We Need More Allies, We Have Plenty of Friends

Researchers of higher education suggest that there are different roles that individuals play and behaviors that they exhibit in addressing issues of diversity and inclusiveness on college campuses. For example, scholars distinguish between the concepts of being a friend and an ally.

Dr. Kathleen Wong, Professor of Communication Studies at Western Michigan University, writes:

“Becoming a ‘friend’ is not equivalent to becoming an ‘ally.’ Friends may be sympathetic and genuinely supportive, but alliances require more than sympathy and support: they require action. Alliances require people to move beyond empathetic grief, rage, and anger to develop cognitive communication and affective skills, to assess the structural conditions that perpetuate injustice, and to strategize action for systemic change. Allies are proactive rather than reactive.”

A friend:
Listens sympathetically to members of marginalized communities (e.g., people of color, members of the GLBTIQ community, women) when discussing the challenges they face related to diversity; offers support quietly, personally, and privately; desires to be supportive but are not always sure how; is aware that differences affect people but are more comfortable focusing only on the similarities between people rather than also considering the differences; and is optimistic and helps cheer up the target group members when incidents occur.

In practice, a friend is the person who talks to you after the meeting to congratulate you for speaking up in support of marginalized communities and the issues impacting them. The friend implies that, if they had spoken up, they would have said the same thing you said. The problem is that they did not speak up and let you take the political risk.

An ally:
Addresses issues, not just incidents; mobilizes and organizes to respond to issues without being prompted by a target group member; is willing to take risks that may affect her own place, position, and authority within her (dominant) group; is willing to make public mistakes in front of both target groups and her own agent group(s); is visible, active, vigilant, and public (even when the target person is not in the room); is willing to recognize the inherent privilege and power of being a member of the dominant group; and views membership in the dominant group as an opportunity to bring about change.

Unlike a friend, an ally does not wait for another person to speak up about injustices, but does so immediately. Sometimes, an ally speaks up in support of your perspective, particularly in those meetings or contexts where you are the “only one.”

Dr. Jesús Treviño, Senior Diversity Officer
On Monday, November 14, hundreds of community members gathered on the Mall for a demonstration against the election of Donald Trump to the presidency. The event, “Not-My-President: College Students and Tucson Community Speaks Up,” was organized by 7 UA students, including senior Khadra Farah (Wildcat). In the Facebook event page, she wrote “WE EXIST. WE EXIST. WE EXIST. WE EXIST. Fear is a totally rational reaction to the Donald Trump presidency and amidst of all [sic] this madness, I decided it would be best to hold a peaceful protest/march so students could voice their frustrations, concerns, ideas, etc.” For about two hours, speakers and performers expressed fear and anger as well as issuing calls to action — to addressophobia, homophobia, sexism, and other forms of violence they perceived enacted by Trump/Pence and their supporters.

After the rally, participants proceeded in a march to and from Catalina Park, drawing attention particularly as they protested on University Blvd. The event organizers had obtained prior permission from the Dean of Students office and had contacted UAPD and the Tucson PD in an attempt to have what they referred to as a “peaceful protest” (Wildcat). Participants did experience backlash including chanting and signs from Trump/Pence supporters, encounters with a confederate flag, and a group of men raising their hands in the Nazi salute. Organizers were adamant that participants did not respond aggressively to these actions and instead encouraged everyone to keep on marching and chanting.

Reflecting a nationwide sentiment, the demonstration was featured alongside other university protests on CNN (as well as local news outlets). Organizers have since then created a group “We Are the Real (US)A” to continue the work (Tucson News Now). For organizers (as well as participants), this event was merely the beginning of a long fight against the platform of the president and vice-president elect.

Citations

CNN    goo.gl/Nu1q5C
Daily Wildcat goo.gl/C2sBF4
Tucson News Now goo.gl/WPHUKa
NotMyPresident Event Page goo.gl/pzoWrp
Implicit bias — sometimes referred to as unconscious bias — “refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner” (Kirwan Institute 2015).

People can hold implicit biases towards any number of identities, including races, genders, sexualities, and disability statuses.

Implicit bias is highly prevalent and can affect everyone regardless of their own identities. For example, while Project Implicit found that 88% of white Americans were biased in favor of white people, this same “strong preference” for white people was found in the results of the Implicit Association Test when administered to people of color (Johnson 2014). This calls attention to the fact that implicit bias is a part of a larger systemic and cultural issue.

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity identifies the following as key characteristics of implicit bias:

- Implicit biases are pervasive. Nearly everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as judges.
- Implicit and explicit biases are related but distinct mental constructions. They are not mutually exclusive and may even reinforce one another.
- The implicit associations we hold do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.
- Implicit biases are malleable. Our brains are incredibly complex, and the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned through a variety of debiasing techniques.

