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CIC Mission Statement

The core mission of the Committee for an Inclusive Community (CIC) is to foster an inclusive environment in the Department of Psychology. The CIC will further that goal by (1) providing opportunities for the Department to discuss diversity and inclusivity and integrate these values into our research, teaching, and mentorship and (2) collaborating with additional campus resources.

Communicate & Collaborate

Welcome to the second edition of the newsletter published by the UO Department of Psychology Committee for an Inclusive Community (CIC). We hope you find this newsletter informative and helpful. Included is a detailed report about the survey completed by Psychology Department members (faculty, graduate students, and staff), as well as details on available grievance procedures, a letter from our chair, a reflection on membership in the CIC, and a detailed discussion of microaggressions.
Whistleblowers and Drug Cartels: On Power Structures in Academia
By Nick Allen

A few years back, a professor of public policy at Leiden University in the Netherlands wrote a blog post called “How academia resembles a drug gang” (https://alexandreafonso.me/2013/11/21/how-academia-resembles-a-drug-gang/). Not surprisingly, it got a lot of attention and pretty much blew up on the nerdier regions of social media. His argument was based on a chapter in the popular Freakonomics book called “Why drug dealers live with their moms”, which pointed out that income distributions within gangs was extremely skewed in favor of those at the top. Rank-and-file street sellers often earned less than employees in legitimate low-skilled jobs, such as flipping burgers at McDonald’s. The reason, the Freakonomics folks argued, why drug gangs had no difficulty recruiting new “employees” to these high risk, low wage jobs, was because of the promise of future wealth. Because of this steady supply of new employees willing to forgo current earning and conditions for the promise of future wealth and security, there is no need for the drug lords to distribute their wealth to the rank and file.

This phenomenon, which labor market economists call dualization, can also be used to understand academic labor markets. Dualization describes the divide between “insiders” in secure, stable employment and “outsiders” in fixed-term, precarious employment. Sound familiar? The tenure system in academia produces a group who has extremely stable jobs (although we don't get as rich as drug dealers, we don't get shot or go to jail either - usually), and a steady supply of people willing to forgo earnings and job stability in favor of a shot at the big time. In academia, this has been exacerbated by the increasing trend towards a non-tenure track workforce and the shrinking number of tenure track positions in US universities.

There is a lot to say about the implications of this dualization for academic careers, but one area where this workforce structure has an effect is in how we deal with issues related to diversity and inclusivity. Not surprisingly, the ranks of the insiders in academia are skewed towards those who are more privileged in our community. Moreover, academic success relies to some extent on a system of patronage, whereby one’s PhD or postdoctoral advisor has a great deal of influence over your future trajectory, both in terms of providing opportunities during your training, and providing letters of support and advocacy which can be critical to future employment opportunities. This is also true for undergraduates, who need strong letters of support to be competitive for graduate school.

The fact that a personal relationship with someone who is essentially your line manager can have such a significant impact on your prospects has both benefits and risks. Most relationships between mentors and mentees are warm, supportive, and mutually beneficial. Most advisors are strongly invested in the success of those they work with, and will support their current and former students and mentees in any way they can - usually taking personal pride and pleasure in seeing their former trainees succeed and become peers.

A Letter from the Chair
However, sometimes these relationships are less successful. What happens for instance when a student or a postdoctoral researcher has a concern to raise? What if the concern involves a critique of the advisor and how they do things? They are often faced with a dilemma about how to maintain their relationship with people who literally have the power to promote or undermine their career prospects, while also having their voice heard. The fact that the “outsider” has usually invested significant effort and forgone a more comfortable path in order to pursue this goal makes the dilemma even more pointed. And of course, this dilemma is particularly difficult for members of underrepresented and marginalized communities, who, as we noted above, already have the deck stacked against them in terms of becoming an “insider.”

