Practical Inclusion Strategies for Faculty & Staff

As part of the Engineer Together initiative, the College of Engineering’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is excited to share practical inclusion strategies that can be implemented both in the classroom and in the office. Whether you are a Dean, department head, supervisor, or employee, these practical strategies are something everyone can implement into their work life! This list will continue to grow and change over time, so we hope you will check our DEI website (eng.auburn.edu/dei) for the most up-to-date list so we can continuously improve our inclusion efforts within the College.

I. Acknowledge Bias
   a. Office
   b. Classroom
   c. Office and the Classroom
      i. Take the initiative to learn about different cultures (foods, festivals, religions, etc.).
      ii. Undergo bias training with prompted self-reflection.
      iii. Acknowledge that bias exists!

II. Acknowledge Holidays and Celebrations
   a. Office
      i. Provide supplemental list of employee holidays (including those not included on the official University holiday calendar) for faculty/staff who report to you. Have a conversation with those who report to you about the process of requesting a day off for religious holidays and set the expectation that employees can come to you with questions about holidays and celebrations.
      ii. Consider holidays related to food (Lent, Ramadon) when planning an event/meeting where food will be served.
   b. Classroom
      i. Incorporate all holidays into syllabus so students know you are aware of those “less celebrated” holidays such as Good Friday, Ash Wednesday, etc. Have a conversation with your class at the beginning of the semester about the process of requesting an excused absence for religious holidays. Set the expectation early on that students can come to you with questions about holidays and celebrations.
   c. Office and the Classroom
      i. Turn on the “Religious Holidays” calendar in whatever platform you use (Outlook and Google calendars both have this feature).
ii. Get those who celebrate non-traditional holidays to share their experiences and traditions so others can also learn about them.

III. Apologize and (re)Commit
   a. Office
      i. Provide structured time and guidance for self-reflections to help individuals identify problems in their own behavior. This could be incorporated into a department meeting once a month or on an as-needed basis.
   b. Classroom
      i. Include statements in your syllabus encouraging students to inform you about actions they find problematic.
   c. Office and the Classroom
      i. Identify and train third-party allies who can facilitate conversations when an apology is needed.

IV. Celebrate Inclusive Behavior
   a. Office
      i. Encourage your organization, office or department to set goals for inclusion with awards or rewards for those who meet them.
      ii. Be intentional about making sure celebrations such as birthday, engagement/baby showers, etc. are done for everyone. If you do for one, you should do for all. Treat all faculty/staff with respect and offer support.
      iii. Celebrate Black History Month, Women’s History Month, etc.
   b. Classroom
      i. Make outcomes related to respectful teamwork a part of the rubric for group assignments.
      ii. Tie Black History Month, Women’s History Month, etc. into your assignments or lectures as appropriate.
   c. Office and the Classroom
      i. Be quick to complement others when you notice inclusive behavior as a way to encourage additional efforts.

V. Consider Implications of Time
   a. Office
      i. When planning events outside of normal working hours, consider the schedules of employees with children, those who care for elderly parents and those with pets. It’s always a good idea to check with potential participants about life conflicts before planning an event after hours.
      ii. If working with people in different time zones, trade off the “inconvenient” time to schedule a meeting.
      iii. Be cognizant of religious holidays and celebrations when scheduling a meeting.
      iv. Account for commute time when scheduling a meeting or event.
v. Utilize DoodlePolls or other free software programs to find the best time for a group to meet.

b. Classroom
   i. When scheduling assignments and group projects, be considerate of students who may have jobs that prevent them from being able to meet to work on a group assignment outside of normal class hours.
   ii. Be considerate when scheduling take home exams – again, some students may have jobs that make it difficult for them to take a test scheduled outside of their normal class time.

c. Office and the Classroom
   i. Consider religious periods/holidays during the day when scheduling meetings or events. Be flexible as needed when employees or students have a religious conflict for religious reasons during the day.
   ii. Consider offering multiple times for employees or students to have the opportunity to attend an event. Consider offering an event on M/W/F and T/R to accommodate class conflicts on certain days of the week.
   iii. Understand that not everyone distributes their time in the way you do. Some can’t make things on time due to varying circumstances.