Citations:
Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity goo.gl/KM4bT5
“Black-On-Black Racism: The Hazards of Implicit Bias” goo.gl/fEa5l7

TIPS FOR COMBATTING IMPLICIT BIAS
1. The first step to changing your implicit biases is acknowledging that you have them. Try out some of Harvard University’s Project Implicit bias assessments to become more aware of unconscious biases that you may have: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

2. Consciously contrast negative stereotypes with specific counter-examples.

3. Rather than aiming to be “color-blind,” the goal should be to “individuate” by seeking specific information about members of different racial groups. This individuation allows you to recognize people based upon their personal attributes rather than stereotypes.

4. Assume the perspective of an outgroup member. By asking yourself what your perspective might be if you were in the other’s situation, you can develop a better appreciation for what their concerns are.

5. Make more of an effort to encounter and engage in positive interactions with members of other groups.
Implicit Bias

Based on recommendations for letters of recommendation for faculty, check out these tips from the Commission on the Status of Women on avoiding gender bias in reference writing. For a graphic copy, please visit: www.csw.arizona.edu/LORbias

Mention research & publications
Letters of reference for men are 4x more likely to mention publications and twice as likely to have multiple references to research. Make sure you put these critical accomplishments in every letter!

Don’t stop now!
On average, letters for men are 16% longer than letters for women and letters for women are 2.5x as likely to make a minimal assurance (‘she can do the job’) rather than a ringing endorsement (‘she is the best for the job’).

Emphasize accomplishments, not effort
Letters for reference for men are more likely to emphasize accomplishments (‘his research’, ‘his skills’, or ‘his career’) while letters for women are 50% more likely to include ‘grind-stone’ adjectives that describe effort. ‘Hard-working’ associates with effort, but not ability.

We all share bias
It is important to remember that unconscious bias isn’t a male problem. Research shows that women are just as susceptible to these common pitfalls as men. This is a problem for all of us -- let’s solve it together!

Keep it professional
Letters of reference for women are 7x more likely to mention personal life -- something that is almost always irrelevant for the application. Also make sure you use formal titles and surnames for both men and women.

Stay away from stereotypes
Although they describe positive traits, adjectives like ‘caring’, ‘compassionate’, and ‘helpful’ are used more frequently in letters for women and can evoke gender stereotypes which can hurt a candidate. And be careful not to invoke these stereotypes directly (‘she is not emotional’).

Be careful raising doubt
We all want to write honest letters, but negative or irrelevant comments, such as ‘challenging personality’ or ‘I have confidence that she will become better than average’ are twice as common in letters for female applicants. Don’t add doubt unless it is strictly necessary!

Adjectives to avoid:
- caring
- compassionate
- hard-working
- conscientious
- dependable
- diligent
- dedicated
- tactful
- interpersonal
- warm
- helpful

Adjectives to include:
- successful
- excellent
- accomplished
- outstanding
- skilled
- knowlegeable
- insightful
- resourceful
- confident
- ambitious
- independent
- intellectual
According to Imam Dr. Abduljalil Sajid, a chairman of the Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony UK, islamophobia is “the fear and/or hatred of Islam, Muslims or Islamic culture and history. Islamophobia can be characterized by the belief that all or most Muslims are religious fanatics, have violent tendencies towards non-Muslims, and reject as directly opposed to Islam such concepts as equality, tolerance, and democracy” (RISC 2011).

In the wake of national tragedies, such as 9/11 or the mass shooting at Pulse Nightclub, levels of islamophobia rise sharply; however anti-Muslim bias is, generally speaking, prominent in American culture. A 2015 YouGov poll found that 55% of surveyed Americans had an “unfavorable” opinion of Islam. 40% of participants were in favor of a national registry of Muslims, a policy rooted in anti-Muslim fear and bias (Chalabi 2015).

Features of Islamophobia

One of the first steps towards allyship is to become aware of what islamophobia looks like so that you can more effectively challenge it. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) identifies the following beliefs that underlie islamophobia:

- Muslim cultures and Islam are monolithic and unchanging
- Muslim cultures are viewed as wholly different from other cultures
- Islam is perceived as inherently threatening
- Muslims are seen as using their faith mainly for political or military advantage
- Muslim criticisms of Western societies are rejected out of hand
- Fear of Islam is mixed with racist hostility towards immigration
- Islamophobia is assumed to be natural and unproblematic (CAIR 2016)
4 Myths about Islam

Myth #1: Islam promotes hatred.
The Qur’an is centered around faith, hope, and peace. When lines from the Qur’an are used to claim that Islam is violent, these quotes have been taken out of context (Huffington Post).

Myth #2: Jihad is synonymous with terrorism.
While extremist groups have understood terrorism as a form of jihad, jihad itself is an Arabic word that means “exerted effort or struggle to better oneself.” In other words, jihad is a lifestyle commitment and can be practiced similarly to New Year’s resolutions (Huffington Post).

