

# The First-Year Faculty Experience of Belonging at UVM

## Presenters:

- **Jane E. Okech, *Professor of Counselor Education & Supervision (CESS); Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs***, Division of Faculty Affairs (DOFA).
- **Sherwood Smith, EdD., Lecturer of Human Development and Family Science (CESS), *Senior Executive Director for Intercultural Excellence and Faculty Engagement***, Division of Intercultural Excellence

For information on upcoming FYFE workshops, please go to:

<https://www.uvm.edu/dofa/first-year-faculty-experience-fyfe-program>

# Getting Started # 1



What does the phrase “belonging” at UVM mean to you?



What specific factors or conditions do you need in order to feel a genuine sense of belonging at UVM?

# Know UVM'S Our Common Ground.

*How does this contribute to belonging?*

Our Common Ground:

Respect, Integrity,  
Openness, Innovation,  
Justice, & Responsibility

It's critical to think about  
how UVM's aspirational  
values connect to your  
work and UVM's culture

You will hear references  
to Our Common Ground  
Often

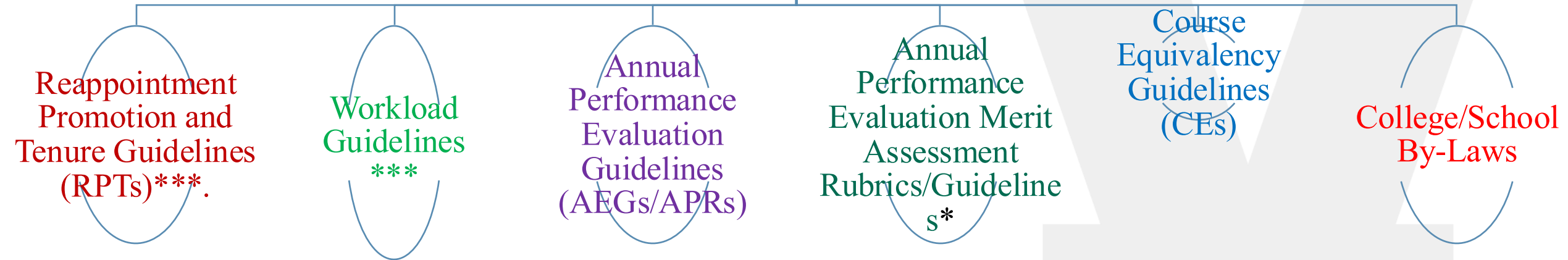
Speakers will assume you  
know it, value it, and are  
committed to upholding  
it

You will be expected to  
reference it in all kinds of  
proposals, programs, &  
reports

# Know the Expectations for your Role and Responsibilities.

*How does this contribute to belonging?*

**Each Academic unit has the following guidelines:**



# Know Your Workload Assignments & Percentages

Review your Unit  
Workload Guidelines  
and your own  
workload agreement  
per academic year.

**Teaching:** Peer/Student Course Evaluations Including, Inclusive excellence criteria where appropriate (Range from 40-100%)

**Service:** Indications of Service at Department/ College /University/ Professional Level; Inclusive excellence criteria where appropriate (Range from 5-20%)

**Research/Scholarship:** Reviews include indications of impact & responsiveness to feedback on your scholarship, including clarity of Publication status/record, Quality/Quantity (Range from 5-100%)

**Internal/External Grants:** Reviews include assessment activity and success.

**Student advising/ Mentorship:** Reviews include the use of inclusive excellence criteria where appropriate and evidence of growth, development, and responsiveness to feedback. (Range from 10-20%)

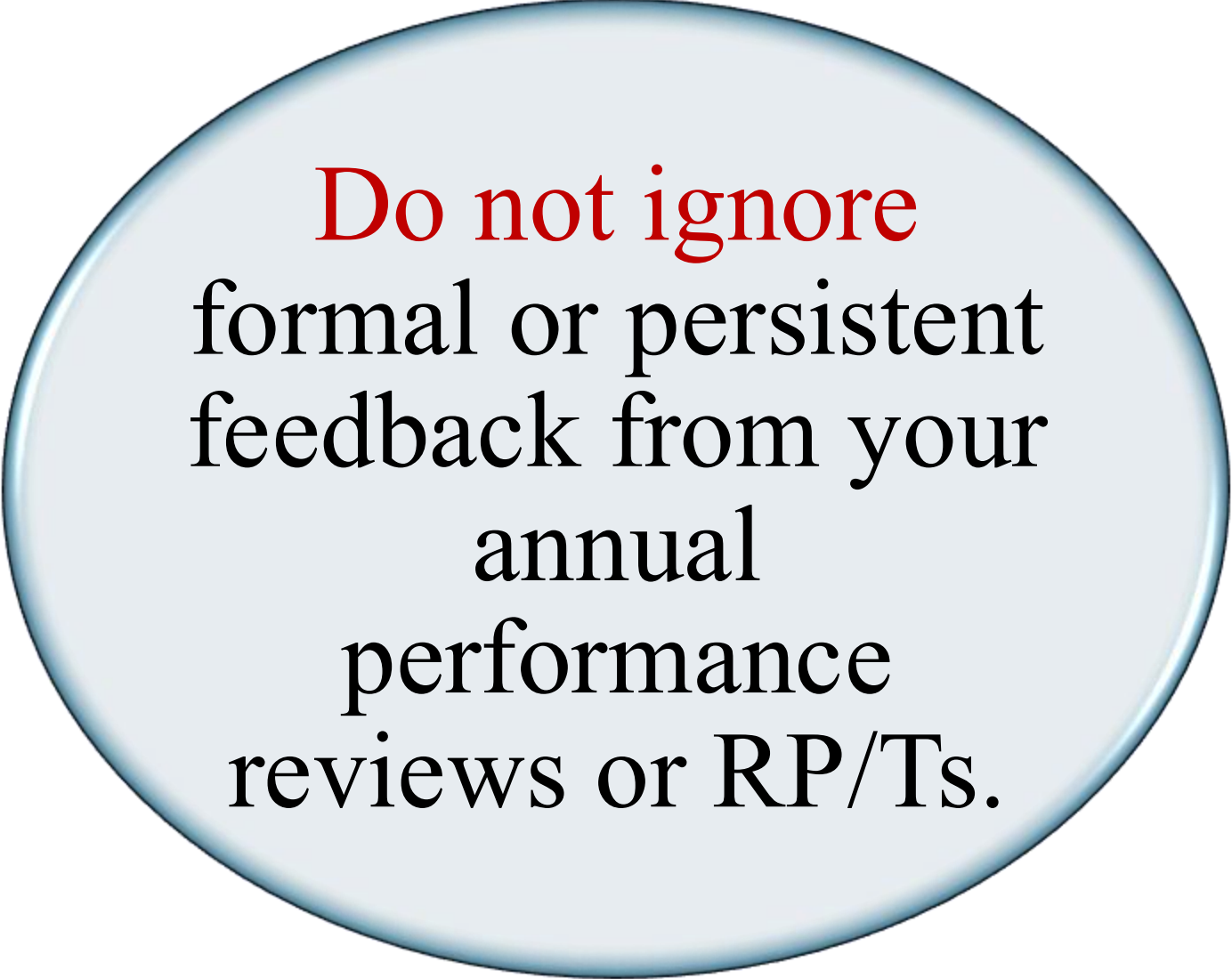
**Clinical/Extention/Library Work:** Reviews usually conducted by clinical/extention supervisors see CNHS/LCOM/CALS/LIB Guidelines

