FREQUENTLY
AVOIED
QUESTIONS

A GUIDE
TO
SOLIDARITY

Cultural Center Copy
An Open Letter to the Hampshire Community

Dear Hampshire "Community,"

We are writing this letter in response to the multiple issues regarding racism, misogyny, sexism, and gender/sexuality discrimination that have come up throughout this academic year, but more importantly as a larger historical response to what has occurred on our campus since its inception. It is time that the campus deals with the issues that it claims to be above: the myth that liberal arts institutions such as Hampshire are progressive enough to be beyond these manifestations of social and institutional oppression.

We can no longer hide in this "bubble" that believes itself to be a utopia, in which all students are accepted and praised for their difference. On the contrary, Hampshire College (its students, faculty, staff, and administration) perpetuates these discriminatory acts. Said community members have, in many cases, been the instigators of racist, sexist, and/or homophobic actions that impact not only these targeted communities, but also the ways in which all community members see themselves in relation to each other. We have, over the years, dealt with accusations challenging the necessity of safe spaces such as the Cultural Center, QCA, Women's Center, and Identity-Based Housing.

In regards to the Student of Color population and their allies, many a vicious comment has been made in regards to the way that this smaller community functions, with references to "reverse-racism" and "self-segregation," among other things. These
comments usually come from a place of ignorance, not understanding the larger history of struggle.

This zine was created by a group of students (students of color, white students, queer students, allies) in an effort to express our collective frustration, and to call out to the larger community to step up, take responsibility, and check yourselves and your peers in your thoughts, words, and actions. This is not to say that "we all need to get along." Rather, we as individuals function as part of a collective whole, and therefore must learn to respect what we may not understand, or agree with, for the safety and comfort of all.

There are students on this campus who spend much of their time either silenced or educating, when it is not their job, defending themselves without administrative support, and dealing with persecution due to identities that they can not change.

If reading this causes offense in any way, perhaps it is a sign to re-evaluate the ways in which you regard these issues. No one here is asking for solidarity or coalition, but basic respect, the willingness to learn, and to question that which you do not understand without prior judgement or assumption.

This has been an on-going struggle, and although we do not expect that you, the reader, will drastically change your opinions regarding the situation facing our community, we hope that you will see this as impacting your own daily life, because this affects all of us.

*This letter does not represent the points-of-view of all students of color, international students, or queer students at Hampshire College.*
The history of identity-based housing on campus is a story of struggle, much alike the history of the groups they represent. As early as 1972, only two years after the doors opened, Hampshire students were already concerned about institutionalized racism on campus. That year, "Third World students" (now known as SOURCE [Students Of Under Represented Cultures and Ethnicities]) took over the Cole Science Center to protest, among other things, Hampshire's lack of effort in recruiting minority students, implementing affirmative action, hiring minority faculty and staff, and advancing minorities in general. From informal statements made by student activists who participated in this takeover, it is believed that the interest for identity housing arose around this time. Nevertheless, it wasn't until almost a couple of decades later that Third World students got to act on that interest.

The next two decades were tumultuous for Third World students. For the first half of the 70s, the Vietnam War consumed the attention of all Hampshire students, allowing only brief mention of domestic social issues. However, in 1977 a cross burning at the Merrill quad brought issues of racism on campus back into attention. A committee (chaired by Frank Holquist) investigating racism at Hampshire College, culminated its work with a final report that was submitted to the administration and the campus at large in February of 1978. The report pointed out several flaws in current policies adopted by Hampshire regarding minority recruitment, minority people's representation, retention rates, affirmative action, and the institution's ability to respond to race-related social crisis (such as this cross burning). The number of minority students, staff and faculty had dwindled since the beginning of Hampshire, and if no action was taken, this trend was expected to continue. This report became the basis for all subsequent investigations, statements and protests regarding issues of diversity on campus up to 1988 when the Dakin Takeover took place.
The Dakin Takeover was one of the largest (if not the largest) and longest protests to ever take place on Hampshire campus, and its purpose was to force the administration to take action and make changes towards solving issues of diversity on campus. Many things changed during that year: the Lebron-Wiggins-Pran Cultural Center was created, new student groups were born and the first identity-based mods were created.

Nevertheless, it wasn’t until a few years later that these mods obtained recognition from the administration. According to Linda Mollison, mod 39 (also known as the “Umoja House”) was the first student of color mod and was created in 1988. It was given “institutionally designated status” in 1992.