Myth #3: The hijab, or headscarf, is oppressive.
Almost all Muslim women who wear a hijab have chosen to dress in this way. There are only a couple of passages in the Qur’an that even address modesty, and the word hijab itself is never used. Like many other religious symbols — such as a cross or yarmulke — the hijab is a sign of faith. Reima Yosif, the founding president of the Al-Rawiya Foundation, says her decision to wear a hijab can be described as “an outward expression of an inward experience” (Huffington Post).

Myth #4: Islam is oppressive to women and to the LGBTQIA+ community.
While some Muslims use the Qur’an and Hadiths to justify patriarchy and queerphobia, many other Muslims assert that Islam demands practicing compassion, acceptance, and love (Hernann 2015). As with other religions, there are many different ways that Islam is practiced, and it is a generalization to say that Islam is anti-woman or anti-queer.

Steps Towards Allyship
1. Educate yourself about Islam, the many Islamic cultures world-wide, and the discrimination and violence experienced by Muslim communities.
2. Increase your awareness about the ways in which White, Western, and Christian privileges perpetuate islamophobia.
3. Challenge myths or stereotypes about Islam when you hear or see them.
4. When you encounter islamophobic rhetoric in the media, document it and contact an official from that media outlet (CAIR).
5. Challenge political policies that are anti-Muslim, such as discriminatory national security profiling, immigration discrimination, and discriminatory watchlists (ACLU).
6. Be conscientious of the ways in which your attempts at advocacy may unintentionally silence or patronize Muslim community members. Instead, focus on ways to promote their agency and leadership (Hernann 2015).

Citations:
“Top Myths About Islam” - About Religion goo.gl/3ait5h
“Why the Idea That Islam Promotes Intolerance of the LGBTQIA+ Community is a Lie” - Andrew Hernann goo.gl/sVgsCT
“How anti-Muslim are Americans? Data points to extent of Islamophobia” - Mona Chalabi goo.gl/LdDOyS
“Anti-Muslim Discrimination” - American Civil Liberties Union goo.gl/1zPWCV
“Islamophobia Pocket Guide” - Council on American-Islamic Relationships goo.gl/8oxQY
“Long Story Short: Islam” - Huffington Post goo.gl/bZloFR
Recommended Readings

**The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness - Michelle Alexander**
“Invaluable… The New Jim Crow is a timely and stunning guide to the labyrinth of propaganda, discrimination, and racist policies masquerading under other names that comprises what we call justice in America (Daily Kos).”

**Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law - Dean Spade**
“In Normal Life Dean Spade presents revelatory critiques of the legal equality framework for social change, and points to examples of transformative grassroots trans activism that is raising demands that go beyond traditional civil rights reforms. Spade explores assumptions about what legal rights can do for marginalized populations, and describes transformative resistance processes and formations that address the root causes of harm and violence” (Duke University Press).

**Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde**
“The classic collection of 15 essays and speeches by prominent black lesbian feminist writer should be required reading not only for those in cultural theory, literary criticism, gay/lesbian studies, and women’s studies but for anyone who seeks to better understand how intersecting oppressions mediate women’s lived experiences. The book includes landmark essays such as “Uses of the Erotic” and “Poetry Is Not a Luxury” and a seminal dialogue between Audre Lorde and poet Adrienne Rich” (For Harriet)

Activities

**Cultural Cuisines**
Gumbo is a Cajun stew that originated in Louisiana around the turn of the 19th century. The name is derived from the West African word for “okra.” The dish also incorporates sassafras leaves (a contribution of the Choctaw tribe) and roux (French cuisine). There are various ways to make gumbo, including with and without seafood and with or without okra. Here is one recipe:


Source: https://www.southernfoodways.org/interview/a-short-history-of-gumbo/

**DIY (“Diversity Is You”) Game**
This year, Chinese New Year -- also known as “Spring Festival” -- is a festival that celebrates the Lunar New Year. This year, the first day of Chinese New Year is Saturday, January 28 (on the Gregorian calendar) and it is the Year of the Rooster. The Lantern Festival is celebrated on the 15th day of the first month of the new year. During the festival, children carry paper lanterns and answer riddles that are written on them. Here is one way in which to make a paper lantern:

http://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-make-a-paper-lantern-in-6-easy-steps/

Source: www.wikipedia.com
The UA STEM Learning Center drafted their vision to include Inclusive Excellence as part of their work: “Vision: To advance STEM learning by connecting UA and community resources and supporting inclusive excellence efforts.”

The Graduate and Professional Student Council of UA added an Inclusive Excellence statement to the group’s Constitution: “We support and practice Inclusive Excellence, the UA strategic systemic approach to campus diversity designed to address institutional discrimination and capitalize on the benefits of diversity by embedding diversity and inclusiveness throughout all aspects and dimensions of the university.”