## Getting Started # 2

Which aspects of your belonging needs are currently being met by the university community?

Which aspects of your belonging needs remain unmet or inadequately addressed?

What specific suggestions do you have for how UVM could better meet new faculty's needs for belonging and community connection?



**Do not ignore**  
formal or persistent  
feedback from your  
annual  
performance  
reviews or RP/Ts.

# Know UVM Systems that Impact your Work

MY UVM: An individualized webpage that gathers together information and links to information for Students, Faculty, and Staff at UVM.

BrightSpace: University-supported Learning Management System

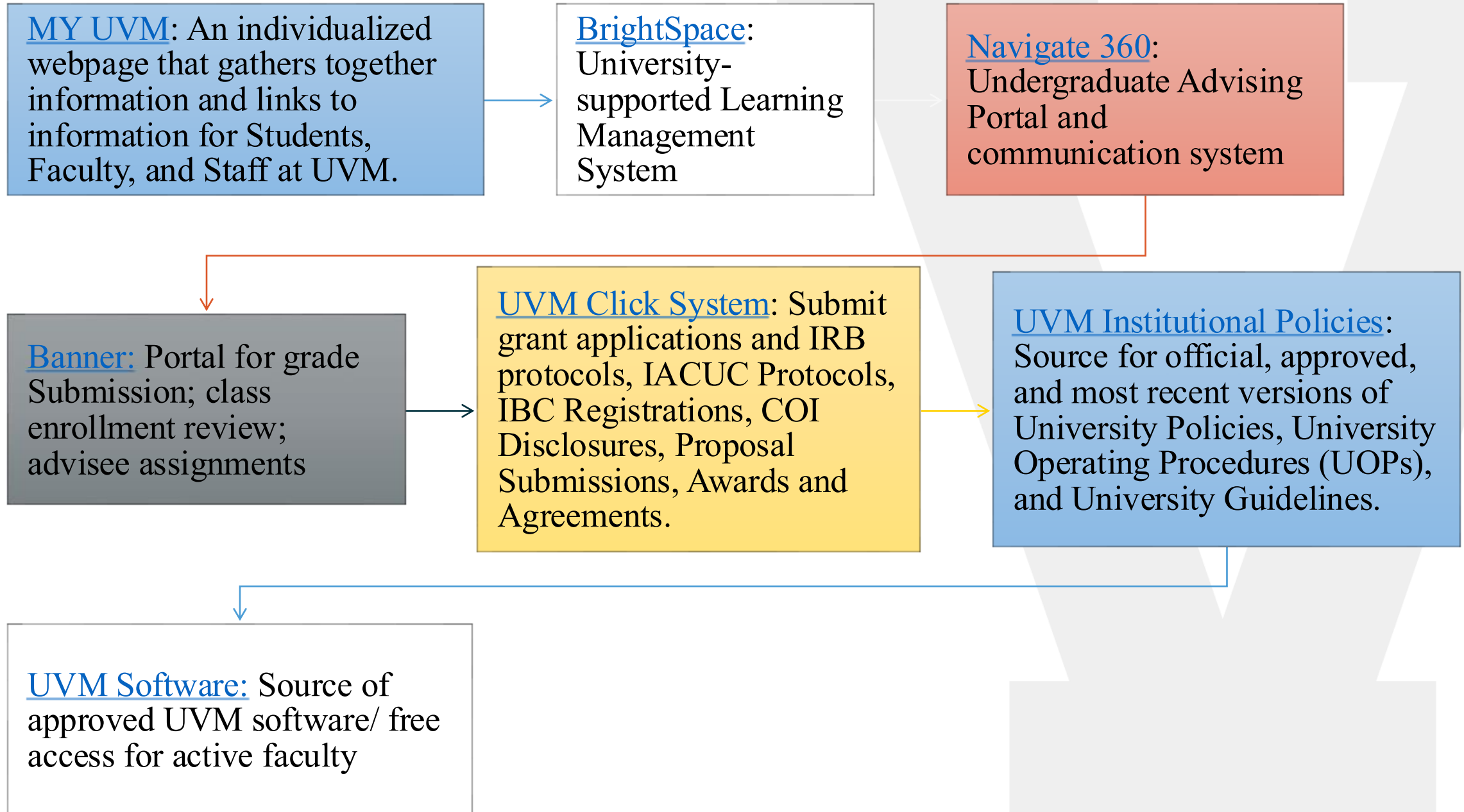
Navigate 360: Undergraduate Advising Portal and communication system

