



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Goals

The goal is an adequate language: It is important to remember that based on members' backgrounds and experiences words, actions, or presentations might be interpreted differently than intended. It is the responsibility of the person in charge to select a neutral but engaging language that brings your point across to everyone in the room.

Exercise: Pay Attention to Language

One of the most common places we accidentally alienate people is through the words we choose. Think about all the different ways your words can be interpreted and choose your language consciously. Who are you speaking to with those words?

Creating content that values everyone.

Ask yourself the following questions after you created your content:

- Do your examples, slides, and videos consistently depict a diverse group of people?
- Are women, people of color, people with disabilities, and other populations portrayed as powerful leaders and innovators, or are they depicted as victims or perpetrators of problems?
- Are people portrayed in non-traditional gender roles and in non-sexualized ways?
- Do your examples and content take a global (rather than country) perspective?

Sourcing references.

As you review the sources underlying your positions, and as you prepare to communicate those sources:

- Do you refer to a diverse group of people as experts and authorities in both your citations and your commentary?
- Do you give accurate credit, especially to marginalized groups?





Leading conversations.

While jokes and humor can help build connection and make presentations and conversations more enjoyable, they can also backfire when making certain audience members feel excluded. Consider whether you may be making demeaning jokes or comments that are not aligned with the values of the community. Jokes based on generalizations of a nationality, gender, sexual orientation are only acceptable if it is certain that no one in the audience feels offended.

- Get inspired by the SU's values: <https://su.org/about/diversity-inclusion/>

Creating power dynamics

Leading a conversation creates a position of power and authority, especially if you represent a traditionally empowered group. Consider how this dynamic plays out. Here are suggestions for creating dynamics that are inclusive and accessible:

- Focus on asking questions and listening to the opinions in the room rather than only sharing your own.
- It is also important to ask and answer questions in a manner that is sensitive to social power dynamics. For example, there is evidence that if the speaker ensures that the first audience member who asks a question is a woman, female participation is significantly increased throughout the question and answer session. -> [Get the study](#)

Addressing inappropriate comments.

- If someone makes an inappropriate comment, it's important to address that comment in a clear fashion that responds to the severity of the comment and its effect on other community members. Nevertheless, assume good intent: inappropriate comments can arise from clumsy speaking, unease with the language, unfamiliarity with cultural norms, or a lack of awareness of the need for sensitivity around the issue under discussion. In these cases, consider responding with: "Let me address a slightly different question..." or "I'm going to rephrase your question as..."
- For more blatant or intentionally aggressive comments, consider these responses: "The comment does not reflect our values. I ask that we speak to one another in respectful ways. Could you rephrase your comment more respectfully?" or "I am uncomfortable with that question/comment and I am not going to respond to it."
- On the other hand, if someone challenges you as having made an insensitive remark or behaving in an insensitive way, it's important to remember that regardless of your original intent, it was upsetting to the other person. That person may have had vastly different experiences than you, leading them to view your words or behavior differently. In that case, it's helpful to respond with empathy and understanding (rather than defensiveness); ask how you could have spoken or behaved in a way that made the person more comfortable. Ultimately, we strive to create an environment in which all members feel comfortable and fully engaged.





Navigating sensitive topics

- Encouraging your community to fully understand the challenges and innovate for all. Many topics related to technologies or artificial intelligence can contradict or challenge various religious beliefs. Key is to create a conversation that will be engaging and inclusive rather than off-putting. Encouraging open exchange about ethics of technology, what is right and wrong, and who decides what is right and wrong ensures inclusion.
- In an area of highly polarized political landscapes, political statements can honor your perspective but also nurtures an environment in which people who disagree with you will still feel comfortable participating.
- To support this culture and to identify opportunities for improvement, SU has created a process for reporting incidents, both within the organization and within programs.

