

FACULTY SENATE COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

Be Open to Divergent Perspectives: We can expect different views to be shared. We commit to honor these views, to understand the sources of disagreement, and to work cooperatively toward common goals and solutions.

Avoid Assumptions: Avoid assumptions about any member of this body. Avoid generalizations about any social group (e.g. race, gender, disability, age, position, etc.). Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.

Use “I” Language: Understand that others will come to our discussions with different experiences from yours. Be careful about assumptions and generalizations you make based only on your own experience. When speaking about your own experiences, clarify for whom you are speaking (yourself or your department) and from what position you are speaking (e.g. faculty member, committee chair, or another role).

Own your intentions and your impact: Our good intentions might not always match the impact of our actions. Positive or neutral intentions might still have a negative impact on others.

Acknowledge and Apologize for Mistakes: Understand that we are bound to make mistakes in this space, as anyone does when approaching complex tasks or learning new skills. Strive to see your mistakes and others’ as valuable elements of the learning process. If you make a mistake, just acknowledge it, apologize for it, and learn from it.

Treat Others How They Ask to Be Treated: Speak with care. If you learn that something you’ve said was experienced as disrespectful or marginalizing, listen carefully and try to understand that perspective. Learn how you can do better in the future.

Make Space for Everyone to Speak: Share responsibility for including all voices in the conversation. If you tend to have a lot to say, make sure you leave sufficient space to hear from others. In this case, consider the “you-then-two” rule: let at least two other people speak after you before you speak again. This prevents any one person from dominating the conversation and gives everybody a chance to be heard and to listen. If you tend to stay quiet in group discussions, challenge yourself to contribute so others can learn from you.

Make Space for Everyone to Process Information and Make Informed Decisions: A large amount of information is shared during faculty senate. Normalize that taking time and space to process information is ok. Support your faculty colleagues to process information shared and discussed in this space.

TIPS TO ENACT THE INTERRUPTION STATEMENT

In 2022, the Faculty Senate adopted the interruption statement. In each meeting, the Chair will invite the body to invoke a point of interruption on microaggressions or other remarks that felt biased. Below are tips on how to raise these issues.

INQUIRE

Ask the speaker to elaborate. This will give you more information about where they are coming from and may also help the speaker to become aware of their perspective.

KEY PHRASES

“Say more about that.” “Can you elaborate on your point?” “It sounds like you feel strongly about this. Tell me why.” “What is it about this that concerns you the most?”

USE IMPACT AND “I” STATEMENTS

A clear, nonthreatening way to directly address these issues is to focus on oneself rather than on the person. It communicates the impact of a situation while avoiding blaming or accusing and reduces defensiveness.

KEY PHRASES “I felt (feelings) when you said or did (comment or behavior), and it (describe the impact on you).”

USE PREFERENCE STATEMENTS

Clearly communicating one’s preferences rather than stating them as demands or having others guess what is needed.

KEY PHRASES

“What I’d like is...” “It would be helpful to me if....”

USE STRATEGIC QUESTIONS:

It is the skill of asking questions that will make a difference. A strategic question creates motion and options, avoids “why” and “yes or no” answers, is empowering the receiver, and allows for difficult questions to be considered. Because of these qualities, a strategic question can lead to transformation.

KEY PHRASES

“What would allow you...” “What could you do differently....” “What would happen if you considered the impact on...”

REVISIT

Even if the moment of a microaggression has passed, go back and address it. Research indicates that an unaddressed microaggression can leave just as much of a negative impact as the microaggression itself.

KEY PHRASES “I want to go back to something that was brought up in our last meeting”
“Let’s rewind minutes...”

Adapted from Kenney, G. (2014). Interrupting Microaggressions, College of the Holy Cross, Diversity Leadership & Education. Accessed on-line, October 2014. Kraybill, R. (2008). “Cooperation Skills,” in Armster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual, 5th Edition, pp. 116-117. LeBaron, M. (2008). “The Open Question,” in Armster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual, 5th Edition, pp. 123-124. Peavey, F. (2003). “Strategic Questions as a Tool for Rebellion,” in Brady, M., (Ed.), The Wisdom of Listening, Boston: Wisdom Publ., pp. 168-189.