Banner: Portal for grade Submission; class enrollment review; advisee assignments

UVM Click System: Submit grant applications and IRB protocols, IACUC Protocols, IBC Registrations, COI Disclosures, Proposal Submissions, Awards and Agreements.

UVM Institutional Policies: Source for official, approved, and most recent versions of University Policies, University Operating Procedures (UOPs), and University Guidelines.

UVM Software: Source of approved UVM software/ free access for active faculty





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*What role can your  
colleagues play in  
you developing a  
sense of belonging  
at UVM?*

# Know How Your Colleagues

Your Program/Department/ College Colleagues

Your Department Chair/Equivalent in Stand Alone Schools (GSB; RSENr)

Your Unit Support Staff (PDFs, RPT support, Grant Submissions, etc.)

Your Unit Leaders: Dean, Associate Deans, Staff and their intersection with your role

Your University Leaders: President, Provost; Vice Provosts, and Vice Presidents and their impact on your faculty role and responsibilities

*Be intentional about this relationship*

*Be intentional about these relationships*

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*What role can your  
students play in  
you developing a  
sense of belonging  
at UVM?*

# Know How Your Students

## Keep Office Hours as per your Unit's Policies

- *Be accessible/ reachable and responsive*

## Know Your Students & Let Them Know You

- *Their aspirations, identities (cultural & socioeconomic context), goals, and needs*

## There are resources to support your students:

- *Such as the Center for Academic Success, ACCESS, CAPS, ETS, Identity centers, Graduate and UG Writing Centers, Tutoring centers, Student Accessibility Services, Student-Athlete Academic Support, the Office of Fellowships, Opportunities & Undergraduate Resources, etc.*

## Resources to address concerns about your students:

- *e.g., Your Chair, [Code of Student Conduct](#), etc.*

# Know Resources to Support Your Success

Professional Development  
Funds

*Consult your CBA; Chair;  
Support Staff etc.*

Teaching

*CFMP, CTL, CELO, ETS,  
WID, etc.*

Advising

*Student Services Offices in your  
Unit /CFMP*

Research/Scholarship

*Participate in the CFMP/OVPR  
joint programming*

Service

*Participate in the CFMP; Talk to  
your Chair, Mentors, etc.*

Rights/ Protections

*UVM Policies; CBA etc.*

Wellness Support

[Employee Wellness](#)