We need, as community, to be acutely aware of these power structures and the impact that they have on all people, especially those who are underrepresented and disadvantaged. Thankfully, we usually conduct our day-to-day business in a collegial way, but often there is little overt recognition that some people in the room are enjoying much more financial and job stability and security than are others. The awareness of privilege and power structures is the first step to acknowledging and addressing their effects.

In many industries there are now “whistleblower” protections designed to enable people to speak out about uncomfortable truths, without experiencing personal disadvantage for doing so. In academia this issue has been thought-through to a certain extent with respect to issues like scientific fraud and misconduct, but what about practices that maintain the disadvantages experienced by underrepresented and marginalized communities? These may be more subtle, but no less powerful or important. What kind of whistleblower protections might be important with respect to these issues? And how can we make sure that people are truly protected from negative outcomes for raising these issues when their career prospects can be powerfully influenced by the opinions of those that might be the target of the concerns?

One of the goals of the CIC is to ensure that we have a community in which all voices are heard, and we need to work especially hard to make sure we hear those of members who are underrepresented amongst the “insiders”. Understanding the nature of the power structures that are inherent in our workplace, and how these structures can silence people in both overt and covert ways, is an important step towards making sure that we can achieve this.
One of the challenges department members have had in the arena of diversity and inclusivity issues is that when complaints arise, there is no clear system for how they should be addressed and resolved. Indeed, in our survey, 25% indicated that the department was doing a somewhat poor or very poor job of addressing issues as they arise, with 46% feeling our performance was adequate, and 29% indicating that they didn't know. This is unfortunate for at least two reasons. First, it can leave these unresolved complaints festering. Second, the university actually has an extensive set of resources for addressing grievances—both for the person who raised the grievance, and for the target of the grievance, if there is one. It’s just that few of us know about these resources, or about what steps we should take when a grievance arises.

To familiarize the department with this information, we’ve prepared the flowchart below, which takes you through each step one can take, and each resource available. More extensive instructions to accompany the flowchart are available here: http://tinyurl.com/UOpsy-grievance

Note that all of the resources are external to the department. Moreover, the CIC itself is not involved in hearing, resolving, or adjudicating. Our purpose is to bring you the information so that you can seek out the many trained individuals who are already available on campus.
Results of Annual CIC Survey

First, thanks to all who took the time to complete the 2015 CIC survey. Depending on how you estimate the current size of our department (faculty, graduate students, and staff), we ended up with ~65% participation.

Our goal, like last year’s survey, was to assess the attitudes, experiences, hopes, and concerns of members of our department regarding issues of inclusivity and diversity, and examine any changes in these attitudes since last year’s survey.

NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

Last year, many individuals reported having negative experiences in the department related to issues of diversity and inclusivity. The findings demonstrated that 1 in 4 respondents feel there are others they can't work with or can't talk to because of issues related to inclusivity and diversity. The statistics on those negative outcomes of inclusivity and diversity did not seem to change much in the department from last year (see Figure 1).

EXPERIENCES SHAPE RATINGS OF DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE

Given these statistics, we decided to probe what negative experiences of perceived insensitivity

Figure 1. Percentages of respondents who have and have not felt excluded/disconnected as a result of perceived insensitivity/hostility related to issues of diversity, by resulting outcome across 2014 and 2015. Blue = “Yes”, Gray = “No”, and Orange = “NA”
and lack of inclusivity within the department may have led to those negative outcomes. What we found was a little alarming; of those who responded to the question about negative experiences (83% of those who participated in the survey overall, or \( n = 75 \)), 32% reported one or more negative experiences of varied intensity (see Table 1), which at a minimum reflects 16% of the department overall. These statistics were revealing, as they might represent why individuals may have not wanted to participate in a class, considered dropping a class, or felt as though they might not want to talk to others in the department.

