Activism is in the Action: Civility, Community and Starting From Where You Are

One Sunday evening early this semester, I received a series of notifications regarding unusual postings on campus. As I opened the messages, I saw photos of flyers that had been taped over existing university posters. The flyers pushed hate and exclusion, and segregated people into us versus them. Rather than being shocked, I was disappointed. I knew we were not immune from the larger world and the shocking racist events occurring in Charlottesville, Baltimore and even Salt Lake City. I knew what happened in those cities could happen in ours. The disappointment was that it had.

However, what happened next turned it all around for me. The university and community activated and put the world on notice — THERE IS NO ROOM FOR HATE AT WEBER STATE. Students, faculty, staff, administrators and community members began active conversations about how to respond, so that the world would understand that free speech does not include hate speech. People began working together to set up workshops to discuss civility, community and action from where we

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**Activist From Birth**

The power of a personal story, when told well, changes hearts and minds.

That’s what Richard Ray Perez learned as a son of immigrant parents, as a student at Harvard and eventually as a documentary filmmaker. He will bring that message to Weber State University as the Diversity Conference keynote speaker, Oct. 6 at 11:30 a.m. in the Shepherd Union Ballrooms.

“The power of our personal experience is something we all have, especially people of color who are underrepresented,” Perez explained. “We can use that experience to connect to other people to generate empathy and get beyond political classifications and ideologies. Everyone has a story; some are very relevant to the challenges we face in modern society.”

Perez’s own story began near Los Angeles, where he was the eighth child of parents who made a living in the fields and factories. His older siblings were politically active. Perez was touched by stories of the disproportionate number of Mexican-American men drafted and killed in Vietnam. And by his unarmed little league teammate who was shot and killed by police. And by his own experiences of racism and profiling.

“At a young age, I was exposed to the social problems my community was experiencing,” Perez said. “There was a legacy of unfairness as I would call it. Experiencing it myself, my activism was involuntary but inevitable. It’s almost like I couldn’t escape it. The trajectory was set.”

Perez had a keen mind, a desire to learn and a supportive family. He excelled at a high school that had one of the worst dropout rates in Los Angeles. He stood out academically, which helped him earn a scholarship to Harvard.

“Education is power, but you have to grab on to it and hold it,” Perez learned. “It’s not going to be easy for most immigrant kids or for kids from working-class backgrounds at, or below, the poverty line. It’s kind of like riding a bronco, but you must hold on, because it will help give you the capacity to promote positive change.”

Perez has produced a number of documentaries, including the Sundance feature “Cesar’s Last Fast,” about the sacrifice and spiritual conviction of Cesar Chavez and his struggle for humane treatment of America’s farm workers.

“Cesar Chavez was so persistent, against these massive odds to get owners to treat farm workers with dignity,” Perez said. “But this man would not stop. Cesar used to say, ‘Expect to hear no nine times before you hear yes once.’ So I say to first-generation college students, when it’s hard, you have to be persistent. It’s supposed to be hard, so prepare yourself.”
OCTOBER

Oct. 3       Film Screening
             Cesar’s Last Fast
             7 p.m., WSU Davis, Bldg. 2,
             Room 103

Oct. 5-6     Annual Diversity Conference
             See back page

Oct. 5       Engaging Hispanics in Politics
             Utah State Sen. Luz Escamilla
             12:30 p.m., Shepherd Union
             Fireplace Lounge

Oct. 10      LGBTQ+ Resource Fair
             9 a.m., Shepherd Union Atrium

Oct. 10      Film Screening
             Forbidden: Undocumented and
             Queer in Rural America
             2 p.m., Shepherd Union
             Wildcat Theater

Oct. 11      LGBTQ+ Pride Rally
             Noon, Stewart Bell Tower Plaza

Oct. 13      LGBTQ+ Pride Drag Show
             6:30 p.m., WSU Davis,
             Bldg. 3, Ballroom

Oct. 28      Expect the Great 2017
             Westminster College

Oct. 28      Hispanic Heritage Celebration
             9 p.m., Marshall White Center
             $5 with college ID
             $8 without ID

NOVEMBER

Nov. 1       Native Heritage Celebration –
             Sunrise Ceremony
             With Lyle J. Harvey
             8 a.m., Val A. Browning Center
             Flag Poles

Nov. 1       Native Heritage Celebration
             Breakfast
             8:45 a.m., Shepherd Union
             Room 232
             weber.edu/diversity

Nov. 1       Native Heritage Celebration -
             How Our Language Was Planted
             With Lyle J. Harvey
             10:30 a.m., Shepherd Union
             Room 316

Nov. 8       Film Screening
             Beyond Standing Rock
             3 p.m., Shepherd Union
             Wildcat Theater

Nov. 10      Eddie’s BBQ In – Connecting
             Police & Students
             3 p.m., Shepherd Union
             Ballroom