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# Discussion/Questions

DOFA@UVM.EDU

# **“Faculty Experiences: The First-Year Faculty Experience of Belonging at UVM”**

**Presenters: Sherwood Smith**

**OVPIE**

**September 19, 2025**

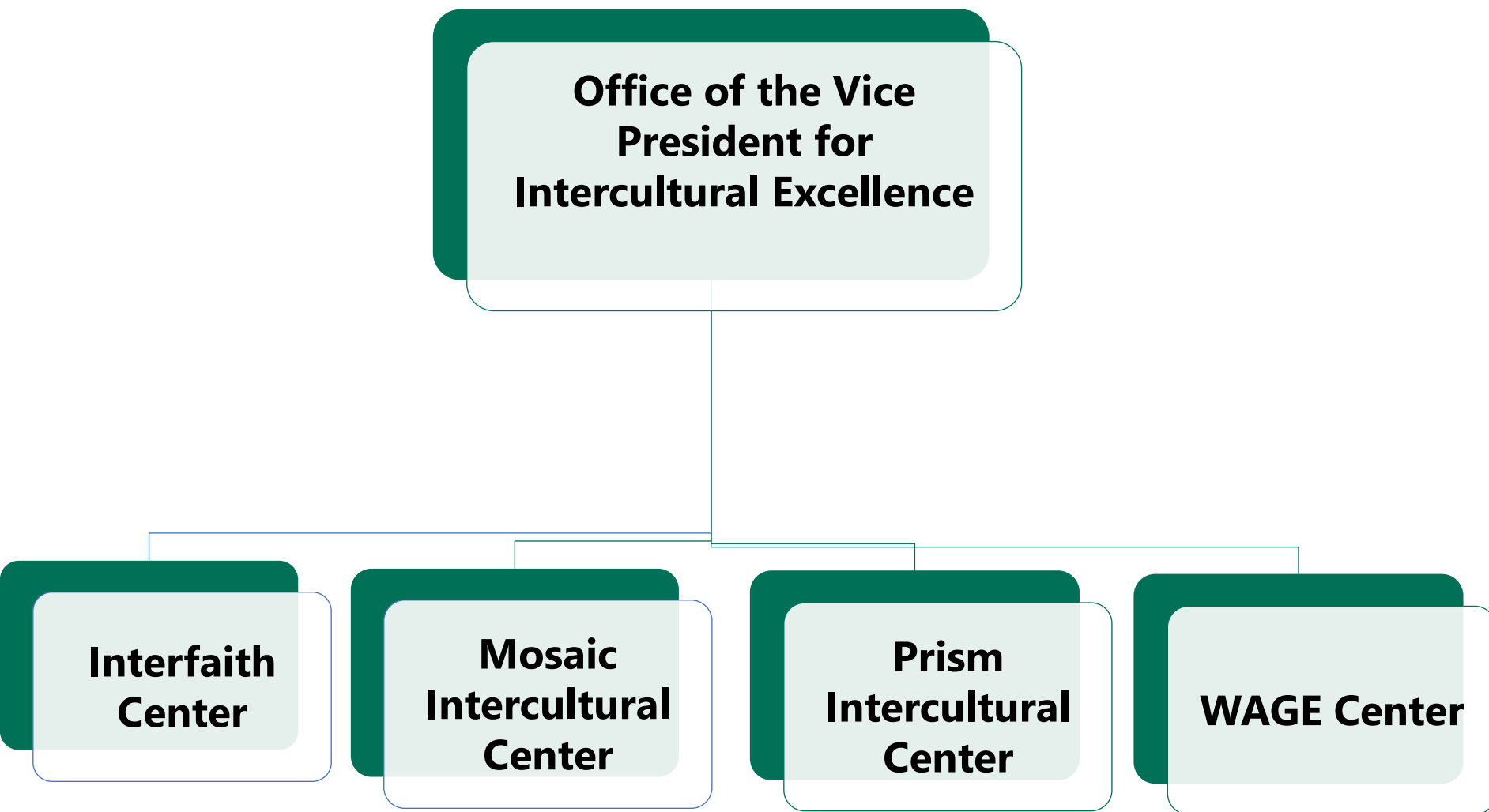
**UVM**

**12 – 1:30 PM**

# Land Recognition Statement

UVM is located on the waters and lands which have long served as a site of meeting and exchange among Indigenous peoples for thousands of years and is home to the Western Abenaki People. UVM seeks to honor, recognize, and respect these peoples, especially the Abenaki, as the traditional and enduring stewards of the waters and land. With these intentions, we will begin today by acknowledging that the institution of the University of Vermont and many in our UVM community are guests on this land. The institution's role as a guest is to respect the waters, lands, and Indigenous knowledge interwoven within them, and uplift the Indigenous peoples and cultures present on this land and within our community. While the land acknowledgment is an essential starting point, there is much work ahead as we come to terms with the legacies and trauma of Indigenous dispossession.





# **DOIE Signature Events & Resources 2025-2026**

**September 28<sup>th</sup> Andrew Harris Legacy Reception in the Davis Center**

**January 2026 Martin Luther King Jr. Keynote Celebration at Ira Allen Chapel**

**March 16-20<sup>th</sup> 2026 the Our Common Ground Symposium in the Davis Center**

**Cultural Resource Guide:**

**<https://www.uvm.edu/ie/cultural-resource-guide>**

***Allen House offers a physical drop in space for UVM faculty/staff to share community. The Leon Lawrence Lounge provides coffee/tea and can be reserved in Virtual EMS like our other space for meetings, workshops, and retreats.***

# **Faculty Experience of Belonging at UVM:**

**The Faculty Experience of Belonging at UVM:** The objective of this workshop is to support new faculty in understanding and negotiating their multiple contexts, environments and their intersections with their faculty roles, professional and personal. It seeks to support having productive engagement with UVM students, staff and faculty colleagues. The session serves as a foundational workshop on:

- a. Contextualizing faculty's experience of UVM's "our common ground", and evolving dynamics involved
- b. Exploring strategies on bridging experiences of difference and similarity (domestic & international)
- c. Finding and establishing their voice,
- d. Generating options for further resources.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR SESSION NORMS

- Listening actively
- Use “I” statements = own my beliefs
- Move at the speed of trust
- Strive to make it so everyone contributing
- Staying in difficult dialogues
- Ask questions to clarify rather first
- Respect for privacy
- Accept a lack of closure
- Appreciate cultural differences = “Platinum Rule”

# AGENDA

- Welcome/ Introduction/ Group Agreements
- Reviewing History & Our Common Ground
- Identities: Making Meanings for self and systems
- Context and complexity: Intercultural Awareness
- Perspectives on Responses
- Questions & Feedback
- Resources

# Eye Of A Fly

## MULTIPLE PRESPECTIVES CAN BE TAKEN



- The most distinctive mark of a cultured mind is the ability to take another's place, and see life and its problems from a point of view different from one's own.”

A.H.R. Fairchild

# Language & Definition Resources

## Intercultural Communication:

*“Intercultural communication skills provide the capacity to effectively navigate the complexity of human similarities and differences.” Dr. Ahmed*

Artze-Vega, I., Darby, F., Dewsbury, B. & Imad, M. (2023) The Norton Guide to Equity Minded Teaching. NY: Norton & Company, Inc

Bennett, M. (1998) Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication. Intercultural Press, ME

Gardiner, Harry & Kosmitzki, Corinne. Lives Across Cultures: Cross-Cultural Human Development, 3rd Edition. Allyn and Bacon. 2005

Sorrells, K. (2016). Intercultural Communication. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA.

# Questions?



# Discussion: Cultural Factors

Influences by the shared patterns of daily life of people, including values, norms, behaviors

Both influenced by our group memberships (age, class, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and others)

Both are passed along by **communication, imitation and socialization** from one generation to the next.