Therefore, this year we decided to compare individuals who experienced any form of insensitivity (Table 1) instead of using negative outcomes potentially stemming from those experiences that was used in the analysis last year. We considered this a more sensitive metric of discrimination because nearly a third of the respondents reported experiencing some negative event. Similar to what was found last year, department members who reported no negative experiences were much more likely to think the department’s performance was adequate than members who reported one or more negative experiences (Figure 3).

Descriptively, the data highlight that both those who did and didn’t experience any negative event in the department perceived that the department was lacking in recruiting graduate students and faculty from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. However, on other issues such as handling issues of inclusivity and diversity, being welcoming to those from diverse backgrounds and instructors being respectful and inclusive in class, we found that those who had negative experiences reported the department to perform less adequately than those who did not experience any negative event.

As a committee, our initiatives in this last year included efforts to mitigate some of these perceptions. We worked at providing access to teaching resources, incorporating a teaching evaluation item on inclusivity, and creating a grievance procedure for individuals with concerns. However, our survey highlighted that awareness of those initiatives were not as high as we had hoped. Only 40.5% of respondents knew that they had access to teaching resources on issues of diversity and inclusivity, although 67.11% of the sample knew about the grievance procedures that were in place. We maintain hope that an ongoing conversation about the matter can raise our awareness about others’ experiences, and help us pursue our research and teaching more collegially and productively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Percentage of respondents who reported having experienced one or more forms of perceived insensitivity and lack of inclusivity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile or threatening comments and/or gestures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial or ethnic profiling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personally-targeted offensive emails</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feared for your personal safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obscene or threatening phone calls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensive humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obscenities/threats via university-affiliated online community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt as if you were invisible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been ignored and/or disregarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3. People who have and have not reported having experienced one or more forms of perceived insensitivity and lack of inclusivity related to issues of diversity by ratings of how the department is doing on issues of diversity/inclusivity.

Recruiting a diverse group of graduate students

- No: 0.00%
- Yes: 7.84%

Being welcoming to people from diverse backgrounds

- No: 0.00%
- Yes: 84.31%

Recruiting graduate students with diverse perspectives

- No: 1.96%
- Yes: 50.00%

Instructors of undergraduate classes being respectful and inclusive

- No: 1.96%
- Yes: 76.47%

Recruiting a diverse group of faculty members

- No: 37.50%
- Yes: 20.83%

Instructors of graduate classes being respectful and inclusive

- No: 1.96%
- Yes: 62.50%

Recruiting faculty members with diverse perspectives

- No: 33.33%
- Yes: 58.33%

Fairly handling issues of diversity and inclusivity that arise

- No: 0.00%
- Yes: 58.33%

Note: Blue = “Very Poorly”, Orange = “Somewhat Poorly”, and Gray = “Adequate”. X-axes represent whether or not people reported experiencing one or more forms of perceived insensitivity related to issues of diversity. “N/A” responses were excluded from analysis. Y-axes represent percentages of the sample. Z-axes represent ratings of how the department is doing on issues of diversity/inclusivity.
Microaggression (noun): Prejudicial messages delivered through seemingly meaningless, innocuous actions (e.g., snubs, dismissive looks, gestures, tones; denigrating/hostile/negative questions or comments); a subtle, pervasive form of discrimination against marginalized people (e.g., racial microaggression; Sue et al., 2007).

Getting “called out” is not a pleasant experience. Last year during a clinical case conference discussion, with zero forethought, I used the word “deviant” to describe an individual’s sexual preferences. As tempting as it is, I will forgo explaining “what I meant by that”, because what is important about this story is what happened next. Very soon after I had made the comment, a fellow student clinician said calmly, evenly, in so many words, “I heard you use the word ‘deviant’ to describe this person’s sexual preferences, and I am not ok with that. I want this to be a place where people of all sexual orientations are respected and not judged”.

There was a moment of truth: how to respond? I could have tried to provide more context by way of justification. I could have ignored my colleague’s comment, or dismissively offered a different way of saying what I meant, keeping the conversation moving along on my terms. I could have gotten angry and launched a counter-accusation of “too sensitive!”, or written it off as an act of “political-correctness”. Sheepishly, I will tell you what actually unfolded.

