DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AMONG ADVISORY MEMBERSHIP

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Presentation Goals
provide an overview and framework for diversity and inclusion with Extension advisory groups
identify basic guidelines and strategies for improving volunteer recruitment and retention efforts
share successes and challenges

Understanding Importance of Diversity & Inclusion

What is Diversity?
The collection of human similarities and differences we carry with us at all times based on the characteristics we were born with, experiences we have had, and choices we have made.

Trainers Diversity Source Book: Society for Human Resources Management. 2005

Multiple Dimensions of Diversity
By 2042, no single demographic majority
People of color will comprise more than 50 percent of the U.S. population.
By 2050, 1 in 5 people living in U.S. will be Hispanic.
Currently 4 generations in the workplace; soon to be 5.
Disabilities affect 20% of all Americans.
Women earn the majority of college degrees awarded in the U.S.
Estimated 9 million LGBT individuals in the U.S.
Inclusive organizations have the highest employee engagement,
which in turn leads to higher performance and productivity.

US Census Bureau; The Gallup Organization. Employee Discrimination in the Workplace,

Advisory group should be a cross-section of a community or county’s demographics.
A representative advisory group is positioned to help ensure programming is suitable for the target population.
Parity is the state of being equal or equivalent to the demographics of the target population.

What does the research show?
Diversity Research Network
Workforce diversity is positively associated with higher business performance outcomes.
Racial diversity is positively associated with higher performance in organizations that integrate and leverage diverse perspectives.
Gender diversity is positively associated with more effective group processes and performance in organizations with (inclusive) people-oriented performance cultures.

Conclusion: Diversity without Inclusion will not work

Diverse teams are more creative and perform better in problem solving than homogeneous teams.
Diversity in workforce and processes results in better decision-making.
The effects of diversity are highly dependent on the presence of facilitating or inhibiting conditions in the organization;
absent facilitating conditions (inclusion) the aforementioned outcomes are reversed.

Conclusion: Diversity without Inclusion will not work

How Diversity Makes Us Smarter
Decades of research... show that socially diverse groups (that is, those with a diversity of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation) are more innovative than homogeneous groups.”

“This is not only because people with different backgrounds bring new information. Simply interacting with individuals who are different forces group members to prepare better, to anticipate alternative viewpoints and to expect that reaching consensus will take effort.”

Scientific American, September 2014.
Attracting & Retaining Diverse Advisory Councils

Reasons for Volunteering (Spearman, 2011)
1. Desire to serve others and improve the community
2. Give back to society through Extension volunteerism
3. Positive attitudes and interests about Extension
4. Desire for value and meaningful service
5. Prior positive experience with Extension

Benefits of Diverse Volunteers
- Increase total number of volunteers (and donors)
- Bring different backgrounds that bring different skills
- Relate better to diverse participants or learners
- Help bridge the gaps between clients and staff
- Bring cultural awareness and expertise that can help reach untapped communities

Barriers to Volunteerism for Diverse Populations...
- Fear of being used as a token
- Not feeling connected to the mainstream community
- Cultural emphasis on family involvement over community involvement
- Lack of identification with agencies serving diverse volunteers
- Belief that input is not taken seriously
- Economic hardships

Levels of Acceptance and Inclusion A Continuum
- Exclude: people who are perceived as different are treated as outsiders with little value
- Tolerate: people who are different may be included, but not welcomed
- Accept: recognition that people who are different can contribute valuable knowledge, skills, and insight to the group
- Embrace: engage and celebrate diversity to achieve innovation and higher productivity

Unconscious Bias
Hidden biases and positive preferences...
- are automatic responses to people and situations based upon assumptions
- may reflect cultural stereotypes learned early in life
- may result in negative prejudice – or unconscious affinities
- affect our relationships with people and groups

“It is natural to be most comfortable around people like yourself.”
Michael Silvestro, Vice President for Human Resources, Marist College
Unconscious Bias
- may come from an unconscious desire to “clone ourselves”
- may sound like:
  - “I like this guy. I just have a good feeling about him.”
  - “I’m just not sure she’s management material.”
  - “She just seems to be a good fit.”

“If we are doing what we have always done… then we’re operating from a narrow and constrained place… a place where old assumptions are always correct and where new realities never affect our assumptions.”

- Gerard Holder, Hidden Bias

What Can I Do?
- examine and uncover hidden bias and positive preferences… [website]
- examine the impact on our decisions and relationships in the workplace
- examine the effects of majority culture: “I am normal.” – Beverly Daniel Tatum
- assume personal responsibility… and take purposeful steps to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion

How to Recruit and Retain Diverse Audiences & Volunteers
- Assess organizational and programmatic culture/climate for openness to diversity
- Reach out to communities that will benefit from programs
- Commit to long term programs
- Work with community leaders
- Tailor programs and curriculum to fit
- Create recruitment opportunities
- Ask

Recruitment Steps: Pursuing a Specific Volunteer or Group
- Clarify appropriate job to be done
- Consider larger trends and cultural issues
- Where will you find the specific group or volunteer?
- How will you communicate?
- Understand motivations of specific group
- What will you say? Be honest.

Community Profiling

Board Composition Analysis
Best Ways to Retain Volunteers

1. Provide meaningful engagement opportunities
2. Provide training opportunities
3. Appreciate and recognize service
4. Respect volunteer time and inputs
5. Provide challenging opportunities for leadership improvement

Spearman, 2011

Reflective Questions

Ask yourself:
- Is recruiting diverse volunteers a priority? If so, what is the motivating recruitment factors (compliance, transformation, innovation, inclusion)?
- What is my organization’s history working with diverse populations?
- Am I willing to learn about another culture and different belief system?
- Am I willing to examine my biases?
- Am I willing to step out of my comfort zone?
- What changes (individual, programmatic, organizational) may be necessary to recruit and retain diverse volunteers?
- Will members of diverse communities want to volunteer in my organization? Why or why not?

Action Plan

Personal
What can I commit to doing more/less of personally in support of diversity and inclusion?

Professional
What can I commit to doing more/less of at work in support of diversity and inclusion?

Organizational
What can my organization commit to doing more/less of in support of diversity and inclusion?
Questions/Reflections

To reach others, we have to first know ourselves. And to contact the deeper truth of who we are, we must engage in some activity or practice that questions what we assume to be true about ourselves.

--Adapted from A.H. Almaas