Mod 82, the men of color mod, requested a larger mod in the spring of 1995. At the same time the student of color mod (39) had a hard time filling. Mod 39 moved to 82. When mod 82 asked for a larger mod, it was given a six-person mod in Greenwich. They were not happy with this decision and the petitioners interrupted the campus-wide lottery by taking the lottery forms from Linda Mollison’s desk on the day of the lottery. They were granted an eight-person Enfield mod then (mod 52). Mod 52 was created in 1995. It lost its designation two years ago and lost the mod last year (2005) by not being able to fill two consecutive years.

Since 1988, the student of color mods have been the home to many students of color who seek to carry forward the mods’ legacy and the ideals they represent for political activism, involvement in communal service, and (legendary) parties. Additionally, the campus has historically had queer friendly designated housing areas (e.g., mod 30 and mod 54) that have been instrumental in meeting the needs of students and in campus change.

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**TIME LINE**

- **1989**
  - Cultural Center formed in Dakin Master's House on OCT. 26

- **5/6:**
  - Students present demands
    - MORE FACULTY/STAFF OF COLOR
    - RESOURCES for a multicultural center
    - revise THIRD WORLD requirement

- **7PM:** Students meet with President Greg Prince to discuss demands

- **8PM:** Allies stage rally in front of CSC in support of SOURCe

- **9/18:** Greg Prince issues community memo about supporting and discussing multiculturalism

- **1992**
  - Members of SOURCe take over CSC during night

- **5/5:**

- **1995**
  - Mods 39 & 82 combined to Greenwich
  - STUDENTS INTERRUPT LOTTERY IN PROTEST
  - granted mod 52

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Gaining the "institutionally supported" status meant, among other things, that the housing office would be mindful that the students they assigned to those mods identified with the mod's designation. This was a key factor in allowing identity-based mods to prosper on campus.

*Addendum*

In Spring 2006, a group of students decided to bring Mod 52 back online as the longest-standing Students of Color mod at Hampshire. The house was undergoing renovation; the group decided to seek community support, especially from previous 52 residents, then living in 56. The group of eight students lotteried for the mod with forty points, winning it on the second day of the Housing Lottery. It is now re-designated as a Students of Color mod.

As well, that same year, the Queer Mod (54 Enfield) and the Women of Color Mod (60 Enfield) lost their designations as a result of being unable to fill. In Spring of 2007, both mods were reclaimed by filling.

**SOURCE & allies protest on Accepted Students Day**

2002

**2004**

Mod Lottery Protest
MIKE FORD pulls 1D based mods out of THE LOTTERY

**2005**

mod 85 established as 1st Students of Color mod in Prescott House

**2006**

Spring
mod 52 RECLAIMED in lottery with 40 points (with community and ally support)

MOD 54 (QUEER MOD)
MOD 60 (Women of Color) LOSE DESIGNATIONS

2007

remaining:
85 People of Color
47 Women of Color
39 Queer

Mod 52 loses designation, enters renovation Spring 2006, previous residents squat in 56

"I met w/ Linda Mollison every day, for weeks. I memorized the entire chart on her office wall. We outlined 5-yr plans. We wrote manifestos. All in the name of reclaiming 52."

"Without D based housing, I would not have found my people on this campus."

"Q.P.O.C."
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  - 82 Men of Color Established
  - AFTER 39 IS UNABLE TO FILL

**Institutionalized**
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"I met with Linda Mollison every day, for weeks. I memorized the entire chart on her office wall. We outlined 5-yr plans. We wrote manifestos. All in the name of reclaiming 52."

"Without ID-based housing I could not have found my support system on this campus."

"Q.P.O.C."
RESPONDING TO 3 MISCONCEPTIONS

Amongst many highly contested issues on the Hampshire campus are those of identity-based housing, safe spaces, diversity, and racism/discrimination. There has been a tendency for students to express their frustration, doubt, fear about said issues in manners that cause a raucous, misusing and misinformed the general Hampshire community through the use of open publications. While indeed this is a campus and academic environment that encourages students to express their views, this privilege has at times been misused, based on lack of factual context, being damaging to certain groups of students and based on a definite lack of understanding fueled in many cases by personal issues, stubbornness, and the unwillingness to listen and learn. Here we will break down commonly misconstrued notions that again and again require explanation and justification.