For a split second I noticed the urge to defend myself, but instead, I gave the not-so-graceful preamble: “I’m going to start crying”, and then a few quiet tears began to stream down my face. I felt embarrassed and remorseful. I told her I appreciated her perspective, and I thanked her for calling me out. The shame I felt was authentic but so was the gratitude; I had unconsciously said something that had the power to hurt and alienate others, and such an action was far out of sync with my values and intentions. The comment betrayed an aspect of my unconscious psyche that I would prefer did not exist; yet there it was for all to see. I came to know the bittersweet taste of humble pie that day. It was an important experience in my development not only as a clinician, but also as a human being. I learned an invaluable lesson, thanks to my fellow student clinician’s skillful, direct, and matter-of-fact response. Having witnessed such a skillful example of calling someone out for a microaggression, I now feel more confident in my own abilities to be an ally and speak out in similar situations in the future.

The CIC is dedicated to cultivating a diverse and inclusive community within our department. An aspect of this endeavor that tends to receive a lot of attention involves recruiting diverse faculty, staff and students into our department. What is less often talked about is whether or not the current environment in our department is one where the diverse individuals who are already here feel respected and valued. All too often, well-intentioned people avoid having difficult conversations because most of us have never been taught how to have such a conversation. It is easier to be agreeable, to be polite, to ignore a perceived slight, and to walk away and keep it to ourselves. Many of us are taught to avoid confrontation and give more weight to potential consequences of speaking up than we do to the potential benefits of such an encounter. But we can do better.
My hope is that this article can raise awareness about what microaggressions are and how they affect people—and to open the door for free dialogue around this important topic. Microaggressions are often automatic, unconscious, and committed by folks who are largely ignorant about what it’s like to receive a microaggression. Unfortunately, it is often up to the person who has been negatively impacted by the microaggression, whether directly through an insult to personal identity or indirectly through the insidious, corrosive effect of microaggressions on our society, to attempt to intervene; if victims don’t say something, typically no one else will. Adding insult to injury is the risk of being met with dismay, defensiveness, and denial, if not outright hostility. I want to offer encouragement and support to all marginalized people and their allies: please, speak up. My hope is that we can co-create an environment that values difference rather than pathologizing or ignoring it.

Although “microaggression” originally referred specifically to racial dynamics negatively impacting Black Americans, more recently it has been acknowledged that members of many marginalized groups are impacted by microaggressions, based on race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical disability, religion, and/or class (Pierce, 1995; Sue, 2010).

What does the empirical literature have to say about microaggressions? Microaggressions are associated with anger and frustration, reduced subjective well-being, lower self-esteem, more physical health problems, and shortened life expectancy (Brondolo et al., 2008, Smedley & Smedley, 2005, Solórzano et al, 2000). Being the target of microaggressions has been shown to directly relate to depressive symptoms and indirectly lead to suicidal ideation (O’Keefe et al., 2014). Microaggressions may contribute to the disproportionate suicide rates in certain minority groups (e.g., the suicide rate among American Indian and Alaska Native adolescents, which is twice as high as the same-age peers of the general population; Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2010; Gomez, Miranda, & Polanco, 2011; Walker et al., 2014). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001) states microaggressions contribute to degradation of well being, self-esteem, and quality of life among affected individuals, and have been shown to contribute to racial anger and frustration even more so than overt racism (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

People of color have reported that microaggressions are more difficult to deal with than overt racism (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007). The psychological dilemmas created by microaggressions, when not adequately resolved, contribute to poor intergroup relations characterized by anger and mistrust, creating barriers towards a more egalitarian and respectful society. With respect to racial microaggressions, research has revealed an important consequence of letting them go unchecked: it prevents White people from perceiving different racial realities and owning up to their own contributing role in oppressive systems and institutionalized racism (Spanierman & Heppner, 2004; Thompson & Neville, 1999). By staying silent about these occurrences, potential allies avoid realizing and confronting their own complicity in ongoing oppression, as well as their personal direct or indirect contributions to creating and maintaining disparities for marginalized people. Because microaggressions are often ambiguous, it is essential to break the silence and talk about them.

