

Understanding Performative and Authentic Allyship

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2022 LFS Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI)-based discussion series

Session Goals

- Deepen our collective understanding of “allyship” as an ongoing process
- Reflect on examples of performative allyship in the academic context
- Discuss concrete strategies for deeper, more authentic allyship
- In small groups, draft a list of 2-5 absolute requirements (“Must dos”) for *you personally* to deepen your allyship work
- Others?

If you self-identify as IBPOC, and you would prefer to be placed in small group conversation with other IBPOC folks, please send a private message to Sahil so we can arrange this.

Allyship is...

“An active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group”

- It is not an identity—it is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people
- It is not self-defined—our work and our efforts must be recognized by the people we seek to ally ourselves with
 - it is important to be intentional in how we frame the work we do, *i.e. we are showing support for..., we are showing our commitment to ending [a system of oppression] by..., we are using our privilege to help by...*

<https://theantioppressionnetwork.com/allyship/>

Performative Allyship is...

- Individuals or institutions with privilege professing solidarity with a cause, usually in a publicly visible way, without substantive change or accountability to community
- Self-gratifying (it makes them look good/woke/empathetic)
- It allows individuals and institutions to distance themselves from critique and scrutiny through claims of solidarity
- Shallow/surface level – it does not engage with complexity
- Dangerous – can become part of a brand image or corporate value system, while IBPOC within the system still experience operational, structural, and interpersonal harm
- It can render illegitimate any effort to change processes that uphold structural oppressions (“we already fixed it, nothing to see here”)
- Ultimately, it maintains the status quo of inequitable power relations

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/carmenmorris/2020/11/26/performative-allyship-what-are-the-signs-and-why-leaders-get-exposed/?sh=5c302d1122ec>

In authentic allyship, there are ongoing, obvious, and genuine efforts to transfer the benefits of privilege to those who are systematically denied privilege...

npr.org/2022/12/16/1143222095/purdue-northwest-chancellor-mocks-asian-language

EDUCATION

A university chancellor apologized after mocking Asian languages in his speech

December 16, 2022 · 5:07 AM ET



GIULIA HEYWARD



purdue.edu/purdue/inclusion/

INCLUSION

Purdue is committed to creating and sustaining a welcoming campus for all. We bring together resources, cultural centers and diversity programs to build a more inclusive community.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

DIVERSITY DATA

HUMAN RESOURCES

Centers

Asian American and Asian Resource and



Offices

Title IX



Colleges

Agriculture



Colleges

Pharmacy

In small groups, think of examples of performative allyship, in and beyond the academic context. Use the jamboard to record your examples.

← Thread



Eve Tuck
@tuckeve



I was just asked by a colleague how I facilitate Q & A sessions—I guess the word is out that I am very deliberate about how an academic Q & A should go after a talk or panel. I think of this as an Indigenous feminist approach to facilitating academic Q & A. 1/

5:22 PM · Jun 19, 2019

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Eve Tuck @tuckeve · Jun 19, 2019



Replying to @tuckeve

Ever since I was in graduate school, I thought I hated giving public talks. But I soon realized it's not the presentation, but the Q & A that can feel so awful. Academic audiences can be arrogant, hostile, and self-absorbed. 2/

In small groups, draft a list of 2-5 absolute requirements (“Must dos”) for *you personally* to deepen your allyship work

- Focus attention on a tangible challenge, not a platitude
- Evaluate and decide what is absolutely essential for success
- Focus or redirect resources and energies where it matters
- Start with a complete list of dos
- Be ruthless in dropping dos
- Do extra rounds as needed

<https://www.liberatingstructures.com/14-min-specs/>

In small groups, draft a list of 2-5 absolute requirements (“Must dos”) for *you personally* to deepen your allyship work

- **we actively acknowledge our privilege and power and openly discuss them:** we recognize that as recipients of privilege we will always be capable of perpetuating systems of oppression from which our privilege came
- **we listen more and speak less:** we hold back on our ideas, opinions, and ideologies, and resist the urge to “save” the people we seek to work with as, with adequate resources and support, they will figure out their own solutions that meet their needs
- **we do our work with integrity and direct communication:** we take guidance and direction from the people we seek to work with (not the other way around), and we keep our word
- **we do not expect to be educated by others:** we continuously do our own research on the oppressions experienced by the people we seek to work with, including herstory/history, current news, and what realities created by systems of oppression look, feel, smell, taste and sound like
- **we build our capacity to receive criticism,** to be honest and accountable with our mistakes, and recognize that being called out for making a mistake is a gift—that it is an honour of trust to receive a chance to be a better person, to learn, to grow, and to do things differently
- **we embrace the emotions that come out of the process of allyship,** understanding that we will feel uncomfortable, challenged, and hurt
- **our needs are secondary to the people we seek to work with:** we are responsible for our self-care and recognize that part of the privilege of our identity is that we have a choice about whether or not to resist oppression; we do not expect the people we seek to work with to provide emotional support (and we’re grateful if they do)
- **we do not expect awards or special recognition** for confronting issues that people have to live with every day and redirect attention to the groups we are supporting, and the issues they face, when we do

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Thanks!