

Advancing Your DEI Strategy Across Viewpoints

Welcome & Introductions



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Overview of the Virtual Training



learning OUTCOME

After participating, you will be able to identify and apply 2-4 new effective communication strategies to advance your equity and inclusion initiatives.

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AGENDA

November 15, 2022

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Opening Activity: Scenario Brainstorm
3. Understanding Your Campus Culture and Critical Stakeholder
4. Small Group Activity: Identifying Partners
5. Navigating Critical Stakeholders and their Positioning
6. **Small Group Activity: Case Study Discussion & Share-out**
7. **Safeguarding and Advancing your DEI Initiatives**
8. Action Steps, Closing Remarks, and Final Q&A

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■ Welcome Attendees & AI Members!

233 Individuals Registered
146 Institutions
65% Public Institutions
33% Private Institutions
2% Other

16% 2-Year Institutions
84% 4-Year Institutions

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

■ Meet Your Faculty



Dr. Belinda Higgs Hyppolite

Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion
& Chief Diversity Officer

University of Oklahoma

belinda.hyppolite@ou.edu



The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA

Meet Your Faculty



Julian R. Williams, J.D.

Vice President for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

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GROUP DISCUSSION



Scenario Brainstorm

Please reflect and **briefly** share situations or scenarios that you have experienced when facilitating critical conversations with stakeholders who have opposing views and opinions.

Please do not reveal identities.

#1

Understanding your Campus Culture and Critical Stakeholders

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■ Ground Rules

- ✓ Speak your truth with care
- ✓ Allow room for feeling in the room
- ✓ Listen to learn; Demonstrate genuine inquiry
- ✓ What is said here stays here; What is learned here leaves here
- ✓ Challenge yourself. Be honest with yourself
- ✓ Don't judge others
- ✓ Don't judge yourself













The word cloud features 'Context' in large black letters on a yellow brushstroke background. Other visible words include 'risk', 'opportunity', 'process', 'assessment', 'impact', 'cost', 'evaluation', 'treatment', 'strategy', 'research', 'management', 'project', 'organization', 'performance', 'plan', and 'impact'.

CONTEXT
 The circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood and assessed

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■ What is Impacting Your Campus Culture?

-  **University Operations**-How you function daily
-  **Overarching Campus Climate**-What's happening across your institution, within the state, and nationally that can impact decision making and the culture
-  **Faculty and Staff Engagement**-Are the faculty and staff happy or are their morale concerns impacting the business operation (i.e., raise system, operating budgets, varying agendas, etc.)
-  **Institutional Culture**-Historical legacies that impact daily operations
-  **Student Enrollment and Retention**-Are you achieving your recruitment and retention goals. This metric directly impact the success of the organization.
-  **Curricular and Co-Curricular Experiences**-Classroom versus out of classroom experiences
-  **Community Partnerships/Alumni Engagement**-Are we connected the local community and alum

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POLL



Given your current campus culture, select the top three issues impacting your campus culture right now.

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Culture War

Woke Agenda Political Correctness Content Neutral
Academic Freedom Left Free Speech
Protected Speech Access
Right Hate Speech Voter Suppression
Academic Freedom Insurrection White Rage
Centrism Gender Affirming **Female**
Black Lives Matter **All Lives Matter**
Blue Lives Matter Transgender
Belonging Male Reproductive Rights
American Rights Civil Rights

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What is Environmental Scanning?



The gathering and use of information about events, trends, and relationships of an organization's internal and external environment.



To assist management in planning the organization's future course of actions.



Is a process of gathering, analyzing, and dispensing information for tactical or strategic purposes.



The environmental scanning process entails obtaining factual and subjective information on the business environments in which the university is operating or considering entering.



CHAT

What are some examples of instances that you've scanned for your own campus?

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■ Environmental Scanning Considerations

- Economic Implications
- Socio Cultural Considerations
- Demographic Representation
- Political/Legal Concerns
- Technology Capability
- Global Effects
 - What are the threats and opportunities
 - What do we have access to today
 - What are the short, medium, and longer-term goals
 - Who need to be involved in this process



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Critical stakeholders often involves determining who has the most to gain or lose from a particular policy or strategy. Other critical stakeholders include influential leaders within a larger community of stakeholders.

■ Communication Strategies

- Understanding the history of the institution and the State
- Know the mission and vision of the university and how DEI adds value to those concepts
- Understanding the triggers of language with our key stakeholders
- What is the acceptable language at your institution, state, etc.
- Know how to invite individuals into the work versus calling them out.
- Understand campus culture and how others experience the university become the primary marketing tool.
- Language can bring a campus community together or create greater separation.

COMMUNICATION



■ Five Skills To Advance DEI Communication

- An understanding of the environment (context)
- Humility and vulnerable
- Education/ongoing learning
- Be relational (care about all people)
- Honesty draped in a compassionate response
- To be outcome-driven and solution-oriented



QUESTIONS?



