UNIVERSITY *of* VIRGINIA | Staff Senate

UVA Staff Senate Meeting February 22, 2023
1:00 p.m.
In-person – working group
Carruthers Hall

Agenda
- Welcome & Opening Remarks – 2 minutes
- Engaging in group conversations about what Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) means to you

**UVA Staff Senate Co-Chairs:**
Adam Griggs, School of Medicine
Patrick Wood, University Finance

Approximately 45 senators attended the working lunch.

Adam Griggs (School of Medicine) opened the meeting.
Updates from the Parking Summit – Kendall Howell
·        HMAI Updates – Adam Griggs
    o   Winners have been selected and will be announced soon on the Staff Senate website, as well as via a UVAToday article that will be coming out soon
·        Circle of Light starting soon (see information below) – Adam Griggs
        **CIRCLE OF LIGHT**
        *4th Thursday of each month, beginning February 23*
        Join an emotional wellness space where individuals can process their experience with racial trauma through the exploration of shared stories and lived experiences. We will help participants understand how racial trauma can affect mental and emotional well-being and how to incorporate ways to interrupt the trauma response by drawing upon culturally-grounded healing strategies. You will be seen, heard, felt, and can your light shine!
        Register for a Circle of Light Session

**Working Session**
Each table of Staff Senators filled out their answers to three questions:

- What does Diversity mean to you?
- What does Equity mean to you?
- What does Inclusion mean to you?

Each table spoke among themselves for about 20 minutes and wrote down the team's thoughts about each question. Following the team exercise, the Chairs brought two working groups together into three larger groups to discuss each table's thoughts and recorded the conversations on paper. Finally, the entire group came together for a large Group discussion.

Here are the thoughts from the Group Discussion:

**Big Picture**

If you can't see Diversity, are we diverse?
What are the barriers in the system?
What are the areas to work on first?
How do we share our values?
How do you learn empathy?
Accountability must be expanded.

**Conversations**
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are all needed to stay stable. There is a sense of being when all perspectives are included. The process of all three needs to be active, not passive. To say we are DEI is not enough. We will fall short of meeting all goals for all people, but we will always try. There is positive intent to hit the target. We need to have a positive mindset but have to realize we are not all the same, we've grown up in different places, and circumstances, so we are innately different, however, we all need to be heard, acknowledged, and accepted. We have to come to the table with humility and open-mindedness.

People want to be heard and they want to talk. They need to be invited to the dance implicitly, not broadly/generically. Active: provide accommodations and reach out to the community (how do you reach everyone?) What is 'enough accommodation'?

The statement 'everyone is welcome' has to be backed up by actions. Have we benchmarked those things which may be a barrier to participation/inclusion in the UVA community? While we may not have grown up together, we have a shared environment here at UVA.

We have to get uncomfortable. We need to expand accountability, set goals, own failures, and address issues needed to improve. Need quantitative and qualitative. Train people to recognize Inequity in day-to-day community and speak out to recognize and stop it. Bias Interrupters are trained and permitted to foster an environment of belonging.

We have to limit assumptions.

**Small Group/Two-table discussions**

All ideas listed during small group discussions in the three categories from the teams are aggregated here in no particular order:

**Diversity**

- Not Limited
- Life experiences
- Broad community representation
- Be who you are
- Value to learn and grow
- Acknowledging Differences
- Active v. Passive
- Appropriate representation, age/ability/race/religion/neuro/ethnicity/socioeconomic, educ., hiring practices
- Recommending
- Allyship
- Representation
- Shared environment
- Relative
- Various metrics: geography religion, race/ethnicity
- Seeing how the different parts/dimensions can work together
- Open-minded/no judgement
- Requires engagement
- Quantifiable/qualitative data
- presence of differing perspectives

**Equity**

- Removal of barriers
- Requires creative problem solving
- Meet individual needs
- Acknowledge individuals
- Help people to meet clear consistent expectations
- Proactive
- Reaching out
- Persisting
- Leveling the playing field – and Identifying resources to level that field
- "Saying" doesn't make it so

- Evaluating policy, structure, system
- Meeting them where they are in there knowledge respectfully
- Integrity Governing competitive process
- Open-minded/no prejudgement
- Humility
- Empathy and understanding of different backgrounds
- Access
- Intentional
- Level the field – people standing on boxes at fence
- Making space
- Physical and personal considerations
- Goal of diversity
- Requires engagement