What does it take for real change? What are the processes that guide groups to respond with collective action? One model of coping with
collective disadvantage stipulates that there are two potential routes to collective action in response to perceived discrimination: (1) an emotional route (e.g., motivated by anger), and (2) a cognitive route (e.g., motivated by a perception of collective efficacy in correcting a problem (Van Zomeren et al., 2004). Sohi and Singh (2015) explored whether emotions (i.e., anger), and cognitive factors related to efficacy, predicted collective action. They also examined whether collective action was associated with group social well-being. They found that microaggressions predicted lowered social well-being and greater anger. However, they also demonstrated that engagement in collective action in response to that anger attenuated the negative impact of microaggressions on social well-being. Collective action was also shown to predict a greater sense of empowerment. Note the prediction was not significant in the opposite direction (i.e., a sense of empowerment (entitlement?) did not lead to collective action; Sohi & Singh, 2015). This suggests that although responding to microaggressions does involve the uncomfortable experience of anger (as well as other emotions), when those emotions are channeled into action, they become a protective asset leading to greater well being and empowerment.

As a woman and a first generation college student from a definitively working class background, I have been personally affected by microaggressions at times, but I am by no means the authority on how to respond to microaggressions. I have White privilege like the next Caucasian; there are certainly those that deal with a far greater level of hostility and negative impact than I do. Also, context matters - the same action can have drastically different consequences for an individual depending on who they are (for a timely thought experiment, try to imagine what would have happened to the Malheur occupiers had they been people of color). In stating the following ideas about how to go about calling out a microaggression, I am imagining a relatively egalitarian setting where individuals are free from coercion and the threat of violence. What follows are suggestions, based on my personal and professional experiences. These guidelines are informed by Dr. Marshall Rosenberg’s *Nonviolent Communication*, my training experiences as a psychotherapist (especially the couples and parenting interventions I have done), and several hours of reading recent empirical research on the topic of microaggressions. **There is no single way to respond to a microaggression** (or to respond to being called out for a microaggression, for that matter). I invite this to be a starting point for ongoing dialogue.

1. If you’re someone who tends to care about and notice microaggressions frequently, clarify your intentions for responding to them ahead of time. Realize that while the intention of speaking out to raise awareness of the harmful impact of a microaggression is a reasonably attainable goal, persuading a resistant microaggressor to see the error of, or to change, their ways may or may not be successful. Stating what is true for you (e.g., in terms of how a comment affected you as an individual) may have more of an impact than attempts to change a person’s mind. Attempts to change a person’s mind through intellectual persuasion could be counterproductive, leading to mutual animosity and a deadlock of opinions.
2. Say something to the (micro)aggressor, as soon as you can. The tenets of behaviorism tell us that to be effective, a reinforcement/punishment needs to occur as close in time to the target stimulus as possible.

3. Saying something directly to the person, if possible, face-to-face is probably best. Having the other person right in front of you helps both parties to remember that there is a human heart on the other side, with all its imperfections and vulnerabilities. In other words, the human impact is clearer when the response is immediate and personal. Given time to seethe and brood, it is all too easy to turn someone into an unfair caricature.

4. Examples for how to get the conversation started: “I heard you say _______, which affects me or others in a detrimental way__________.” Or, “I'm concerned about what you just said. Are you saying/implying ________?” Or “When you said X, it came across to me as Y. A better way to say it is Z.”

5. Listen. Really try to hear the other person. Consider that most people probably do not intend to hurt you. Try to stay receptive. Perhaps think to yourself, “I don't need to prove anything. Let me just try to understand what this other person is saying right now.” Yes, it's awkward.

