

Small Group Discussion Challenges

Your diversity committee has been working for over a year and has gained traction and developed a reputation throughout your school as a body that pushes the envelope. The leadership of your school is beginning to experience the discomfort of accountability. How do you continue to cultivate their curiosity and support? How do you make sure that your work doesn't get shut down while making big asks for change? When change bubbles up from the bottom to the top, how do we keep those at the top from feeling threatened?

You've brought in a consultant to lead an Equity 101 training for your unit staff. The next morning, a white staff member comes to your office wanting to talk about the training. The staff member believes the training was too focused on racial bias and asks why there wasn't more time spent on age discrimination. That afternoon, another white staff member comes to your office wanting to share how upset the training made her. She says "I don't have privilege because I grew up poor." How do you respond to each of these staff members?

You've worked with the leadership of your unit to develop a series of mandatory trainings on equity, microaggressions, and implicit bias. A senior member of your unit staff has been telling anyone who will listen that the trainings are inappropriate, promote a "liberal agenda," and have no place in a state institution. You're starting to field questions from staff members, some of whom don't agree with the senior staff member but aren't sure how to respond to his argument, and some of whom aren't so sure that he's wrong. How do you handle this situation? Who do you communicate with and what will you say?

You and several other hiring managers from your unit have been to sessions on creating more equitable hiring practices. You're now ready to roll out changes to your unit's hiring practices, including job posting language about how your unit values diversity, increased outreach efforts, best practices around hiring committees, and the use of rubrics when evaluating candidates. When you approach unit leadership about the changes they ask how you will measure the effectiveness of your new procedures. What kind of metrics will you design to help determine how much progress your amended hiring processes are helping you achieve?