**Inclusion**

- Accepting viewpoints
- Need to be invited in
- Requires listening
- Having a voice
- Trust is required – open discussion
- Choice to be included, ensuring all groups – purposefully and forward-thinking
- Seat at the table
- Channels of Trust – Break Diversity barriers
- Empathy
- Belonging
- Building
- Retention
- Safety
- Being asked to the dance
- Other perspectives to improve business model
- Personal value felt with have seat at the table
- Belonging
- Goal of equity
- Quantitative and qualitative data
- Assumption >>> factual feedback >>> improvement
- Humility
- Openminded/no prejudgment/welcoming
- Requires engagement

**Constituency Remarks submitted by Staff to Senator**

**What is diversity?**
- Various differences
- Formal definitions: race, socio-economic, culture
- Drives innovation
- Culture has different perspectives: once shared with everyone it is a great thing
- Knowledge
- Creativity, abundance of talent and abilities
- People grow – explore inner curiosities
- Live outside our comfort zone
- Opportunity to make things better; exposes you to difference
- If you are only around one group of people – exposure is helpful
- All unique qualities of each individual coming together
- Ensuring appropriate representation
- Appreciating these unique qualities and social identities
- Means racial / gender / gender identify / social economical / neuro-diverse / age / backgrounds
- How are we different but how are we similar
- Just because we are in the same group, doesn't mean that we are the same
- Diversity encompasses all of who we are - skin color/age/where we live/how we work - patients, students, and those who do not
- Acknowledging and seeing everyone as an individual
- Anyone with a different upbringing, experience background or culture, gender, family gender identity. Bring different perspectives
- any characteristic that makes us unique
- expansive and growing as we increase awareness and consciousness
- Culmination of what makes up a person or population: gender, race, socioeconomic status, location, nationality.
- Representation of different characteristics within a population. A little bit of everything represented.


**What is Equity?**
- Fairness and justice
- Recognize that everyone does not start from the same place; must acknowledge the systemic structure that maintains bias
- Take everyone into consideration (example: same job title and pay grade) consider all things are equitable and making adjustments as needed

- Equity requires all people not remain in their comfort zone; learn and educate themselves on how differences are created (ex: 25% of people in US have an MBA)
- What's fair is not equal
- Equity is education and knowledge (acknowledging disparities and where they come from)
- Tell the truth about marketing the inequality of groups
- Providing same opps
- Identify where we might be falling short w/o someone expressly stating
- Maybe providing more resources/support so that everyone gets to the same opp. Equality vs equity
- Being heard and accepted - action behind the words
- Not just being invited to the table - but see and hear me and what I'm saying
- Have action behind the conversations - what actions are we taking?
- Those voices of previously under-represented be heard
- Creating a safe space - very important to creating equity - must have trust
- Try to understand or feel accepted here
- Flex Work policy - a lot of discussion around equity when talking to workplace, meeting with patients/customers/internet availability, pay for parking - commuting cost - increase in utility bills and costs of setting up a home office
- Tend to hear one person's perspective
- Loud voices are heard most often - quiet voices are more willing to bear the burden and not push for their views to be heard
- Digital Poverty - employees and students who work in rural America – lack of broadband internet access – should be a basic utility
- Creating equitable work environment that everyone can work and thrive
- giving people their individual shoes, making sure the shoe fits individually and meets the needs of the person's experience and wants. Taking into account their preference for the shoes.  You don't pass out the same pair of shoes. Visuals of fences and having the different -  considering barriers and to just how to we equip someone to overcome the barrier, requires thinking about WHY the barrier is even there, and can we work on how to remove the barrier in order to help the individual.
- Equity is the process of identifying the resources to create a level playing field for all. Just because everyone has the same box doesn't mean they will be able to see over the fence
- Not the same as equality. Not everyone needs the same thing to get to the same place. Recognizing and respecting differences between folks.

