

**Call for Papers (CFP)**  
**TU Communication Studies Symposium:**  
**Showing Up, Making Space, and the Political Imagination of Diversity**  
**April 27, 2018**

Sara Ahmed's 2012 *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* offers a reflexive look at the slow calcification of diversity within higher education where diversity becomes a non-performative: as long as you say you are working towards diversity you don't have to really do anything else. Since publication, her framing of diversity and the rhetoric of tolerance is more salient than ever. At Towson University in 2015, #OccupyTowson students pushed diversity to praxis and staged a sit-in to demand action on key issues for marginalized students. Towson, along with universities across the country, are seeing students move diversity from a contained professional "institutional commitment" to a demand for real change in the lived experiences of students. Statements without action are not enough.

On the occasion of these vital conversations and movements, the 2018 *Communication Studies Symposium* convenes Towson University, and the surrounding Towson and Baltimore community to engage in a day-long event which confronts themes of diversity, inclusion, and social justice. The symposium aims to engage and mobilize these themes within the context of action and praxis. What does it mean to embody social justice praxis? Are some embodiments burdens? What challenges does "diversity work" face? Does diversity lose its activist roots when institutionalized? How do our bodies respond to institutional exclusions? What does the labor of inclusion look like? Who ought to show up? Shut up? Where do praxis and identity intersect? What are the contours of intersectional social justice?

The Communication Studies major at Towson University invites faculty, students, activists, and community members to join us for a day of productive difficult dialogues at the intersection of identity-formation, embodiment, and social justice. Through foregrounding the activist work of scholar Dr. Amber Johnson (the symposium's keynote address), the symposium aims to ignite discussions about our socially unjust world in which "we experience moments that require small and large acts of repair." Part of that repair process is showing up, making space, and engaging in wound and wonder alike.

We invite you to show up and make space with paper presentations, performances, and creative work during morning and afternoon break-out sessions. The symposium seeks active dialogue from participants within the context of (but not limited to) the following points of departure:

- Postracial rhetoric and racism
- (Trans)gender/Racial/Sexual Justice
- Rhetorics of tolerance
- Micro/Macro aggressions and institutional life
- Political coalition-building and collaboration
- The problem(s) of diversity
- Invisible power of whiteness
- Art activism and identity
- Embodiment, affect, and agency

Please submit an abstract of no more than 500 words to [CommStudiesSymposium@towson.edu](mailto:CommStudiesSymposium@towson.edu). Be sure to include your name, title, and affiliation. Feel free to email with questions. Deadline: Jan 1, 2018.