

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE COLLABORATIVE SYMPOSIUM SERIES “*RETHINKING SYSTEMS DESIGN FOR RACIAL JUSTICE & EQUITY*”

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In late 2020, the Divided Community Project (DCP), housed at The Ohio State University Michael E. Moritz College of Law’s Program on Dispute Resolution, envisioned hosting a collaborative event series designed to draw together and elevate dispute systems design lessons for enhancing racial equity from US-based truth, reconciliation, action, and equity commissions. At that time, the list included local processes initiated by district attorneys (Boston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco);¹ by citizen led groups (Truth and Action project housed at Mitchell-Hamline School of Law);² by city-councils (truth and reconciliation commission in Iowa City);³ and commitments from a nationwide group of mayors to advance reparations in more than a dozen communities across the country.⁴ In the subsequent two years, equity-focused commissions have proliferated. Most prominent have been the NYC Racial Justice Commission, established and active during 2021 to develop ballot proposals through a racial equity lens to revise New York

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¹ *Grassroots Law Project and Leading Reform District Attorneys Announce Truth, Justice & Reconciliation Commissions to Address Decades of Harm Caused by Law Enforcement and Prosecutorial Overreach*, GRASS ROOTS LAW PROJECT (July 1, 2020), <https://grassrootslaw.org/press/press-release-20200701/> [https://perma.cc/UZG8-3MRV].

² *Truth and Action*, MITCHELL HAMLINE SCH. OF L., <https://mitchellhamline.edu/truth-and-action/> [https://perma.cc/6FC3-AJKM] (last visited Sept. 26, 2022).

³ Janice Weiner & Laura Bergus, *Resolution No. 20-228: Resolution Establishing Ad Hoc Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, CITY OF IOWA CITY (Sept. 15, 2020), <https://www.iowa-city.org/webink/0/edoc/1962562/Resolution%2020-228.pdf> [https://perma.cc/M2JS-QA7P].

⁴ MAYORS ORGANIZED FOR RACIAL EQUITY, <https://moremayors.org/> [https://perma.cc/Z39U-4WDS] (last visited Sept. 26, 2022).

City's charter,⁵ and the Charleston (S.C.) Special Commission on Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Conciliation.⁶ Statewide commissions include California (2-year reparations task force)⁷ and Vermont (5-year statewide Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)).⁸

The DCP was grateful for *The Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution's* willingness to collaborate, edit, and develop a multi-issue journal publication connected to this theme. DCP invited colleagues from Harvard Negotiation and Mediation Clinical Program (HNMCP), and Stanford Law School's Martin Daniel Gould Center for Conflict Resolution (SLS) to join in an event series of symposia featuring communities engaged in the design, development, and implementation of truth and reconciliation-style commissions.⁹

SLS and HNMCP added valuable insight to DCP's vision to create two tracks: (1) connecting and supporting emerging commissions; and (2) curating academic symposium events and accompanying articles related to the design of race equity processes. This introduction highlights how the symposium series and connected articles were developed and how collaborators have supported, and continue to support, processes for advancing racial justice and equity.

I. RETHINKING SYSTEMS DESIGN FOR RACIAL JUSTICE & EQUITY

In June 2021, collaborators put out the following call for proposals:

The Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution, in partnership with The Ohio State University's Divided Community Project, the Harvard Negotiation and Mediation Clinical Program, and Stanford Law School's Gould Center for Conflict Resolution, is pleased to announce a call for submissions focusing on the work of collaborative efforts addressing truth, action, reconciliation, and

⁵ NYC FOR RACIAL JUSTICE, <https://racialjustice.cityofnewyork.us/> [<https://perma.cc/D9TU-E2K6>] (last visited Sept. 26, 2022).

⁶ *Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Conciliation*, CHARLESTON SC, <https://www.charleston-sc.gov/equitycommission> [<https://perma.cc/9664-7GLZ>] (last visited Sept. 12, 2022).

⁷ *AB 3121: Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans*, STATE OF CAL. DEP'T OF JUST., <https://oag.ca.gov/ab3121> [<https://perma.cc/A84V-KDNN>] (last visited Sept. 26, 2022).

⁸ H. 96, Act 128, 2021-2022 Sess. (Vt. 2022).

⁹ DCP invited colleagues from SLS and HMCP to this collaboration after the same group hosted a November 2020 book launch celebration for Grande Lum's award-winning book, *America's Peacemakers*.