# Personal Skill Levels

c\* Sherwood's Model

Unconscious

Conscious

Incompetent

Competent

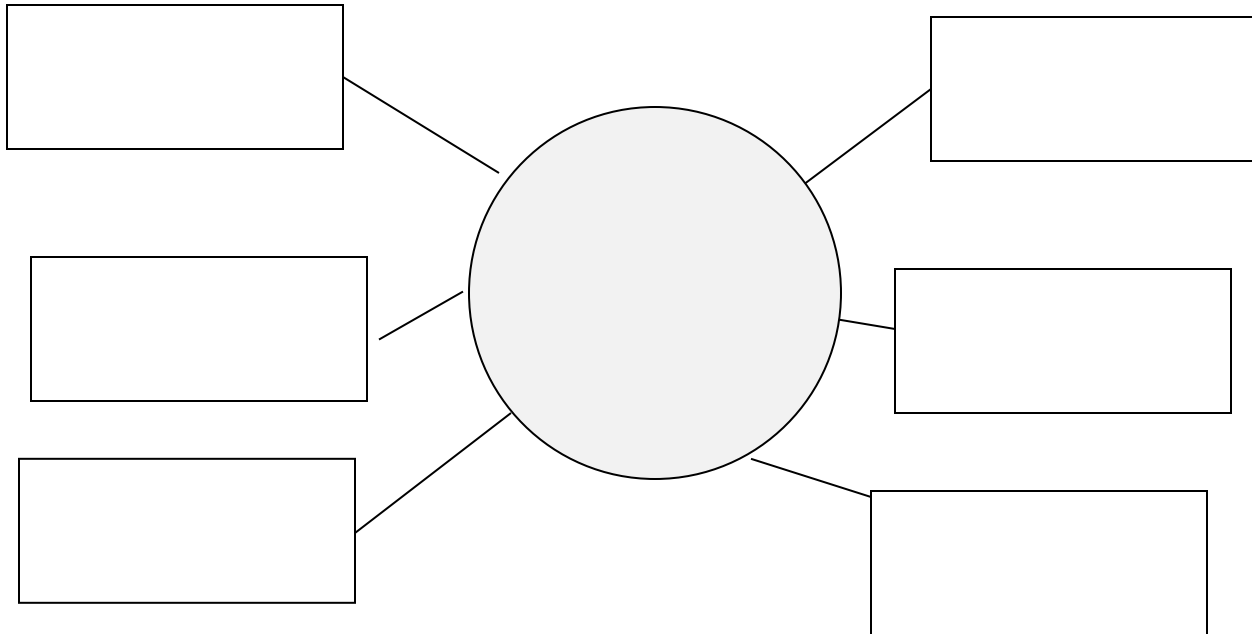
\*\*\* Preconscious consciousness<sup>12</sup>

# Some UVM Historical Points by Sherwood

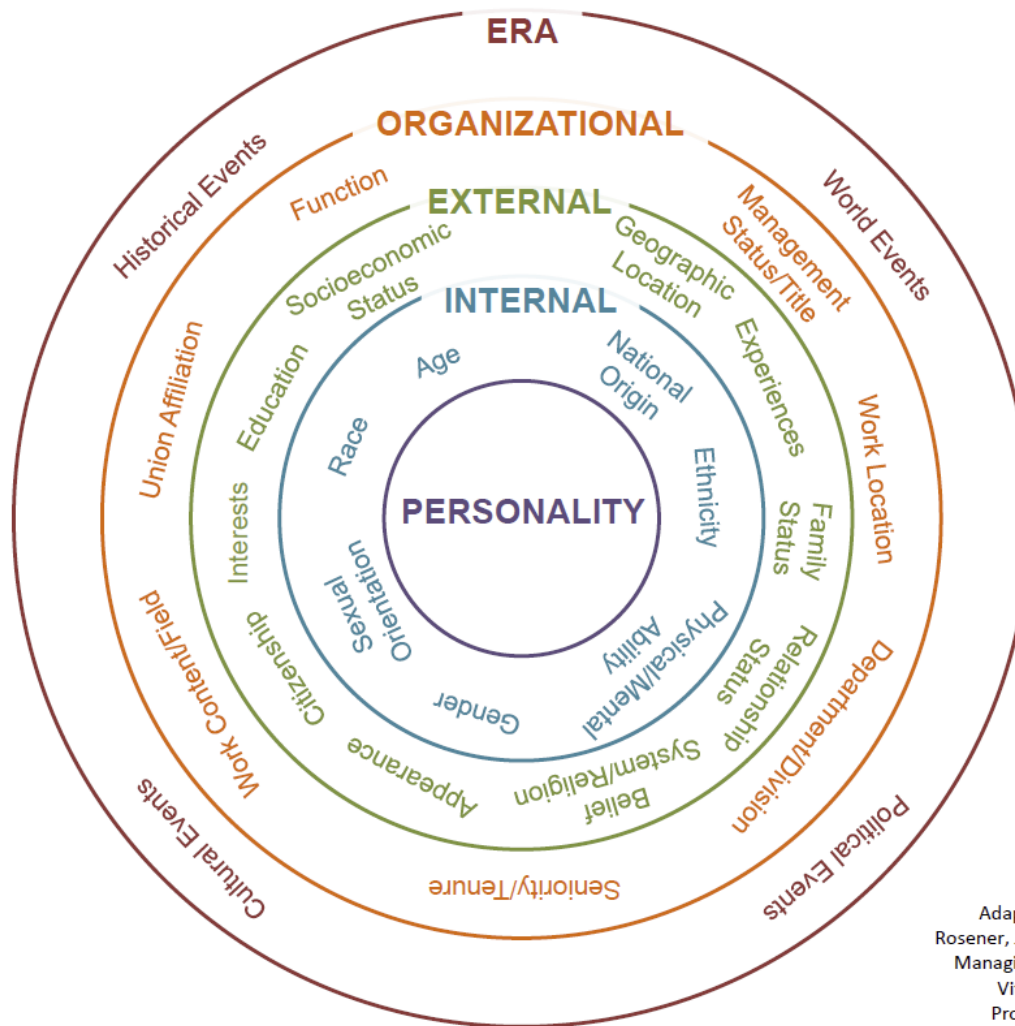
- Founded 1791 as 5<sup>th</sup> college in New England
- The initials UVM stand for the Latin words *Universitas Viridis Montis*, or University of the Green Mountains.
- Began as a private university, UVM attained quasi-public status with the passage of the Morrill Land-Grant College Act in 1862 and the addition of the State Agricultural College. [Land taken from Indigenous People.]
- In 1871, UVM defied custom and admitted two women into Phi Beta Kappa, in 1877, it initiated the first African-American into the society.
- Eugenic: Vermont approved its sterilization law on March 31, 1931 and was the 29<sup>th</sup> state to pass such a law (Gallagher, pp. 185-186).
- By 1897, the event had been formalized and dubbed “Kulled Koon’s Kake Walk.” Kake Walk did not end until 1969
- “Waterman Takeover” students who occupied Waterman in 1988 and 1991
- Today, the university blends the traditions of both a private and public university, drawing 6.2% (as of 2019) of its total operating budget from the state of Vermont.
- Additions: Anti-Semitism, Anti-Communist [McCarthyism], .....

