SGA Executive Election Endorsements

TechNews Staff

Prior to the annual Student Government Association (SGA) Executive Elections, TechNews has an annual tradition of selecting and endorsing the candidates that we feel will best represent the interests and needs of the student body. This year, TechNews will not be endorsing any candidates for the SGA Executive Election.

This decision was reached during a roundtable discussion among various members of TechNews staff. With three uncontested positions and very few candidates running in for the positions that are contested, informed endorsements made by our staff hold little meaning; the student body will not have the opportunity to make many choices regarding the representation we will have in the coming academic year during the SGA Executive Election which is being held on April 7, 2015. Whether the sparse number of candidates be due to inadequate publicity of the election or lack of general interest in student government, we regret being unable to endorse candidates for the SGA executive positions.

The TechNews staff does hope to see the current candidates further elaborate on their ideas and platforms in the week leading to the election. In general, student representatives that promise increased transparency regarding administration and SGA events, improved communication with the student body, and accurate representation of students' opinions, good and bad, are students that we support in the upcoming election.

The TechNews staff wishes the best of luck to all candidates.