The College of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture as well as the College of Humanities will be sending students to the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Fort Worth, Texas May 31–June 4, 2017. This is the premier conference for exploring race and ethnicity and related issues on college campuses.

ANNOUNCING: Campus Teach-In and March on Civic Engagement and Non-Violent Protest

Friday, January 20, 2017
Teach-In 9:00 am - 5:00 pm on UA Campus (on stage in front of the Cactus Garden) with March from Old Main to El Presidio Park and concert to follow.

Mission statement: On January 20, 2017, the United States will face a new presidential administration that threatens the rights and safety of many in our community and challenges the tenets of our democracy. While some of us believe it is important to respect the outcome of the election, we also believe it is vital to step up our civic engagement under these circumstances. This march is a public demonstration that the greater Tucson area is a community that is inclusive and respects the rights and dignity of all people regardless of faith, race, gender, ability, citizenship status, or sexual orientation. We want to demonstrate in a peaceful manner that we, as a community, collectively affirm the rights of those who are most vulnerable. We want to affirm in public our solidarity to protect the rights of US citizens who are Muslim, the rights of undocumented students who came to America as children and are currently enrolled at colleges and universities, the reproductive rights of all women protected by law, the rights of individuals in the LBGTQ community, and the rights of African Americans who are victims of police shootings to a fair trial. These rights are legal and we stand together to protect them.

*Open to the Tucson community*

Monica Casper and Roberto Rodriguez, masters of ceremonies
Tohono O’odham Blessing
9:00 am Judith McDaniels, the importance of an informed citizenry and the public voices of activists
10:00 am Jeannine Relly, fact-checking and journalism
11:00 am Maha Nassar, deconstructing myths about Islam
12:00 pm Enrico Trevisani & Zaira Livier, youth organizing, DACA issues & sanctuary status
1:00 pm Nina Rabin, immigrant rights and U.S. law
2:00 pm Tyina Steptoe, history of the KKK and white nationalism in the U.S.
3:00 pm Denis Provencher and Annette Joseph-Gabriel, hate speech: what it is, where it is happening, and how to report it
4:00 pm Phyllis Taoua, organizing non-violent protest: history, dynamics, how to do it

Following the teach-in, please join us for an Inauguration Day March for Unity and Solidarity starting at 5 pm at Old Main as we march together to El Presidio Park on Alameda Street with a concert in the park to follow.

These events are open to the public and are wheelchair accessible. To request specific disability-related accommodation, please contact the event organizers.
Upcoming Events

UA Presents: MLK Video Project
Wednesday, January 11 - 4 pm
Women's Plaza of Honor

Kamasi Washington Performance
Thursday, January 12 - 7:30 pm
Rialto Theatre

Doctoral Defense: “Discourse, Social Scales and the Epiphemomenality of Language Policy: A Case Study of a Local, Hong Kong NGO”
Friday, January 13 - 12:30 PM
SUMC, Agave Room

“Injustice Anywhere is a Threat to Justice Everywhere”
Sunday, January 15 - 3:00 pm
Centennial Hall

AAHS Lecture: “Archaeology in the Valleys of the Sierra Madre Occidental, Sonora, Mexico”
Monday, January 16 - 7:30 pm
Banner - UMC, DuVal Auditorium

WRC Spring Feminist Mixer
Wednesday, January 18
Women's Resource Center

Deep Dish Lecture
Thursday, January 19 - 12:30 pm
McClelland Park

Talk - “Indigenous Glass Art: Ancient Forms and Modern Materials”
Thursday, January 19 - 7:00 pm
Center for English as a Second Language, Rm. 103

WRC Sip ’n Bitch
Wednesday, January 25
Women's Resource Center

Diversity Task Force Meeting
Monday, January 23 - 9:00 am
Old Main, Silver and Sage Room

Talk - “Visions of the Borderlands: Exploring Popular Historical Imagery”
Thursday, January 26 - 6:00 pm
Main Library , Special Collections

36th Marks Memorial Lecture: “Sex and the Constitution”
Friday, January 27 - 5:30 pm
James E. Rogers College of Law, Rm. 164

January 2017 Holidays

January 5: Guru Gobind Singh Ji's Birthday

January 6: Epiphany

January 6: Christmas for Armenian Orthodox Church

January 7: Christmas for Eastern Orthodox Church

January 14: Makar Sankranti

January 15: World Religion Day

January 16: Martin Luther King Day

January 18-25: The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

January 24-27: Mahayana New Year

January 26: Republic Day of India

January 27: UN Holocaust Memorial Day

January 28: Lunar New Years

January 28: Chinese New Year

January 31: Guru Har Rai's birthday