Use this drawing. Write your name in the circle and then consider elements of your social identities: (left shared “**What I value most**” & right shared “**What others see first**”).

You will discuss the process and you are not expected to share the content.



# Person & Context Wheel Diagram



Adapted from: Loden, Marily & Rosener, Judy, "Workforce America! Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource," McGraw-Hill Professional Publishing, 1990.

# RESPONDING

- We aspire to be a community that values: **Our Common Ground Values**
- **RESPECT.** We respect each other. We listen to each other, encourage each other and care about each other. We are strengthened by our diverse perspectives.
- **INTEGRITY.** We value fairness, straightforward conduct, adherence to the facts, and sincerity. We acknowledge when things have not turned out the way we had hoped. As stewards of the University of Vermont, we are honest and ethical in all responsibilities entrusted to us.
- **INNOVATION.** We want to be at the forefront of change and believe that the best way to lead is to learn from our successes and mistakes and continue to grow. We are forward-looking and break new ground in addressing important community and societal needs.
- **OPENNESS.** We encourage the open exchange of information and ideas from all quarters of the community. We believe that through collaboration and participation, each of us has an important role in determining the direction and well-being of our community.
- **JUSTICE.** As a just community, we unite against all forms of injustice, including, but not limited to, racism. We reject bigotry, oppression, degradation, and harassment, and we challenge injustice toward any member of our community.
- **RESPONSIBILITY.** We are personally and collectively responsible for our words and deeds. We stand together to uphold our common ground.

# Intercultural Skills for Responding:

What skills are necessary?

- **Self Awareness**

- Respect–*Integrity–Openness–Justice–Responsibility–Innovation*

- **Empathy**

- Ability to listen to others

- **Interest in continuous learning**

- **Curiosity**

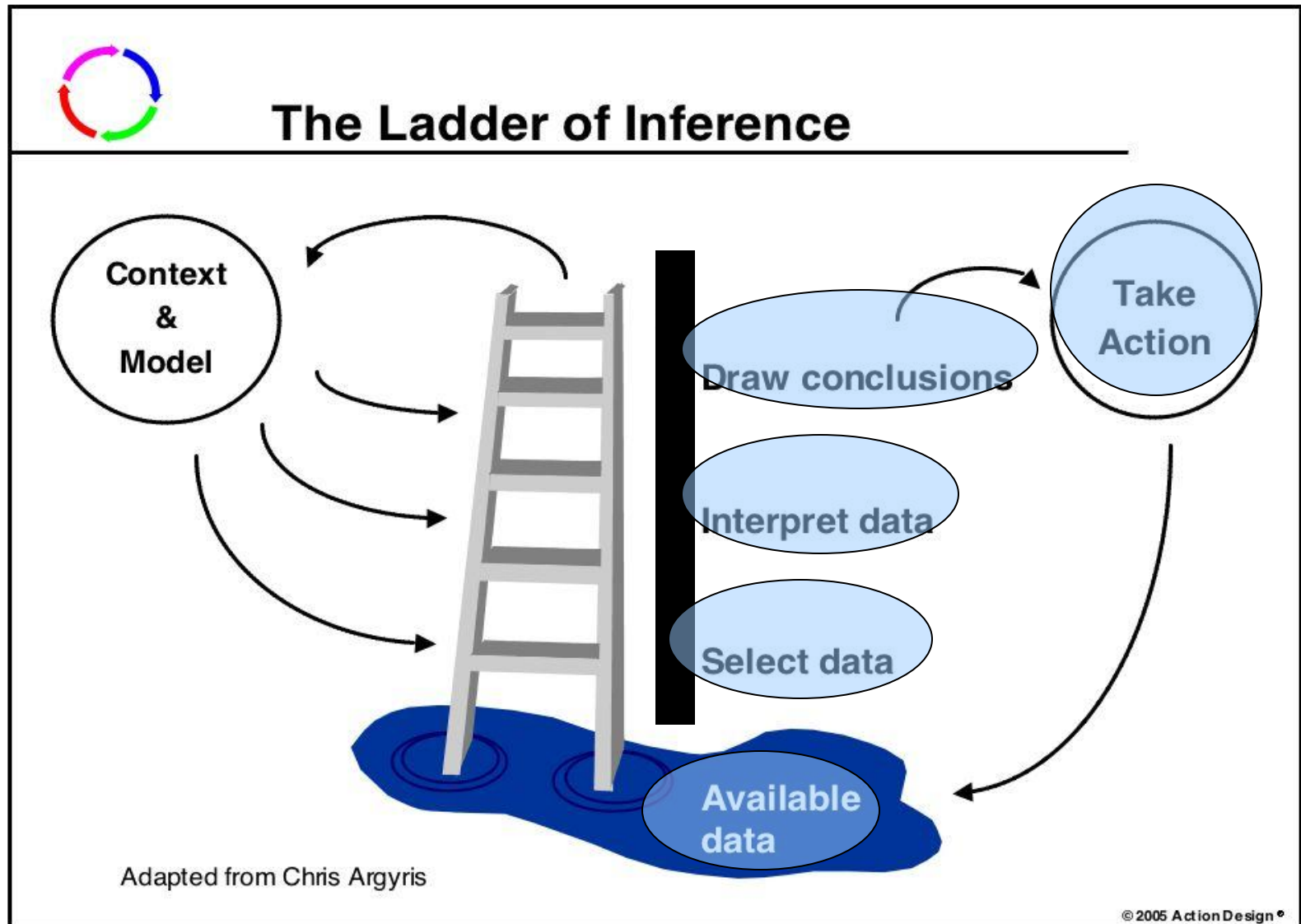
- Flexibility in thoughts and actions
- Patience

