

Minutes of meeting on 5-19-2016

1. Very briefly discussed the commencement speech shared this morning:
<http://www.onbeing.org/blog/omid-safi-the-problematic-idea-of-success/8682>
 - a. Of note, the fact that we are human beings not human doings and our checking in is an opportunity to describe *how we are* rather than *how we do* or how much we have to do.
 - b. The strive to always widen the circle of who we love (not just those of the same color, the same discipline, the same belief, the same practices, the same upbringing, ...) as us.
 - c. Live in the moment and enjoy it.
2. We discussed the cultural iceberg (see diagram below):
 - a. Changing the tip of the iceberg is relatively easy but any time we remove a pic, a new one reemerges through the buoyancy of the iceberg.
 - b. Significant and lasting change requires that we address the layers below the surface, the tacit, the implicit, the unconscious.
 - c. E. gave examples of language used in schools serving students whose parents are non-native English speakers. We can request that some expressions not be used (e.g. "you have a nice accent") but that does not address the underlying value system (seeing the second language as an issue rather than an asset).
 - d. G. wondered whether this means we should always be censuring what is most likely a well-intentioned statement "you look good today", "you have a nice accent", "you look happy today" ;-).
 - e. E. The suggestion is not to censure but to use it as an opportunity to reflect: "would I say this to a "normal" (majority) person, one who is not from an underrepresented or underprivileged group. If not, why not? Does the statement point to some underlying assumption? Bias?
3. Ch. Pointed to the bulk of ADVANCE work is in educating and creating alliances with the majority who have serve as strong allies and advocates.
 - a. Most of ADVANCE work is on the bottom "half" of the iceberg and addresses implicit biases and assumptions.
 - b. By nature this is slow work.
4. Briefly discussed the checklist and how our work related to it.
 - a. The Scott Page book DIFFERENCE (that we are reading) falls primarily under the frames "Value Difference" and "Revise Engineering Culture"
 - b. Transcribed them so that we can start adapting, adding, and documenting (rationale, underlying theory, etc.).
 - c. In particular, all items refer to engineering education; we will broaden.
5. Discussion of the Book DIFFERENCE:

- a. The notion of InnoCentive, a bidding place for problems and solution is very appealing. Author notes that “problems that get solved are those that attract a diverse and differentiated pool of solvers.”
 - i. Can we create something similar for our students?
 - b. How can we promote diversity of perspectives in our classes so that
 - i. We grow students’ toolboxes
 - ii. Grow students’ appreciation of diversity and its impact
 - c. Students come to us “indoctrinated” into wanting to identify the “right” answer and get to it in the “right” way.
 - i. How can we counter that?
 - ii. How can we retrain?
6. We discussed whether there is time and space in our syllabi for supporting that type of diversity of perspectives.
 7. It emerged that collectively, we can look at example lecture plans submitted by members of this group and explore how to create opportunities for problem solving using a diversity of perspectives.
 8. So, for next week, we will look at 3-4 lecture plans and discuss how faculty can use them as a context for multi-perspective problem solving.

**Thank you, be well, do well, and see you all next week,
Fatma**

Frame 1: Equip the Under-represented group member

- Am I making an assumption that URG members need special assistance to be successful?
- Are there individuals in my classroom that need special assistance and am I aware of a variety of resources to help provide students an array of support, including URG member-specific support?
- Do I share opportunities for skill enhancement with all members of the class? Or only with URG members?
- Am I equally committed to the success of ALL students, not just the “best” students, and am I willing to do what it takes to provide opportunities for all to “thrive”, not just “survive”?

Frame 2: Create Equal Opportunity

- Are there barriers, within the learning environment created, that may inadvertently impact some students more than others based on their URG member status?
- Are there specific policies or procedures I follow to ensure equity (e.g. selection process for teamwork,) am I aware of the implications of the selections strategies I am using, and do I have alternative strategies to mitigate unanticipated negative consequences?
- Are my classroom policies transparent and designed to ensure fairness?
- Are critical accommodations necessary for diverse learners?

Frame 3: Value Difference

- Do I provide reference to and/or showcase diverse “engineers” as a regular part of what I do in class, not simply as something “special”?
- Do I seek value and acknowledge the contributions and engagement of all the students, not just individuals that look like me?
- Do I share diverse perspectives in problem solving engineering solutions?
- Do I model support for and understanding of different perspectives?
- Do I help students develop team-building and inclusive leadership skills?

Frame 4: Revision Engineering Culture

- Do I know about “social” aspects of engineering that influence equity, such as implicit bias, micro-inequities, self-efficacy, “fixed” and “growth” mindsets, the “masculinization” of engineering??
- Do I seek input from students regarding their experience of equity within the classroom?
- Do I talk with colleagues about what equity in engineering education and culture looks like?
- Do I introduce the social relevance of the engineering concepts used in class? Do I talk about how these concepts would be used in real-world applications

Academic Cultural Iceberg¹

Visible: The way we say we “get things done”

Curricula,
classroom climate,
admission, tenure,
promotion, ranking, policies,

Easily accessible

- * Relatively easy to change
 - * Not effective leverage points
- System reconstitutes tip to recover original form

The way we **really** get things done

Traditions, unwritten rules,
Experiences, narratives,
Perceptions, beliefs, biases,
Shared assumptions
Values, feelings,
Models of success

More elusive

- * Deeply seated. Takes longer, multi-faceted, repeated efforts to change.
- * Effective leverage point

1: Adapted from Edward, T. Hall, *Beyond Culture*. New York: Anchor books (1976): 13.