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Office of Equity and Inclusion

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## LANGUAGE: A tool for culturally relevant leadership

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### DURING OUR TIME TOGETHER

- Introduction to Concepts
- To Be Aware and Informed
- Personal Leadership
- Shared Learning
- Impact
  - Campus Climate
  - Collegiality
  - Academic Outcomes

*"If we understood the power of our thoughts,  
we would guard them more closely. If we  
understood the awesome power of our words,  
we would prefer silence to almost anything  
negative. In our thoughts and words, we create  
our own weaknesses and our own strengths."*

Betty Eadie



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## **CULTURE OF POWER**

- Power dynamics are ever present
- Codes and rules for participating in power structures
- Influenced and shaped by those in power
- Difficult to immerse oneself in a culture of power
- Those in power are least aware

(Delpitt, 1988)

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# Cultural Competence

## Cultural Competent Organizations

### Leadership

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## CULTURALLY COMPETENCE

- Examine our own cultures
- Understand ourselves as cultural entities.
- It requires **identifying the dynamics of difference caused by historical distrust.**
- Understanding who we are and accepting how **others perceive us** is one of the first steps towards cultural competence.

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## CULTURALLY COMPETENT ORGANIZATIONS

- Policies, practices and values of an organization that **foster effective cross cultural communication.**
- Values the people who work there, **understands the community** in which it operates.
- **Embraces its stakeholders as valuable members** of that community.
- **Promotes inclusiveness, institutionalizes** the process of learning about differences and demonstrates a willingness to expand the organization's paradigm for culture.

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## PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

- Advancing our own cultural competency
- Broad and public communication
- One-on-one interactions (relationship building)
  - Toxic exchanges
  - Macro and Micro Aggressions
- **“One more thing I can’t say?!”**

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## PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

- Developing and sustaining relationships across difference
- Willingness to confront language
  - Use of gender pronouns
  - Accessibility
  - Race
- Team accountability



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## LEADERSHIP AS A COMPETENCY

***Formal and Informal Communication:*** Communicates in an effective and authentic way in both formal and informal settings using various methods appropriate for the message (e.g., public statements, social media), as well as demonstrating comfort and confidence in writing, speaking in public, and using information technology to communicate. Actively listens and understands the needs and concerns of internal and external stakeholders.

AASCU State College and University Presidential Competency Model

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# Equity-mindedness in higher education

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## WHAT'S DRIVING THE CHANGE?

- Global political environment.
- D&I is an important component of work/educational experience.
- Research demonstrates the impact and value of diverse and inclusive teams.
- Equity practices (gender pay equity, LGBTQIA issues, accessibility) have received public attention.
- Career trajectory changes (generational differences).

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## RE-WRITING THE RULES

- Inclusion for the 21<sup>st</sup> century student body & workforce.
- Organizations (Minnesota State) operate as networks
  - D&I can reinforce organizational performance
- Managing diverse and inclusive teams
  - More effective, innovative, engaged, and creative
- Beyond training
  - Structural changes, transparent, data-informed solutions, and anti-bias strategies.
- Academic (pedagogy and curriculum)

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## Why YOUR Words Matter



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## INCLUSIVE USE OF LANGUAGE

Language plays a central role in the way human beings behave and think. Educators must be concerned about the critical role language plays in promoting fair and equitable treatment of all individuals in exchange.

- Leaders must especially be mindful of the selection and use of inclusive language!!!

## DEMOGRAPHICS TRENDS

- LatinX
- Trans
- Gender fluid
- Immigrant
- Refugee
- Students of color
- Students who identify as having a disability
- Veterans
- Economically disadvantaged
- Adult learners with children
- Multigenerational workplace



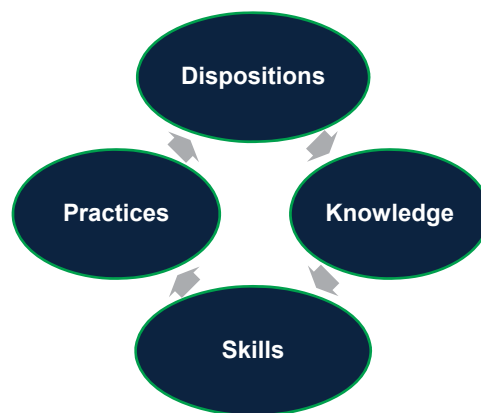


## INTROSPECTION

- Has your awareness and sensitivity around the use of language shifted because of the changing demographics? If so, how?
- What are ways in which your campus/office/team has adapted language to be more culturally responsive?