Nov. 14      12th Annual Native Symposium
             Education and Civility through
             a Native Lens with Dr.
             Cassandra Manuelito-Kerkvliet
             10:30 a.m., Shepherd Union
             Wildcat Theater
             weber.edu/diversity

Nov. 15      Deliberative Democracy Day
             Noon, Shepherd Union
             Ballroom

JANUARY

Jan. 12      Civility in Modern Times:
             An Evening with Dr. Cornel
             West
             7 p.m., Val A. Browning Center
             $10/$8/$6

Jan. 15      MLK Freedom Breakfast and
             March
             9 a.m., Marshall White Center

Jan. 19      18th Annual Gospel Music
             Festival
             7:30 p.m., Val A. Browning
             Center

Jan. 25      Trials of Civility in the 19th
             Century American City
             Noon, Shepherd Union
             Wildcat Theater

FEBRUARY

February     All Month: Black History Month

Feb. 26-28   22nd Annual Storytelling Festival

MARCH

All Month: Women’s History Month

March 29     Holocaust Remembrance
             Keynote: Daniel Mendelsohn

APRIL

All Month: Gaypril

April 8      The Class of ’94 – Performance
             and Discussion
             Black Box Theater
Getting Involved
How Nubia Peña became an activist, and how you can, too

At an early age, Nubia Peña learned what it meant to be compassionate and selfless. She had a great example — her mother. “Every time I observed her helping a neighbor or giving to those who had less, even when we didn’t have much, seeds of social justice activism were being planted in my heart,” Peña said.

Those seeds took root, and grew and grew.

Today, Peña is the advocacy and prevention training specialist for the Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault and a juvenile defender at Utah Juvenile Defender Attorneys, LLC. Through her professional and personal endeavors, she works to bring awareness to issues of violence and systemic oppression.

While Peña’s mother inspired her early on, her experiences later in life, particularly working closely with survivors of violent crimes, also influenced her decision to become engaged in social reform.

“The services that existed for diverse survivors were not always inclusive, and the systems themselves were barriers to victims accessing assistance,” Peña said. “This drove my commitment to change the actual systems, practices and policies.”

That commitment spurred Peña to go to law school. In 2016, she earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Utah. That same year, she was selected as one of 25 law students nationwide to be recognized for social justice activism in the National Jurist, a leading news source in legal education.

Peña says there are many ways to become involved in a movement or cause. She lists social media, activist groups, art, legislative reform, legislative education, voter registration drives, and mentoring young leaders, as a few examples.

“After identifying the issue that has inspired you to become involved, start connecting with others already engaged in the work,” Peña said. “Become well informed, so, when tasked with speaking about the matter, you can do so in a credible manner.”

Join Peña for her activism workshop Thursday, Oct. 6 at 6 p.m. at Weber State University Davis.

Adrienne Andrews
Chief Diversity Officer
19th Annual Diversity Conference
Activism is in the ACTION
Oct. 5-6, 2017

THURSDAY, OCT. 5
Weber State University Davis, Building 3 Ballrooms
5:30 p.m.
Opening Social
5:55 p.m.
Welcome and Introductions
6 p.m.
Activism Workshop and Q&A with Nubia Peña
7:45 p.m.
Teaser Remarks From Keynote Speaker Richard Ray Perez
7:55 p.m.
Brief Remarks From Andrea Hernández, WSU’s Diversity & Inclusive Programs Coordinator

FRIDAY, OCT. 6
Shepherd Union Building
Concurrent Panel Sessions and Presentations
8:30-9:20 a.m.
SU 316 Academic Activism: Closing the Achievement Gap
SU 312 International Activism: Facilitating Change Beyond Providing Community Service
SU 321 Protest, Power and Disability Rights Activism
9:30-10:20 a.m.
SU 316 Finding Common Ground in Sustainability
SU 312 Top Tips for Starting a Social Enterprise
SU 321 How the Consulate of Mexico Advocates for the Mexican and Latinx Community in Utah
10:30-11:20 a.m.
SU 316 Protest and Activism: “Call and Response” for the Indispensable Opposition
SU 312 Reasons For and Ways to Help With Resource Conservation
SU 321 Narrative Films for Social Change
11:30 a.m.-12:20 p.m.
Keynote Speaker Richard Ray Perez
12:30-1:30 p.m.
Lunch & Roundtable Discussion

All events are free and open to the public. Luncheon requires registration. RSVP to Teresa Martinez at weber.edu/diversity or 801-626-6957.

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Rules of Considerate Conduct

Pay Attention
Acknowledge Others
Think the Best
Listen

Be Inclusive
Accept and Give Praise
Don’t Speak Ill

Respect Even a Subtle “No”
Mind Your Body
Be Agreeable

Keep It Down
Avoid Personal Questions
Care for Your Guests
Be a Considerate Guest

Think Twice Before Asking for Favors
Refrain from Idle Complaints
Respect Others’ Opinions
Respect the Environment and Be Gentle to Animals

“Choosing Civility: Twenty-Five Rules of Considerate Conduct” by P.M. Forni.