VI. Foster an Environment of Transparency and Feedback
   a. Office
      i. Provide training for leadership that includes guided conversations on how to support transparency with employees and how to effectively give feedback.
      ii. Weekly meeting with administrators to discuss “how” and why” of what we do, and offer chance for feedback and debrief on action items.

   b. Classroom

   c. Office and the Classroom
      i. Consider feedback with a growth mindset instead of a defensive one

VII. Cultivate Community from Multiple Touchpoints
   a. Office
      i. Facilitate formal introductions at events with alumni and guests.
      ii. Coordinate a meet and greet between offices and departments.
      iii. Be sure to send open invitations for lunches, events, etc. Send reminders and/or a calendar invite to help increase attendance.
      iv. Offer the same event on different dates/times so more people are likely to have the opportunity to attend.
      v. Offer the event in-person and on Zoom if possible to allow for more people to potentially have the opportunity to attend.

   b. Classroom
      i. Set aside time for students to meet junior faculty.
      ii. Encourage students to join clubs/organizations they may not have considered.
iii. Be mindful when creating student groups to ensure that you are promoting new interactions without isolating certain students.

c. Office and the Classroom
   i. Be intentional to ensure students, faculty and staff can see someone who looks like them (recruitment and career programs, marketing materials, etc.).
   ii. Create programs for populations with specific needs.
   iii. Ensure accessibility to attend programs and opportunities. Create an easy registration process and ensure point of contact is clearly noted if someone needs to request accommodations.

VIII. Food Choices at Events
   a. Office
      i. Include a disclaimer when sending out invitations to events that will include food so participants know what to expect and can plan ahead as needed.
      ii. Provide a description of the food being served, including ingredients list.
      iii. Ask during registration process for an event that will serve food if a participant required dietary accommodations that will not be met with what is being served.
      iv. Include options for major allergies and food preferences (gluten free, dairy free, vegetarian, etc.).
      v. Plan ahead for food offering at events by providing adequate choices.
      vi. Offering a buffet allows for most people to accommodate any food sensitivities or allergies (Taziki’s, Taco Mama). Always include a vegetarian and gluten free option if attendees are not placing their own food order.

b. Classroom
   i. Be mindful when passing out snacks/candy in the classroom and ensure that no students have a severe allergy to what you are passing out (i.e. allergic to peanut butter).

c. Office and the Classroom

IX. Names and Pronunciations
   a. Office
   b. Classroom
   c. Office and Classroom
      i. Ask how to pronounce at the beginning of your conversation and repeat it back. You can follow-up at the end to ask one more time and ensure whoever you are talking to that you will do your best to remember their name.
      ii. Try to correctly say someone’s name when first meeting someone. Always show an effort to pronounce their name in future interactions – everyone appreciates the effort.
      iii. Write their name down in the way it is pronounced to help you remember the pronunciation, but be discreet and remember to write their name correctly on official documents.
      iv. Acknowledge your limitations with committing a name and its pronunciation to memory. Again, the effort is what matters.
v. If you pronounce someone’s name wrong, apologize and ask for pronunciation again.

X. Utilize Gender Pronouns
   a. Office
   b. Classroom
      i. Add pronouns to the syllabus to encourage students who also want to share their pronouns with you.
   c. Office and the Classroom
      i. Add your pronouns to your email signature and on Zoom meetings to encourage others to share their pronouns.
      ii. Add your pronouns to your nametag as applicable to encourage others who want to share their pronouns to do the same.
      iii. Introduce yourself as your pronoun (Hi. I’m John Doe and I use the pronouns he/him/his).
      iv. Make the effort to use pronouns correctly!