Misconception: “Students of Color at Hampshire are self-segregating”
Response:

The Student of Color population at Hampshire is 12% of a student body of 1,400 students. That means that there are 168 Students of Color (give or take) and 1,232 students who classify as White currently enrolled at this institution. Such small numbers within a majority white campus and culture make it hard for many students of color to feel comfortable. Due to being mere scatterings on a white campus, many students of color tend to seek comfort in each other, coming together through a common experience of feeling tokenized, discriminated against, and misrepresented in classes dealing with issues of race and ethnicity, amongst other things.

The term self-segregation is a highly misused and ill-conceived term. The root word ‘segregation’ literally means an enforced separation. This term was commonly used to refer to acts such as apartheid in South Africa and the Jim Crow era of the United States in which there were laws that made it illegal for people of color to mix with whites in terms of education, employment, health, and spaces of socialization amongst others. ‘Self-Segregation’ commonly refers to the act of historically oppressed populations sticking together, and is often looked down upon and put in a negative context. It is necessary to reevaluate the negativity surrounding self-segregation and put it into context.

In a CNN article printed in 2000 called Segregation now? Some still see racial divide on campuses, Tatum, a dean at Mount Holyoke College said, “When white students are together, it’s not seen as, quote, a group of white students. It’s a group of individuals getting together, having fun, whatever it is. When black
students or Latino students or Asian students are sitting together, the first thing that people tend to comment on is that group label.” In light of this, it could be said that accusations of ‘self-segregation’ at Hampshire comes from the reality that these minority groups on campus, due to no fault of their own, tend to be very visible because of their “difference”, making it easy to brush their methods of socialization as “self segregating”. It is rarely considered that the reasons why this type of socialization occurs, or even the reasons why identity-based housing is needed, is based on a need for solidarity, and the creation of a community front that is supportive of the struggles of being the “different one” in classrooms and within the larger population.

Using the term “self-segregating” is in fact highly degrading and insulting, reducing minority students and relating the ways in which they function at Hampshire to historically oppressive tactics used by colonial regimes, and white states. In fact, the need for students of color, queers students, and their allies to create a united front, comes from the context of battling these histories that continue to prevail and show themselves as part of the Hampshire College experience.

**Misconception: “identity-based housing is not diverse”**

**Response:**

This statement brings to mind the many ironies and hypocrisies related to it. When Admissions talks about “diversifying” the campus, they often mean in regards to enrolling more students of color to intermingle within the acknowledged greater white population, and yet, some say that students who live in identity based housing make our campus less diverse! My initial response would be to very sarcastically apologize for not adhering to the role that I as a student of color am apparently supposed to fulfill on this campus. They say, “integrate” because that makes the campus more “diverse”. Apparently, if students of color are living in one house, it is their fault for making mod living less diverse. It is not acknowledged that within the “student of color” population itself, there is in fact an incredibly multicultural population. On a campus like Hampshire, it is easy to conglomorate students of color into the category of “other” which then becomes the same, that which is in complete opposition to the white community. In fact, I would argue that identity based housing allows for some of the most diverse spaces at Hampshire.

Students of color are not all the same! The Hampshire student of color community is made up of Latinos (U.S), Blacks (U.S), Native Americans, Asians
(East/Southeast/South), African, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and those of mixed
descent. The term “people of color” does not refer to skin tone (as there are many
varying shades of skin color), but to historically oppressed communities. Therefore
it is also a misconception that identity based housing privileges people of ‘darker’
skin tones, as that is hardly the case.

Additionally, while some are opposed to identity-based housing as self
segregating and problematic, many are in favor of multicultural housing (not to say
that multicultural housing is not a good option) due to the fact that it includes white
students. Apparently, as long as white students are being included in the set up of
these housing structures, no conflict arises.

**Misconception: Safe spaces promote exclusivity and intimidation**

**Response:**

Whether it be spaces such as the Cultural Center, the QCA, or the Women’s
Center, which are designated to deal with the struggles of specific communities, or
student of color/queer identity based housing, the misunderstanding that these
spaces are exclusive and intimidating always seems to come up. The premise of
these spaces are not made with the intent of exclusivity nor intimidation. They have
been fought for (by students of color and white allies alike) out of the
understanding that they provide zones of comfort for discussion and dialogue and
become centers to organize and act in response to concerns regarding community
issues. The feeling that these spaces are intimidating and are not welcoming come
from places of insecurity and fear. Students who make such claims need to
reevaluate the reasons why they feel in these ways, understanding that the
creation of these spaces are not meant to be personal attacks to one’s self
identity. These spaces are open for community dialogue and it is encouraged that
people learn more about the history and ways in which to use and become allies to
these spaces in ways that are beneficial to the entire Hampshire Community.