Emotions are probably running high, and defensiveness is likely. This is an understandable emotional reaction to confronting the human dilemma of disparate perspectives; documented emotional reactions to microaggressions including anger, anxiety, confusion, and contempt (Blume et al, 2012, Schoulte et al., 2011, Wang et al, 2011).

6. Be a persistent advocate for yourself: “I understand your perspective, but it still affected me in this way. I’m not ok with it. It would be better if you say X instead of Y.” Here is how it impacted me _______. Here are some implications that concern me _______.

7. If you get “stuck” (e.g., the conversation becomes circular; emotions become overwhelming) try reflecting the other person’s position back to them. Let an effort at mutual understanding guide the dialogue; it’s important to check in with the other person to be sure you’re understanding their perspective (e.g., “I understand you feel concerned and angry because there’s a need for transparency and justice in this process/system”). Bonus: Empathy eases defensiveness; people are often more able to acknowledge your perspective if they know that you understand where they are coming from first.

8. Focus on needs. What do you need? Maybe you want the person to acknowledge the impact of their words and actions on you and other affected parties. Maybe you want to discuss the implications of what they just said. Maybe you would like them not to say or do X again. Forgiveness is only rational when it seems likely the slight will not continue to recur (Davis et al., 2015). Whatever it is, turning your need for more transparency, courtesy, respect, trust, or justice into an actionable request can point the way to progress.
9. Acknowledge one another’s perspectives. Give the benefit of the doubt. See if mutual goodwill is possible. Be open to being wrong. Have the courage to change your mind. Say you're sorry. Cry if you have to! Embrace your anger. Say you need time to think about it if you need to. Revisit the issue later on if you care to.

How to respond if saying something “just makes it worse”? Trust your gut and do what is best for you. Reach out for support. Contact a trusted friend, family member, mentor, or member of the CIC. It can help to know that you’re not alone. See here for the grievance reporting procedure (http://psychcic.uoregon.edu/reporting/).

Finally, an important step in becoming an ally to oppressed people is examining one's own privilege. Understand that this process takes time and can involve some cognitive dissonance and emotional discomfort. Know too that discomfort is important in so far as it motivates collective, corrective action.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Microaggressions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Implication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Microaggressions (Capodilupo et al., 2010)</td>
<td>A male co-worker hanging pin-up pictures of women on his wall in the workspace.</td>
<td>It is ok to sexualize women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Microaggressions (Nadal, 2011)</td>
<td>Someone told me that I was “articulate” after she/he assumed I wouldn't be. Someone assumed that I spoke a language other than English.</td>
<td>Assumption of inferiority Exoticization/Assumption of foreign status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious &amp; Non-Religious Microaggressions (Hyers &amp; Hyers, 2008; Nadal et al., 2010)</td>
<td>Saying “G-d-damn!” at a professional/classroom setting or only serving food that do not adhere to certain religious dietary restrictions. Saying “Merry Christmas” to people who are Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, etc.</td>
<td>Language and behavior that is not inclusive/aware of other people’s religious practice Christianity is the norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microaggressions related to Sexual Orientation (Platt &amp; Lenzen, 2013)</td>
<td>Using “gay” as a derogatory term. Using husband and wife instead of partner.</td>
<td>Pathologizing sexual minorities Language that is not inclusive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Reflections from a CIC Member
By Mischelle Pennoyer

In my first year as a member of the Committee for an Inclusive Community (CIC), I spent a lot of time listening to the other committee members discuss equity and inclusivity as well as a myriad of complex and often, emotional topics. I began to have a greater understanding of the committee.

As the only non-academic member on the committee, I worried though. Would not being a graduate student or faculty hinder my ability to make a meaningful contribution to the mission of the CIC? In my mind, I wasn't sure if or where I fit in – what would I contribute?