#2

Navigating Critical Stakeholders and their Positioning

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■ Knowing and learning your landscape

- Many of you may be in roles where you are still relatively “new” (less than 2 years in the role).
- Get to know the community, internally and externally.
- Spend time on relationship building, sometimes we chase decision-making when we should be fostering inclusive connections.
- This is to gain an understanding of what the competing interests are in relation to your work.
- Get know the history of your institution and its place in the region/city.

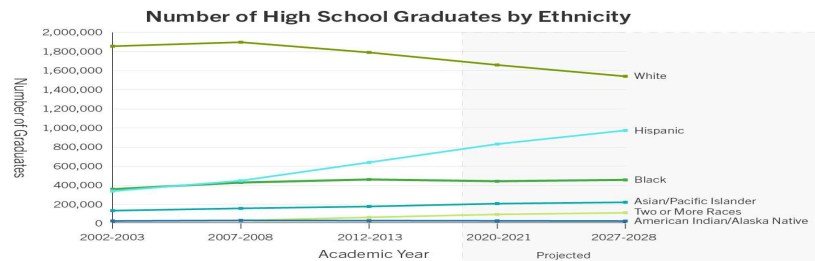
QUESTION: How have you all introduced yourselves to or engaged your campus community about your work?

The four biggest issues facing higher education

*from my perspective 😊

#1 - The demographics of higher education are changing

- ❑ The decline in the traditional 18- to 22-year-old student is here, and it will continue well into the future.
- ❑ Diversity, equity, and inclusion permeates a growing majority of learners; institutions must be prepared to support diverse student's success and completion.
- ❑ International student enrollment has declined in the past two years, while other countries are proactively seeking to attract those students.
- ❑ How institutions adapt to the changing needs to students and create spaces where students of all backgrounds feel a sense of inclusion and belonging will be key.



#2 - Growing numbers are questioning the value of higher education

Figure 5. How much do you agree or disagree that education beyond high school offers a good return on investment for the general population?

(n=1,517)



Note: The numbers in this figure and the narrative may not match due to rounding. In case of mismatch, please refer to the narrative.

Source: Varying Degrees 2022

NEW AMERICA

#3 - Value proposition under fire

- The share of Americans who believe colleges and universities have a positive impact on the country has dropped by 14 percentage points since 2020
- Large partisan divides in terms of the value of higher education
- Is this sustainable and what can college and universities do to address?
- Public perceptions of the value of higher education are challenging the importance of attending college.
- While statistics still demonstrate the benefits of a college education across a person's lifetime, many are questioning the return on investment.

Figure 6. The effect of colleges and universities on the country and local communities:

(n=1,517)



Note: The numbers in this figure and the narrative may not match due to rounding. In case of mismatch, please refer to the narrative.

Source: Varying Degrees 2022

NEW AMERICA

#4 - Politicization of higher education

- The role of college/university President is increasingly difficult due to outside influences. It is very challenging to placate every constituency, which is driving some presidents and other leaders to step away from their positions.
- Threats to academic freedom and speech are mounting, while most institutions are very focused on finding a balance of contradictory viewpoints.
- Students want their voices to be heard, as do faculty. It is becoming difficult for governance systems to support shared voices.
- Some local and state elected officials are reaching deep into the governance and decision-making of colleges and universities, creating diverging positions and public discord.



POLL



Of these four issues that Julian named, please select the **most salient** issue that resonates with you and your campus right now.

So how do you lead and communicate through this?

- It will require sound and intentional leadership to navigate these issues.
- Ignoring the external noise won't make it go away.
- Bravely!
- Be strategic.
 - I know this is extremely cliché, but it really works y'all.
 - You can't fight on every front 100% of the time
- Know the stakes (state funding risks, political/national consequences)
 - You don't have to like it, but you must understand it
 - Meet the key legislators on both sides of the political spectrum
- Reckless or inauthentic DEI work will show and have negative institutional consequences.
 - You can't fake it!

How to navigate successfully

- Find your own voice and use it
- If everyone is comfortable you might not be pushing hard enough.
- Now with that being said...
 - Work must be authentic and "mission-centric"
- Resource advocacy for not just you
- Know who to work through and who to "work around"



***Anti-CRT bill in South Carolina and opposition on preferred name and pronoun at USC**

Get to know everyone

- Student/local media
- THE STUDENTS
- Community partners
- Alumni, specifically key alumni ERG leaders
- Communications stakeholders
- Community relations and government liaisons
- Key legislators
- Board of Trustee allies
- K-12 principals and superintendents
- Internal stakeholders, affinity groups, faculty/staff senate
- Union leadership

Critical Takeaways/Key Tips

- Know what your peers are doing. Sometimes the best way to satiate an opposition force is to inform them as to what peer institutions are doing on DEI issues.
- Be smart and strategic.
- **Keep your work values-centered and above the political fray.**



QUESTIONS?

