



Background

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity was established at The Ohio State University in May 2003 and named for former university president William E. “Brit” Kirwan in recognition of his efforts to champion diversity.

World-Class Leadership

The Kirwan Institute is led by Executive Director John A. Powell, an internationally recognized authority in the areas of civil rights, civil liberties, and issues related to race, ethnicity, poverty, and the law. Powell also holds the Williams Chair in Civil Rights & Civil Liberties at the Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University.

Deputy Director Andrew Grant-Thomas is a national leader on issues related to race, ethnicity, poverty, structural racism/racialization, and implicit bias. He speaks and writes frequently on these issues and on popular cultural references to race and ethnicity. He is often quoted in the national media.

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KIRWAN INSTITUTE
for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

Expanding Opportunity for All





The Kirwan Institute partners with people, communities, and institutions worldwide to think about, talk about, and engage issues of race and ethnicity in ways that create and expand opportunity for all.



Solving Problems; Building Opportunity

As a university-wide, interdisciplinary research institute, the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity works to deepen understanding of the causes of—and solutions to—racial and ethnic disparities worldwide and to bring about a society that is fair and just for all people.

Kirwan Institute research is designed to be actively used to solve problems in society. Its research and staff expertise are shared through an extensive network of colleagues and partners—ranging from other researchers to on-the-ground social justice advocates, policymakers, and community leaders nationally and globally, who can quickly put ideas into action.

Structural Barriers Block Opportunity

If it is the American way to “pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps,” what happens to those who don’t have boots?

Sometimes, barriers within society prevent people from accessing opportunity. Such barriers are not always obvious to others—yet they can be very real obstacles to success. Sustainable jobs, quality education, safe and affordable housing, a healthy environment, and access to health care are all important factors for stability and personal advancement in life. All of these factors, among others, interact to create a “web of opportunity.” How people and groups are situated within this “web” significantly influences their chances for happiness and success in life.

The Kirwan Institute uses a structural/systems approach to investigate the causes and consequences of racial disparities and to conceive policy solutions.

Research

Kirwan Institute research is focused in five key areas.

Structural Racialization and Systems Thinking:

Examining how systems and system components are arranged and structured to distribute social meaning, identity, benefits, and burdens in particular situations and how these structures can be modified and transformed.

Opportunity Communities: Identifying, understanding, and eliminating racialized structural barriers to opportunity in critical domains including education, housing, employment, health and health care, and civic engagement to build opportunity-rich neighborhoods and communities.

Talking About Race: Examining how the form and content of communications influence the way in which racialized messages are received and processed; working to create communications messages and strategies that highlight our linked fates.

Race in the Mind: Examining the processes by which attitudes and ideas about race help shape the relationship between race and opportunity and how the harmful effects can be mitigated.

Global Justice Program: Examining how racialized structures contribute to enormous political, social, and economic disparities that marginalize billions of people in our global society, and exploring how these inequities can be alleviated.

Kirwan Institute research supports the notion that all communities of people are interconnected and society benefits when all human capabilities are developed and maximized to serve the greater good.