

Creating and Working Well with Diverse Committees

Given the diversity of our institution and UVic's institutional mandate to be equitable and inclusive, diversity is a reality in all our work. Diverse perspectives are needed to gain com (re)-hl6 in.8][04 Td [(d)2.2 (ivab

- o Ethnicity/ "race"
- o Age
- o Power and position (social/ administrative/ economic/ other)
- o Disability
- o Sexuality

x

need to contain multiple persons representing multiple forms of diversity to be effectively “diverse.” When this is not possible, additional attention to soliciting and seriously considering and integrating marginalized views, including consulting resources and experts from outside the committee, is important to ensure that existing diversity can affect a committee’s work

- x Add knowledge about diversity

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Support for marginalized participants

- x Make access possible.

- o Ground rules. Set/negotiate ground rules for participation. Include elements related to listening, considering/seeking alternate viewpoints, setting aside personal agendas, etc.
- o Revisit goals Regularly revisit the goals of the committee.
- o Discuss bias Discuss bias: its universality; how it reduces our ability to hear and learn from new-to-us perspectives; ways to counteract it.
- o Facilitate interpersonal connection. Create and encourage opportunities for committee members to mingle and connect rather than simply around a table and agenda
- o Use voting where appropriate to facilitate unpressured decision making. Consensus is not always possible. Voting by secret ballot can allow participants to influence the direction of a group without needing to publicly challenge prevailing opinion or strong views.
- x Consider/Integrate diverse perspectives. When making decisions or recommendations, reflect back on the diversity of perspectives brought forward during the process and ensure they have been appropriately considered in reaching the decisions/recommendations.

What you can do to enhance your equity contribution to a committee

We all have a role to play in enhancing the equity functioning of a committee. Here are some ideas for individual consideration. Recognizing that we all have complex identities and social locations, and are engaged in wide ranging committees and topics, one of these may speak to you more than others as ways to enhance your contributions.

- x Learn about bias and discrimination. There is a wealth of research on the ways that bias and discrimination impact individuals and groups, and sideline the contributions of diverse persons. Make time to do some reading in this area.
- x Learn about diversity and diverse experiences. Do your own research on the equity dimensions of the subject under exploration, starting with individual reading and research.
- x Listen. Particularly if you often speak a lot in meetings, take time to hear out different perspectives being offered and reflect on them before commenting.
- x Suspend disbelief. Marginalized viewpoints can often be hard to hear or understand for people who have not been exposed to particular perspectives before. They often are not taken at face value, but are justified and explained away. Avoid doing this. If you don't understand, ask questions in order to understand rather than to pick apart a perspective.
- x Value alternate views. Take it as a personal challenge to understand better where the different perspectives on the committee are coming from. Such an exercise is bound to expand your understanding of the issues under discussion.

We are glad to consult with you about equity and committee work, from the composition of committees through equity practices to enhance effective work and outcomes. Please connect with us.