- **Tolerance for ambiguity**

- Conflict resolution skills

# Inferences Impact on Belonging

## Available? Meaningful, Valid, Good, Understandable?





# Cultural Analogy of a Tree:

## Source of our inferences

### •MORPHOLOGICAL = Branches

•Skin Color, Hair texture, Bone structure, Eye Shape, Lip Shape, Body Hair, Behavior, Language/dialect, Sports, Food, Music Clothing & others (car examples: age, class, gender, race,....)

### •STRUCTURAL = Trunk

- Legal system
- Government policies, School system
- Forms, documents, book & Media in general
- Norms & values (overt)

### •MYTHICAL – SOURCE OF MEANING = Roots

- Beliefs & spirituality
- Sanity, wellness & sexuality
- values (norms)

## **EXPERIENCE OF DIFFERENCE**



## **DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY**

<b>Denial</b>	<b>Defense</b>	<b>Minimization</b>	<b>Acceptance</b>	<b>Adaptation</b>	<b>Integration</b>

**ETHNOCENTRIC STAGES**

**ETHNORELATIVE STAGES**

**Milton, B. (2000)**

# Locating Intercultural Sites of Impact:

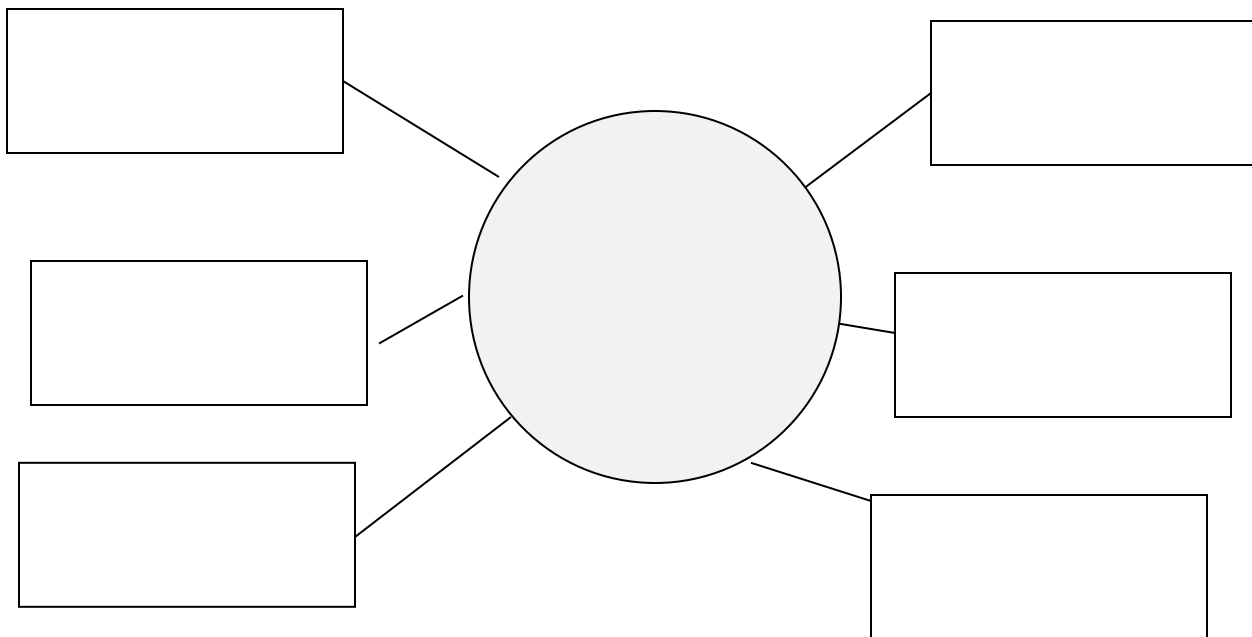
- **Institutional:**  
legal or governmental policies that support systematic discrimination based on \_\_\_\_
- **Societal Cultural ? National:**  
dominant cultural norms and values support systematic discrimination based on \_\_\_\_\_
- **Interpersonal:** individual action or inaction support cultural bias or discrimination based on \_\_\_\_\_
- **Economic:** monetary/wealth system support by cultural bias or discrimination base on \_\_\_\_\_

## Resource:

- *Toomey, S., & Chung, L. (2012). Understanding intercultural communication (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.*

REVIEW YOUR SHEET AND CONSIDER WHAT CULTURAL FACTORS MIGHT HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR ANSWERS.