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**Culturally Responsive EXCHANGES  
include one's dispositions, knowledge, skills  
and practices**



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## INTERSECTIONALITY

- A framework for understanding the ways in which multiple aspects of our identities intersect, influence one another, and compound to create unique experiences (Crenshaw, 2017).
  - ‘A Black Disabled Gay Man’. It can be argued within the intersectionality framework that this is one identity with complex internal and external dynamics.
- How do we address multi-faceted issues without fractioning them into its constituent components?

(McCall, 2005)

## INTERSECTIONALITY

- Multiple identities create complex experiences.
- Disadvantages and advantages are subjectivities (rather than objectivities)

**Black** (*disadvantaged*) **middle class** (*advantaged*)

or

**White** (*advantaged*) **women** (*disadvantaged*)

- One person’s identity may have rank and privilege while another identity may not.
  - Illustrates the intersections of privilege and oppression

## INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IN PRACTICE

- Campus Climate
  - Accessibility
  - Under represented and marginalized populations
  - Gender inclusion
  - Inclusive spaces
- Collegiality and **relationship building**
  - One-on-one interactions
  - Messaging & communication
- Academic mission
  - Culturally relevant pedagogy and curriculum

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## ACCESSIBLE SPACES

- Accessibility
  - Accessible vs. handicapped
  - Person “first”:
    - Persons with disability vs. disabled persons
  - Non-verbal vs. verbal language
    - Do not speak louder to someone in a wheelchair.

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## UNDER-REPRESENTED AND MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS

- Land acknowledgements
  - Acknowledge the native land we (and our institutions) occupy.
  - Recognize the history
  - Provide education and learning opportunities (historical context of the campus).
- Language to recognize cultural spaces
  - Black student union vs. multicultural student center

## CAMPUS CLIMATE: GENDER INCLUSION

The language that educators use provides an important model for students and the larger community. Word choices often reflect unconscious assumptions about gender roles.

As professionals, we all need to examine our language to reduce or eliminate choices that silence, stereotype, or constrain others.

## THE USE OF PRONOUNS

In formal communication is recommended that the use of the singular pronouns, “he, him, his, she, her, hers” be avoided except when referring to a specific person. The following examples illustrate a more inclusive approach:

### Repeat the Noun

- **Example:** You provide an environment where all the child’s physical needs are met and where **his** health and safety are not endangered.
- **Change to:** You provide an environment where all the child’s physical needs are met and where **the child’s** health and safety are not endangered.

## PRONOUNS

Approach: **Use Plural Pronouns**

**Example:** Each inspector should ensure **his** staff is aware of the cost.

**Change to:** Inspectors should ensure **their** staff are aware of the cost.

### Use a Neutral Noun, Title or Other Description for the Pronoun

**Example:** He will check the doors each night.

**Change to:** The **security officer** will check the doors each night.

## MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATION

Language should be used in a way that accords respect to all people. When faced with a situation describing people in general, consider alternatives to the generic “man” label. People do not necessarily hear the word “man” the way the writer or speaker thinks they will.

### **Non-Inclusive /Inclusive**

- Mankind vs. humanity
- Manpower vs. labor
- Freshman vs. first-year student
- Is the booth manned? Vs. Is the booth staffed?

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## COLLEGIALITY

### **Titles and forms of address**

Exclusive language is no longer appropriate and inclusive terms should be used.

Assumption that certain roles were only for men or only for women.

### **Non-Inclusive / Inclusive**

- mailman vs. mail carrier
- policeman vs. police officer
- stewardess vs. flight attendant
- foreman vs. supervisor

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## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Cultural competency matters in one-on-one interactions and developing and sustaining collegial relationships.

