

A Note from the Editor

In early 2020, the death of George Floyd in police custody triggered a wave of protests that were truly global in scale and raised new questions about what it means to be Black in America. These movements are marked by the participation of increasing numbers of white allies. Racial justice scholarship and popular discourse continue to struggle in their efforts to reach understanding about the relationship between white people and the systems of oppression in which they participate—often without realizing it. As a speaker for the Spring 2021 session of Purdue Honors College Visiting Scholars Series, Dr. Robin DiAngelo challenges all white people to accept the fundamental truth of their racism if America society is ever to change.

Dr. Robin DiAngelo is an Affiliate Associate Professor at the University of Washington. She is an expert in and prolific speaker about race relations and, in 2011, originated the concept of ‘White Fragility’. Her subsequent book about the topic – *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* – has spent over two years on the New York Times Bestseller List since its release in 2018. White fragility refers to the instinctive defensiveness that many white people feel when they are approached with evidence of race-based inequalities. According to Dr. DiAngelo, the onus is on white people to use their privilege to partner effectively with marginalized communities.

White Fragility limits white people’s understanding of race solely to their privileged experiences. Dr. Angelo concedes that it is uncomfortable to be aware of privilege, but accepting this challenge is the first step towards the elimination of race-based hierarchies. Unfortunately, people of color disproportionately shoulder the burden of legitimizing their daily struggles, having repeatedly to convince white people that significant action must occur. The education of white allies, too, is often viewed as the responsibility of the oppressed. It is only when white people open themselves to growth that effective dialogue can begin, allowing racial justice issues to be addressed with the depth they deserve.

About the Editor

Jannine Huby is an undergraduate student at Purdue University, where she is dual majoring in Political Science and Global Studies with a minor in Professional Writing. She is an active member of Purdue’s Honors College and a representative for the College of Liberal Arts on the Honors Leadership Council (HLC). Around campus, Jannine can also be seen performing her duties as a Resident Assistant and as a member of Student English Association (SEA).