In this academic year, the department was hiring for two faculty positions; each required an updated hiring announcement. As I began to write the hiring announcements, I looked at other UO postings to make sure I hadn't forgotten anything. As I read through the announcements on the UO website, I noticed many classified jobs ask the applicant to describe experience that demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

What struck me was that this important and thoughtful inquiry was not asked on any applications for UO faculty or administrative positions. Why was this? Did this oversight preclude our own department from asking future applicants to respond to a question about their roles in and contributions to an inclusive community?

As Executive Assistant, my position entails many roles and responsibilities, but also great opportunities to assess and initiate change independently. I realized that I was in a unique position to implement an important change in our hiring process. As I put together the list of documents required to apply for two faculty positions, I researched our AAU comparators. Several required a statement of diversity and/or inclusivity in the faculty application process. I composed the statement and asked the two hiring committees, comprised of faculty and graduate students, for their support and input. After some discussion, the hiring committees agreed to add the statement.

Our statement: Applicants should submit a cover letter, curriculum vitae, three letters of recommendation, statement of research accomplishments and future plans, description of teaching experience, and statement of personal contributions to foster an environment of equity and inclusion for faculty, staff, and students from diverse backgrounds.

Our department uses a web based application process for announcement of and receiving applications for positions. As I was loading in the application requirements, asking for an example and statement of equity and inclusion, I was so very proud of the department, and, of myself for initiating this change.

Howard Zinn wrote: We don't have to engage in grand, heroic actions to participate in the process of change. Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world.

My small act, while not grand or heroic, did allow me to be part of the change and to transform a small part of the world.
To bolster the department’s pedagogical training and, put our values of inclusivity into action by making a clear commitment to the importance of inclusivity in teaching practice, the CIC was instrumental in launching a course evaluation item starting Winter 2015. This item served to track progress in evaluations of inclusivity/diversity in the classroom.

The item reads as follows:

“The instructor treated all students in a fair and equitable manner regardless of group membership (age, ethnicity, gender, nationality, physical ability, political views, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, size, etc.). Please elaborate with one or more specific examples that led you to this response.”

The scale for the item is 5 – exceptional; 4 – good; 3 – adequate; 2 – somewhat inadequate; 1 – unsatisfactory. There will be a short answer section immediately after the 1-5 rating. Of note, students are not required to report specific examples in order to give a numerical response.

When the item was introduced we hoped that instructors would see this as an opportunity to become better educators, mentors, and colleagues and to take specific actions to embrace the value of diversity and inclusivity within our academic community. Indeed, what we found was an overwhelming response indicating that our instructors were doing an exceptional job at integrating inclusivity and diversity in the classroom. We also qualitatively evaluated the responses to the item using LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count). The comments to this item showed that positive emotional expressions (79.68% of affective words) far exceeded negative ones (16.5% of affective words), indicating that the overall tone of the corpus was overwhelmingly positive. Also, the analysis revealed a high clout score (76.33% of words), suggesting that students were highly confident in their evaluations.

Below we report the aggregated ratings for undergraduate and graduate classes reported for Winter 2015, when the item was first implemented. Note that “Somewhat Adequate” and “Unsatisfactory” are not included, as the averages for those two categories were less than or equal to 0.5%. Percentages displayed are averages across all classes of endorsements of each category for those students who actually completed a course evaluation (vs. relative to total enrollment). The average response rate for undergraduate courses was 70% (SD = 9.87%) and was 64% (SD = 16.60%) for graduate courses.

The CIC and the psychology department are committed to facilitating more inclusive classrooms without compromising pedagogical rigor. For more information on inclusive teaching practices, you can visit the University’s Teaching Effectiveness Program (TEP) website for useful information about inclusive teaching. In addition, the CIC has a repository of additional teaching resources under the “Resources” page on the CIC website.

Acknowledgements: We’d like to thank Sara Hodges, Lori Olson, and Amy Stapleton for de-identifying the data and helping us collate this information.
CIC Members 2015-2016

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