

Conversation Starters

Starting conversations with supervisees about diversity, equity, and inclusion in their work is an imperative step of setting attainable DEI professional development goals. We recommend approaching these conversations with humility, grace, and a [growth-oriented mindset](#).

None of us have all of the answers when it comes to being wholly inclusive or understanding the needs of communities that we are not a part of, however, engaging in ongoing conversations about our own and others' inclusive practices (even though they may feel uncomfortable or vulnerable) is the way we grow.

Consider asking the following questions during performance evaluation conversations to better understand the strengths, needs, and goals of your employees.

- *What would you say are the things that you do to create a welcoming community through the work that you do?*
- *Since our last evaluation, what comes to mind in terms of ways that you have fostered respect for all individuals and points of view here on campus?*
- *Are you interested in brainstorming some professional development goals surrounding DEI?*
- *What do you think a diversity minded individual that works in your position acts like? What qualities do they have? How can we support your existing strengths to help you become this person?*
- *What are the things that you do in your position to promote inclusivity that others might not easily see?*

Academic Staff and Faculty

- *What inclusive practices have you integrated into your courses, programs, and practices?*
- *What have you done in your service rolls to ensure that your decisions are serving diverse campus populations?*

Office Service Staff

- *Have you ever had an interaction with a coworker or employee from a different background than you and felt as though there may have been a lack of understanding or an intercultural barrier? If so, what factors do you think contributed to this intercultural barrier?*
- *What has been your experience with DEI initiatives in your current or past office roles?*

Customer Service and Guest Support Staff

- *What would you say are your strengths in communicating across difference?*

- *In your experience, how might customer service look different when helping individuals from different backgrounds?*

Student Support Staff

- *Have you ever had an interaction with a student from a different background than you and felt as though there may have been a lack of understanding or an intercultural barrier? If so, what factors do you think contributed to this intercultural barrier?*
- *In your experience working with students, what are ways that our unit, or the University as a whole, could better serve diverse student groups? Are there any groups of students in particular that come to mind?*

Infrastructure Support Staff

- *What are DEI topics that interest you that you would like to learn more about?*
- *In your opinion, what are the ways that someone in your position can help contribute to the inclusivity of our campus that individuals in other positions may not be able to?*

Self-Assessment

We can use available self-assessments, inventories, and surveys to assess our current DEI understanding and commitment. These self-assessments help us understand where we are, and thus, the possibilities of where we can go.

The following are examples of assessments and activities to help you get started on your DEI self-knowledge journey:

- [Jennifer Brown's Inclusive Leadership Self-Assessment](#)
- Create our own [pulse survey](#), or feedback survey, using available programs and software to help assess your Unit's current DEI climate. This may help your unit or department set collective goals or create internal resources and programs.
- Seek out other inventories and activities created by Colleges and Universities to self-assess DEI understanding and commitment, such as taking a free implicit bias test from Harvard's [Project Implicit](#)