EQUALITY     EQUITY
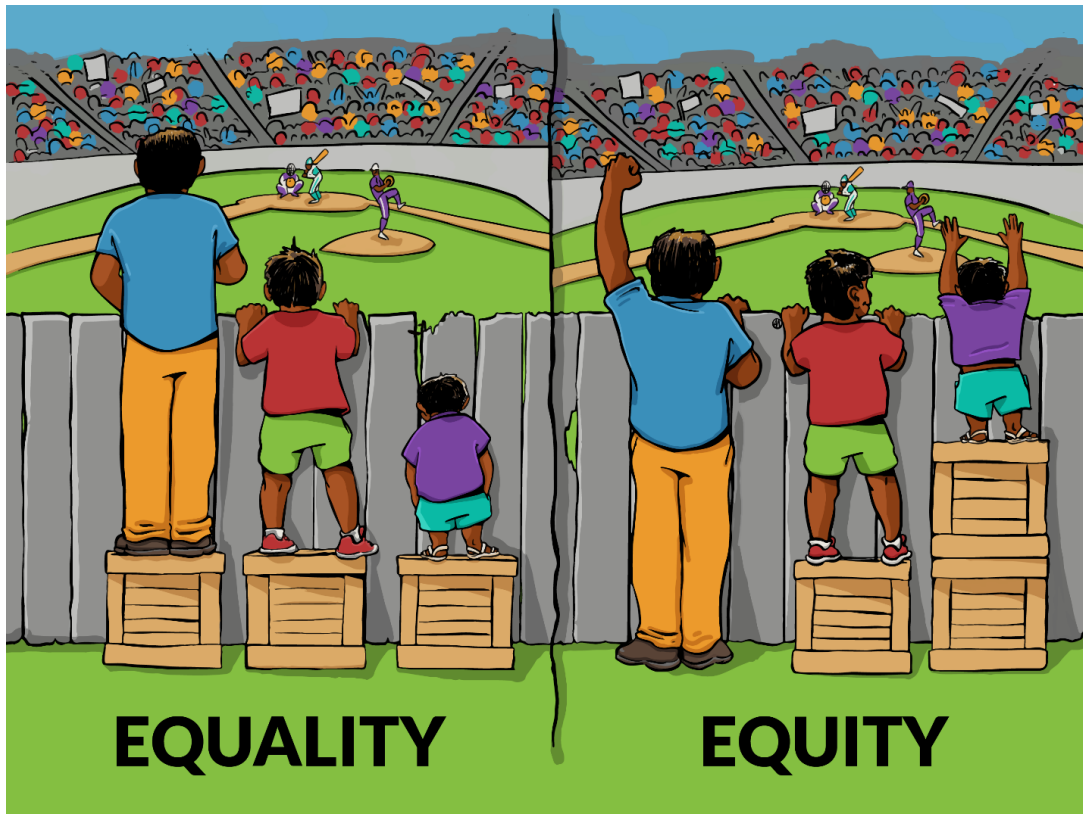
**What is Inclusion?**

- Everyone feels involved, respected, belong, and part of the culture
- Feels safe and valued
- Sense of belonging
- Having a seat at the table (invited to the dance and being asked to dance)
- Not having to keep asking what DE and I means,
- Part of culture
- Utilizing the talents of all people; especially when diversifying the organization
- Measuring the actions, you want to achieve
- Listen to all voices; have healthy dialogue
- Help change minds – meaningful change (no buzz words)
- No box checking exercises
- Appreciation of diversity/non-judgement
- Understanding and accepting different variables
- Including both remote/flex workers and in person workers in all meetings
- Physical limitations - accessibility issues
- Staff - disability physical - handicaps ramps - limited space, e.g. if employee works in Brown Hall and parks at the stadium, they need to wait for a bus to come along and hope it is handicapped accessible to get them to McCormick Road
- Handicapped employees cannot always find a parking space – very limited availability
- Buildings - no elevators