(left shared “**What I value most**” & right shared “**What others see first**”).



# Cultural Levels of Assessment

## Misunderstandings and Skills

### **AREAS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

- 1. Work:**
- 2. Time & Space:**
- 3. Language:**
- 4. Roles:**
- 5. Values:**

### **SOME KEY INTERCULTURAL SKILLS:**

- 1. Self-awareness**
- 2. Curiosity / Life Long Learning**
- 3. Humility / Empathy**
- 4. Listening**
- 5. Tolerance for Ambiguity**

# DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS:

# KEY CULTURAL CONCEPTS

- Culture can impact levels of conflict, cooperation, and community
- Cultures have rules and are systems
- Culture is learned, transmitted and impacts behavior
- Culture changes understanding and values
- Dominant culture has power to define “Normal”

# Cultural Components of Personal or Group View of Conflict

## Conflict View

Inevitable & Unavoidable

Natural & Solutions Exist

Useful &  
Process/Relationship

## Outcome View

Withdrawal & Involved

Win-Lose & Bargaining

Mediation/Debate &  
Compromise



# Interrupting Bias: Calling Out vs. Calling In (Dr. Ross)

<https://edib.harvard.edu/calling-and-calling-out-guide>

## • CALLING OUT:

### ● Influence/Safety/Openness

When we need to let someone know that their words or actions are unacceptable and will not be tolerated

- When we need to interrupt in order to prevent further harm
- Will likely feel hard and uncomfortable, but necessary
- Allows us to hit the “pause” button and break the momentum

## • CALLING IN:

### ● Urgent / Influence/ Safety / No Openness

When there is an opportunity to explore deeper, make meaning together, and find a mutual sense of understanding across difference

- When we are seeking to understand or learn more
- When we want to help imagine different perspectives, possibilities, or outcomes
- Provides for multiple perspectives and encourages paradigm shifts
- Focused on reflection, not reaction
- Is *not* just a suggestion with an uptick (Don't you think you should...?)

# FEEDBACK

- Side One:

Two word for how you are feeling about the session is \_\_\_\_\_

- Side Two:

What more you would like to learn about \_\_\_\_\_

The end for now.....

- **“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”**

**Martin Luther King Jr.**

- **We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”**

- ***Elie Weisel, Acceptance Speech, Nobel Peace Prize, Oslo, 1986***

# CLOSING

# Some Fundamental Differences in World Views That Impact Belonging

## Non-Dominant USA

- Emphasize group cooperation
- Achievement as it reflects group
- Value Harmony with nature
- Time is relative
- Accept affective expression
- Extended family
- Holistic thinking
- Religion permeates culture
- Accept world views of other cultures
- Socially oriented

## Dominant USA

- Emphasize individual competition
- Achievement for the individual
- Must master and control nature
- Adhere to rigid time schedule
- Limit affective expression
- Nuclear family
- Dualistic thinking
- Religion distinct from other parts of culture
- Feel their world view is superior
- Task oriented

Goal: measure of results, not Intent or efforts

To get the results we must recognize that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact culturally appropriate resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

Modified from: <https://onlinepublichealth.gwu.edu/resources/equity-vs-equality/>



University of Vermont  
Division of Intercultural Excellence

## THE INTERCULTURAL CLASSROOM: ISSUES, PERCEPTIONS & TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

Facilitated by Sherwood Smith,  
Senior Executive Director Intercultural Excellence & Faculty Engagement

Designed specifically for the faculty/GTAs, this workshop focuses on enhancing cross-cultural and intercultural competencies so that teaching in an increasingly culturally diverse classroom is more effective.

The goal of the workshop is to support faculty in creating and facilitating learning process in an inclusive classroom by providing pedagogical approaches for responding to students on both individual and cultural level to maximize faculty's success in content delivery and student engagement.

Thursday, September 25th | 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM  
Davis Center 413 (Chittenden Bank Room)  
and

Monday, October 27th | 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM  
Davis Center 403 (Williams Family Room)

For questions email: [Sherwood.Smith@uvm.edu](mailto:Sherwood.Smith@uvm.edu)

Free for the UVM faculty!  
Register at: [go.uvm.edu/interculturalclassroom](https://go.uvm.edu/interculturalclassroom)





University of Vermont  
Division of Intercultural Excellence

## RESPONDING WHEN YOUR CLASSROOM GETS ODD: NAVIGATING THE UNEXPECTED

**Facilitated by Sherwood Smith,  
Senior Executive Director Intercultural Excellence & Faculty Engagement**

Designed specifically for the faculty/GTAs, this workshop focuses on enhancing their ability to adapt their pedagogical responses and design curriculum in preparation for teaching in an increasingly complex classroom dynamics in more effective ways.

The goal of the workshop is to support faculty in creating and facilitating learning process in an inclusive classroom by providing pedagogical approaches for responding to students on both individual and cultural level to maximize faculty's success in content delivery and student engagement.

**Thursday, October 9, 2025 | 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM  
Davis Center 403 (Williams Family Room)**

For questions email: [Sherwood.Smith@uvm.edu](mailto:Sherwood.Smith@uvm.edu)

Free for the UVM faculty!  
Register at: [go.uvm.edu/oddclassroom](https://go.uvm.edu/oddclassroom)