The responses to these misconceptions aim to deal with the insecurities and fears
of the Hampshire population. It is alright to argue and debate these issues as long
as they are done in manners that are respectful, with consideration to the history
and factual basis upon which such debates are founded.
*These terms do change over time—we are only trying to explain them as they are here and now, in the Hampshire community, to help create a better dialogue on campus*

**Class:** A group of people sharing the same social, economic, or occupational status. The term class usually implies a social and economic hierarchy, in which those of higher class standing have greater status, privilege, prestige, and authority.

**Sex:** Separate from gender, this term refers to the biological features associated with maleness and femaleness in the human body.

**Gender:** A socially constructed notion whereby human bodies are categorized into "men" and "women." Gender identity refers an individual's self-identification as a man, woman, transgendered or other identity category.

**Sexism:** The belief that one sex or gender is superior to or more valuable than the other; The attitude of misogyny (hatred of females) or misandry (hatred of males.)
**Heterosexism:** A belief or argument that heterosexuality is the only natural, normal, or moral mode of sexual behavior.

**Homophobia:** Prejudice and dislike towards those who are queer or perceived to be queer.

**Transphobia:** Prejudice and dislike of those who identify as trans and those who bend gender identities.

**Ally:** A person who actively works to dismantle an oppressive system that does not directly negatively affect them. Allied behavior means taking personal responsibility for the changes we know are needed in our society, and so often ignored or left to others to deal with. Anyone can be an ally to any struggle.

**Solidarity:** Seeing one's own privilege and oppression in the context of their privileges and oppressions as so interlinked that no particular form of inequality -- be it class, race, gender, sexuality or ability -- is seen as the most prominent oppression/privilege.

**Reappropriation** (aka reclamation projects): A cultural process by which certain groups reclaim or re-appropriate terms, symbols, and artifacts that were previously used to discriminate.
Race: A social construction based on the false belief that biological or physical characteristics determine one's abilities, behavior, opinions, beliefs, etc. Racial categories are produced socio-politically, via power-relations and social practices.

Racism: A belief or doctrine that inherent differences among the various human races determine cultural or individual achievement usually involving the idea that one's own race is superior and has the right to rule others. 2. a policy, system of government, etc., based upon or fostering such a doctrine; discrimination. 3. hatred or intolerance of another race or other races.

Colorblindness: Not recognizing racial or class distinctions; the idea that not acknowledging race will dismiss the issue of racism and therefore give everyone equal opportunity.

Oppression: The negative outcome experienced by people targeted by the cruel exercise of power in a society or social group. It is closely associated with nationalism and derived social systems, wherein identity is built by antagonism to the Other. Oppression is most commonly felt and expressed by a widespread, if unconscious, assumption that a certain group of people are inferior.

Safe Spaces: A visible message of inclusion, accepta share common experiences of oppression(s) related persons who are respectful and understanding of th
**Internalized Oppression:** The manner in which an oppressed group comes to use against itself the methods of the oppressor. For example, sometimes members of marginalized groups hold an oppressive view toward their own group, or start to believe in negative stereotypes of themselves.

**Intersectionality:** This idea holds that classical models of oppression within a society, such as those based on race/ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, class, disability and other markers of difference do not act independently of one another.

**Privilege:** Benefits received by a particular person or group of people beyond the advantages of most, as a result of systematic and institutionalized racism, sexism, etc. i.e. heterosexual, able-bodied, class, white, and/or male privilege, etc.

**White Privilege:** The advantages enjoyed by white persons beyond what is commonly experienced by the non-white minority.

**Identity:** An umbrella term used for an individual's comprehension of themselves as a discrete, separate entity i.e. gender, racial, national, cultural, bodily and cognitive ability, religious, class, age group, sexual identity, etc.

**Passing:** Refers to the ability of a person to be regarded as a member of a combination of sociological groups other than their own, such as a different race, ethnicity, social class, gender, and/or disability status.

