Work Group Name: Diversity and Education  
Executive Committee Review: April 30, 2019

Question 2: Training interventions – What is a reasonable expectation for growth and learning to meet our minimum criteria of awareness and knowledge?

What is the problem/situation? Individuals have varying levels of cultural awareness and knowledge and vastly different lived experiences. For some current and new members of our VCU community, the goals of cultural humility involve challenging long-held world views that require self-examination and introspection. Given these variations, setting minimum criteria and benchmarks for new and current faculty, staff, and students is challenging.

What does the literature/research have to say about it? Rubrics have been established as a validated and reliable best-practice measure of cultural awareness both at baseline and longitudinally (Deardorff, 2006). Research also shows that an association exists between participation in awareness training and improved attitudes toward members of diverse groups (Chang, M., 2002; Rillotta & Nettelbeck, 2007). For more information view Appendix A. The workgroup also created surveys to request feedback from various university groups including the Inclusive Learning Council (ILC) (Appendix B).

What does the work group recommend? The Diversity and Education workgroup created the VCU Inclusion and Diversity rubric to provide a means to self-evaluate and standardize the attainment of more diverse and inclusive environments university-wide. The rubric identifies three levels of cultural knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Individuals at level 2 “meet expectations” for the minimum criteria of cultural awareness and knowledge. The third level describes knowledge, skills and behaviors that exceed current expectations and could be considered aspirational for all VCU community members. Through interventions, we expect the movement of at least 50% from their pre-intervention rubric ratings in 3 years for current faculty/staff and 2 years for students. This rubric could be used in faculty and staff performance evaluations (Appendix C). Failure to meet cultural awareness and knowledge goals could be treated the same as not meeting other professional development goals. A central hub or mechanism should be established to enhance communication about D&I learning opportunities across the university. Faculty, staff, and students could use the central hub to identify D&I learning opportunities to achieve higher levels of knowledge, skills, and behaviors identified in the D&I rubric. VCU has established a unique D&I structure in the Inclusive Learning Council (ILC), which consists of directors and chairs of D&I committees who know the needs of their faculty, staff, and students. The ILC could provide current information about existing efforts. VCU should build upon current offerings (Appendix C) to support faculty, staff, and students and expand access to these learning opportunities. Most current offerings are typically not available to all students. The following could be considered to increase student D&I learning opportunities: 1) Build D&I learnings (like ethical reasoning and cultural awareness) into new GenEd30; 2) Expand School of Education required courses to make them available to students across the university; and 3) Create a minor in inclusion as a collaboration across various departments.
References


Rubrics have been established as a validated and reliable best-practice measure of cultural awareness both at baseline and longitudinally (Deardorff, 2006). Finding or creating a rubric for levels of cultural competence can be a helpful approach to determining minimum criteria for growth and learning, just as it serves to establish and assess baseline (and above) expectations for cultural awareness and knowledge. Research shows that an association exists between participation in awareness training and improved attitudes toward members of diverse groups (Chang, M., 2002; Rillotta & Nettelbeck, 2007).

In regards to training modalities, debate exists as to why, to what extent, and in which modes of delivery awareness training succeeds (Chang, E. et al, 2019; Lindsey et al., 2015). However, increased benefits have been attributed to programs with longer-duration and/or multiple interventions (Bezrukova, K., 2016; Chang, M., 2002; Laird et al., 2016; Rillotta & Nettelbeck, 2007). As in much human subjects research, it is not possible to show causality, however, ample evidence supports an association between awareness training and increased multicultural humility, marked by decreased prejudice, and increased engagement in additional diversity and inclusion-focused courses and opportunities. Indeed, the evidence supports the utility of such training in establishing a baseline level of multicultural self-awareness (Chang, E. et al., 2019; Paluck & Green, 2009).

Themes cited in the literature surrounding assessment of cultural awareness and knowledge include “ambivalence” toward diversity assessment, uncertainty about best practice measurement methodology, and the concern that current assessment measures may not “identify [individuals] with inappropriate attitudes” (Dogra, & Wass, 2006).
Appendix B
Inclusive Learning Council (ILC) member survey

This workgroup issued several informal surveys to various stakeholders at VCU, including the recent survey below which was sent to ILC members. The survey inquired about what their units currently offer and what they need in terms of D&I education.

A survey of University College faculty using the four questions the workgroup is addressing demonstrated that the faculty who responded (approximately 13%) were largely in agreement with the recommendations of the workgroup with the exception of mandatory training. 10 of the 12 respondents preferred voluntary training. Surveying VCU Libraries faculty demonstrated that the faculty who responded (approximately 13%) were largely in agreement with the recommendations of the workgroup. There was support for establishing a baseline,
incentivizing training, and a strong sense among respondents that this work is important and should be a priority for VCU.

Appendix C
Incorporating D&I Rubric in Performance Evaluations & Current Offerings

Incorporating D&I Rubric in Performance Evaluations

Faculty and Staff (UAP and classified)
We recommend providing some initial D&I learning opportunities for new faculty and staff hires and impressing upon them the need for ongoing diversity education through seminars, courses, workshops, forums, and other educational offerings. For current faculty, we recommend including D&I measurable goals in performance evaluations, work plans, and tenure/promotion documents as an incentive for faculty to pursue cultural competence. We further recommend incorporating measurable D&I goals in performance evaluations of UAP and classified staff.

Role of supervisors
We suggest that goals could be set relative to this rubric and that faculty and staff could first use self-assessment to determine the current status of their knowledge, skills, and behaviors. In dialog with their deans, chairs, managers and supervisors, faculty and staff could plan to attend training during the year to address gaps and increase their cultural knowledge, skills and behaviors. There is always an expectation for growth and learning; in fact, cultural competence is a lifelong process, and is something that “must be intentionally developed over time through effective learning experiences (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012).” Darla Deardorff demonstrates this in her research-based model on intercultural competence, which focuses on attitudes, knowledge, skills, and internal and external outcomes (Deardorff, 2006).

We do not recommend that supervisors be required or asked to assess a faculty member’s cultural humility. Supervisors could, though, assess the professional development faculty and staff in terms of diversity and inclusion activities and initiatives in which they participate. All supervisors should be supportive of staff seeking training opportunities to meet established D&I goals. This should be reinforced to supervisors through clear expectations and strong communication from upper management, university leadership, unit representatives from the Inclusive Learning Council (ILC), and human resources.

Current D&I Learning Opportunities

Below are a few examples of current D&I learning opportunities that could be built on and expanded to allow more faculty, staff, and students to access.

- The Division for Inclusive Excellence’s iExcel Education program is developing cultural humility education which will offer over 20 courses beginning Fall 2019;
- Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA) D&I services, education, and training opportunities for students;
- A minor in LGBTQ studies, which is being established in the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies (GSWS);
- D&I courses are offered in the School of the Arts, School of Social Work, and other academic units; and
- The School of Education is offering required courses for prospective teachers to teach in an inclusive environment.
- The CTLE’s Institute for Inclusive Teaching
- Safe Zone, Green Zone, Global Zone, and Rams in Recovery Training
Progress towards D&I goals could be managed using Talent@VCU, where employees may use the platform to search for, register and track learning.