### -MICROAGRESSIONS

- “I’m going to whip them into shape!”
- “What she’s trying to say is...”
- “Is that your natural hair? Can I touch it?”
- “You are so articulate!”
- “Next time can you smile during our conversation?”

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## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING



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## ACADEMIC APPROACHES

- Student-ready approaches to teaching in which students' unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote student achievement and a sense of well being about the student's place in the world.
- Curricula and learning materials that RESPONSIVE to the students' lived experiences.
  - Open Education Resources \*

## HOLISTIC STUDENT SUPPORT

- Culturally responsive advising
  - Reflect upon advising styles and environments in which advising is provided.
  - Reflect and address the racial disparities within academic progress and completion.



## TRAITS OF AN INCLUSIVE EQUITY-MINDED LEADER

- Commitment
- Courage
- Cognizance of bias
- Curiosity
- Cultural competence
- Collaboration

(Leadership assessment and leadership development)

## IMPROVING INTERCULTURAL SKILLS

- Be aware of your own cultural characteristics and communication style.
- Learn about your own culture and about other cultures.
- Develop relationships with those who can be cultural informants.
  - Who might these be on campus?
- Attend cultural events in your community.
- Be flexible in your intercultural interactions – reserve judgments about behaviors and intentions until you understand the cultural context.

(Willis-Darpoh, 2013)

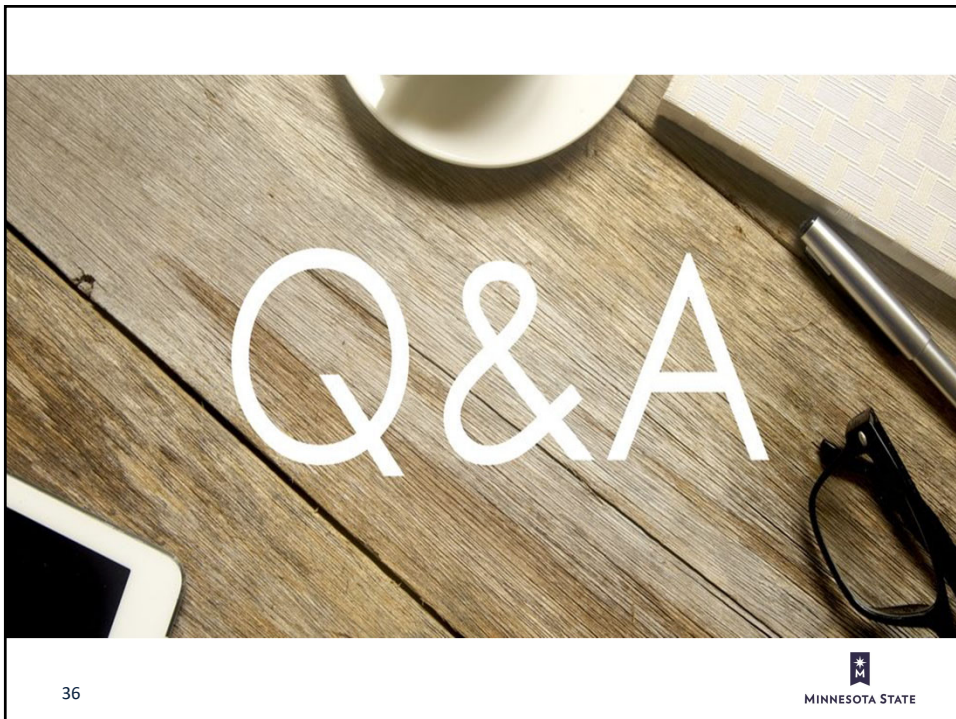
## BROAD INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT

- Employee engagement & retention.
- Culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy.
- Workforce equity and engagement.
- Inclusive spaces.
- Equity-lens to policy review
- Awareness and capacity building.

*People*

*Places*

*Policies*





MINNESOTA STATE

# THANK YOU

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