For a group/groups of people who to identity/ies. Safe spaces are open to all these spaces.
Political correctness (often abbreviated to PC) is a term used to describe language or behavior which is intended, or said to be intended, to provide a minimum of offense, particularly to racial, cultural, or other identity groups.

Person of Color: An umbrella term which refers to people united by a past and present commonality of experience through racial oppression, cultural discrimination, colonialism and imperialism, rather than cultural similarities. On Hampshire campus, the term "students of color" evolved from the term "Third World students."

In conversations, use "person of color" (PoC) instead of "colored" or "ethnic" or "minority."

Use "Asian," "Asian-American" or more specific designations such as "Pacific Islander," "Chinese American" or Korean." instead of "Oriental."

Use "Latino/a" instead of "Hispanic."

Queer: An umbrella term for anyone who does not fit the sexuality or gender "norm." Even though "queer" is a problematic term in other places, it is PC on Hampshire campus.

Since starting work at Hampshire 26 years ago, I've witnessed the creation of identity based housing and I've seen students of color move in and out. Although not every student of color (Cont.)
Genderqueer: A term which refers to individuals or groups who "queer" (v.) or problematize the hegemonic notions of sex, gender and desire.

Trans: An umbrella term which refers to cross-dressers, transgendered people, transsexuals and others who permanently or periodically dis-identify with the sex they were assigned at birth.

*If you are not sure of someone's pronouns, it is best to ask respectfully before you assume.*

"I used to sleep over at 85, on of the dorms where I felt alienated." (cont'd) I desire to live in such housing, and although a few students have holed themselves in these mods only to gain residency in a mod, I feel strongly that most students who have lived in I.D. based housing have benefitted greatly from this experience. I've heard several students of color, over the years, talk about how tedious, and sometimes aggravating, it is to always have to educate and "explain racism" to the rest of the community, until we have more students among the general population at Hampshire or until the world around us is a better place to live, or until H.C. students of color no longer feel the need for such housing. I will support I.D. housing, as long as we can fill those allocated beds.

- Linda Mollison, Housing Director.
Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s
by Michael Omi and Howard Winant

Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Anti-Poverty Policy
by Martin Gilens

Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope
by bell hooks
[a review
http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1007&context=gseis/interactions]

The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics
by George Lipsitz
[see http://www.temple.edu/tempress/titles/1418_reg.html for a free copy of intro]

The Miner's Canary: Enlisting Race, Resisting Power, Transforming Democracy
By Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres

Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred
by M. Jacqui Alexander

Enlightened Racism
by Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis

Where We Stand: Class Matters
by bellhooks

Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance
by bellhooks

Books for the New Century
Avoiding Nickel and Dimes

So Wanna Read Some More?
Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics? by Cathy Cohen

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack by Peggy McIntosh

What Kind of Card is Race?: The Absurdity (and Consistency) of White Denial by Tim Wise

Chapter 5: Dealing with Intractable Problems: Racism and Homophobia

Chapter 13: Political Activism

History of Identity Based Housing

Diversity Taskforce

Letter from Joel Dansky about Universal Access to Hampshire Space
Hate speech codes on the college campus: how censorship does not promote equality or free speech
S. Wyeth McAdam -- DIV III SS93 M4

Critical multiculturalism: rethinking multicultural and antiracist education
edited by Stephen May -- LC1099.C745 1999

Understanding cultural appropriation

Seeing the ivory in the ivory tower: White supremacy at Hampshire College
Jonathan Stribling-Uss -- Div III SS2003.S7

Experiences of students of color at Hampshire College
Robert John Domingo -- Div III SS97.D6

A contemporary look at white anti-racist activism and the process of transformation

The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond
<http://www.pisab.org>

The White Privilege Awareness Project
<http://whiteprivilege.hampshire.edu/resources.html>
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Identity based housing builds community. Social networks flourish in safe spaces.

I hear the tones of urgency and necessity in the voices of students that live in identity-based housing when they are pushed to defend their spaces, and I hear joy and strength when they speak about the ways ID-based housing has enriched their lives and their participation in supportive communities.

Email Responses and Comments:

IDMoldsZine@gmail
"This word 'integration' has millions of white people confused and angry, believing WRONGLY that the black masses WANT to live mixed up with the white man."

- Malcolm X '65

This Zine was Made by

a coalition of concerned students