- Historical building cannot be changed
- Accommodations for each employee based on needs
- Hold zoom webinars - EOCR recommends any virtual meetings open to the public should offer closed captioned - written transcripts
- Every video / town call - closed captions on live as well as transcripts
- Offering translatable websites via a free Google plug-in, written materials in multiple languages (at least the top four languages spoken by UVA employees
- Making sure everyone feels welcome in a space and a sense of feeling welcomed and non-judged.
- A sense of belonging and that they feel a part of the group.
- Someone should be able to bring their whole self and unique perspective to the space. Climate has changed in many ways during hybrid environment – deep and meaningful conversations, some people are connecting easier by making people feel safer. The hurdle is to make sure people are there.
    - The opportunity to exclude people has been taken away with hybrid environments. You don't have the lunchroom or water cooler anymore, so you don't have to interact with, or sit next to, those you don't want to all the time.
    - As a recruitment effort we are able to bring a more diverse hiring opportunity to the university. We are able to place people from all over the world and make sure they have more options to accommodate their lives and find employment.
    - This virtual platform is new and is interesting. We get to know each other better from remote because there was life around. Added another dimension to people.
    - We get candidates that may not have otherwise been able to secure employment due to other life circumstances and can now afford the same opportunities due to remote work availability. We can put the human back in human resources and add in the diversity of our HR workforce and how we support it from within.
- Including individuals and keeping an open mind to include those who share different experiences. Honoring diverse ideas, opinions and strategies and ensuring they are included in a safe and respectful collaborative environment.
- Being seen. Can be harder to measure and can be more difficult to influence as it can be a very individual process.
- Makeup of leadership - in HR or across grounds
- Talk about and train about basic new manager training/development. Integrate into PD. How measure? Make ppl accountable? What do they envision employees participating in, contributing to mission.
- Inclusive excellence - from leadership at university. Elsa involved in SVPO and Facilities. Ensuring these efforts are carried forward, revisited.
- Concept of fairness - comes into DEI. How talk about fairness. Esp ppl who don't see DEI initiatives as being applicable to them. How to have these conversations. Its hard - everything is enflaming.
- Do we actively measure pre/post initiatives?

- DEI cannot be generalized - we don't all just fit into a box
- More education - not voluntary but mandatory
- How have people been excluded from the workforce
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities bridges
- Creating leadership training for all employees around daily DEI practices in the workplace and in personal life
- When you say something, "think, was that offensive to anyone?"
- Bring awareness into daily life - unaware of languages we use and the phrases we hear all the time
- Adjusting language to current day practices – don't use old language that makes new employees feel excluded
- Language is important - maternity leave vs parental leave, lactating mothers vs. lactating parents
- Can't be a "check-box" type of training
- Meeting people where they are; acknowledging where they come from because the journey defines and develops each individual. Create a space where everyone realizes their impact.  Change behavior, not beliefs.
- Create a safe space for dialogue and difficult conversations.  This is done very well for UVA students, but not always for team members.  For decades and longer the overarching mentality was come to work, do your job, leave your problems at the door. That doesn't work, there are generations of people who have never developed the skills to have hard conversations
- Have vulnerability as an organization and acknowledge and then work through some of the negativity that exists about UVA and Charlottesville.  Create community involvement for our teams, especially new members who may be new to the area and looking for activities outside of work.  Latinx ERG has been v. successful; others like this would be beneficial for more underrepresented groups and our teams.
- Create conditions that will result in the best outcomes.
- We have a siloed approach sometimes and I'd like to see a more coordinated effort, so we all grow together.
- Rowing together or just being able to see where all the boats on the lake are (transparency). I don't find it unique to UVA but so often we look to find the holes in the boat.  "Hey there's a boat out there, want to join" – It is purposeful to know what boats are on the lake to reduce redundancy as well as helping to remind ourselves and new people about what's happening and how you can get involved.  Often communication is the hurdle that stalls out.  Also, I'd like to see a better sense of ownership and pride that DEI is a part of everyone rather than just a group or position - it is everyone's responsibility,  a value that needs to be often reminded.  We don't do a great job in holding people accountable when we witness exclusion in the work environment.
- It would be helpful that there is accountability from Senior Leaders and although the tone of this meeting is set by leadership, we'd like to be more involved in how they are able to or wish to ensure DEI efforts are incorporated consistently and everywhere more.  Can we

have more transparency? Can we know what our leaders are planning, or discussing?  What are the strategies they want to implement?

- Transparency, accountability and leadership; as a comms person I think there is a rich culture here, but someone new coming into it may feel automatically excluded; potential employees and new hires could be made to feel more a part of that culture too.
- May be helpful to publish HR's strategic Inclusive Excellence plan https://dei.virginia.edu/inclusive-excellence
- Are groups on the same page as far as policies and practices that promote DEI? For example: training for search committees.
- Hoping that pipelines and pathways helps underrepresented groups gain employment at UVA. This program will provide some one-on-one support with applications, etc. that will hopefully boost equity.
- Increase diversity of hiring by tapping into different markets such as working with alums or students from HBCUs to increase interest and applicant pools.
- Hybrid or fully remote schedules can contribute to DEI mission by allowing employees flexibility.