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BREAK

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**BREAK
OUTS**

**Case Study: The
Political Provocateur**

*Please refer to the Chat to
download the case study
and instructions.*

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#3

**Safeguarding and Advancing
Your DEI Initiatives**

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■ How language impacts your outcomes

- Who is the target audience?
- What is their stake in this process?
- How do we have a win-win solution?
- What else do we need to consider?
- What other factors can influence the context of the environment (politics, hidden and public agendas, lack of clear vision and strategy, a lack of institutional support from the top, Governing Boards)
- OVER COMMUNICATE, absent clear, consistent, communications on DEI your campus will develop their own narratives
- Communicate the “why” and connect it to institutional values and educational excellence

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■ How to succeed in advancing DEI Strategies

	<p>Understand your organization's structure <i>(Awareness)</i></p>	<p>The Leadership Hierarchy Mission critical work Current priorities Identify policies and practices that can disrupt progress</p>
	<p>Capacity & Coalition Building <i>(Education)</i></p>	<p>Identify the problem or barriers Who needs to be at the table What data or metrics can support the case Build leadership skills and capacity Develop key shareholders capacity</p>
	<p>Build a strategy for change <i>(Action)</i></p>	<p>University & department level strategies Policy Review/Assessment (Ongoing and continuous) Rewards & Incentives Accountability Measures</p>



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Things to Consider

- What can I do individually?
- What can we do collectively or as a campus community?
 - Where are the allies?
- How can I, as an individual, seek to impact and lead change to help create a more inclusive community for every person I meet?
- How can we collectively create safer spaces that encourage individuals to bring their unique views and perspectives into the conversation, while honoring and incorporating the opinions and viewpoints of others?
- How can we collectively, think ahead, be proactive, and engage others so our DEI efforts honor others and the ever-changing needs of the community?
- Create the conditions for DEI advancement by planting the seeds and watch them grow. Example: DEI mini-grants



Who's Leading the Conversation?

Co-opt:

- To persuade someone who criticizes/disagrees with you to join your group so that the person can no longer oppose you.
- To co-opt also means to claim something as your own when it was created by others.

Coalition Building:

- A coalition is a temporary alliance or group partnering in order to achieve a common purpose or to engage in joint activities.
- Coalition building is the process by which parties (individuals, organizations, or nations) come together to form a coalition.
- Forming coalitions with other groups of similar values, interests, and goals allows members to combine their resources and become more powerful than when they each acted alone.

Exploitation:

- Those who co-opt are only there to advance self-interests (usually it's either notoriety or a financial benefit). As these "allies" seek to impose their agenda, they are out for themselves.

Parachuters:

- Paternalistic attitude is implicit in the structures from which these "allies" derive their awareness of the "issues." They reject their own programming; they are ultimately reactionary, entitled, and patronizing, or positioning with power-over, those with whom they proclaim allyship.

Who's Leading the Conversation? Cont.

Academics and Intellectuals:

- They take over the work, set agendas for disadvantaged groups, obfuscate and/or trivialize disadvantaged groups' experiences.

Gatekeepers:

- They are known for the tactics of controlling and/or withholding information, resources, connections, support, etc. Gatekeepers come from the outside and from within. Gatekeeping individuals and organizations, like "savior allies" also tend to create dependency on them and their support function. They tend to dominate or control.

Navigators and Floaters

- A "navigating" ally is someone familiar with or skilled in jargon that can maneuver through spaces or struggles. Yet that person doesn't engage in meaningful dialogue (because avoids debates or remains silent) or take meaningful actions beyond their comfort zones. "Navigating" allies uphold their power and, by extension, the dominant power structures by not directly attacking them. Organizations may also act as navigators.



Take Aways

Diversity is not our problem; it is our promise for a better future!

Rep. Elijah Cummings

- Lead the Institutions mission and vision for diversity, equity, and **inclusion which leads to an excellent campus culture**
- Communicate expectations and goals for promoting and achieving an **equitable and inclusive learning culture**
- DEI initiatives and creating a sense of belonging are **integral to the academic mission** of the institution
- Your work is **institutional change work** and is intrinsically designed to position your institution for the future
- **DEI has a role in every stage** of the campus lifecycle from admission to graduation ; It impacts student learning and progression, Faculty and Staff recruitment, retention, promotion, and tenure
- **Provide ongoing assessment** of your internal campus climate and work to establishment equitable policies and practices





Inclusive Communication = Intentional Communication

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QUESTIONS?

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Thank you!

Please remember to complete the *event evaluation*.
Your comments will help us continually improve the
quality of our programs.