



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN
HIGHER EDUCATION:
A Presentation to the VMI BOV- 2**

**Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
The Honorable Janice Underwood, PhD**



“Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred...or we can walk through lightly, ready to imagine another world.”

**— Arundhati Roy, Author
“The God of Small Things”**

Many Virginians: ONE Commonwealth



Shared Goal - To develop Virginia into an inclusive state where all people can live, learn, work, play, and thrive.

REVIEW

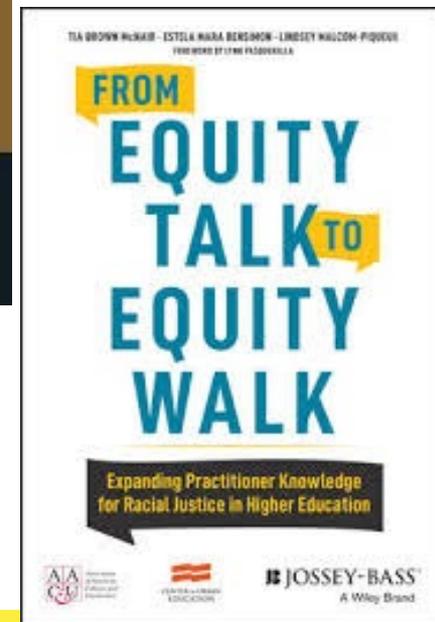
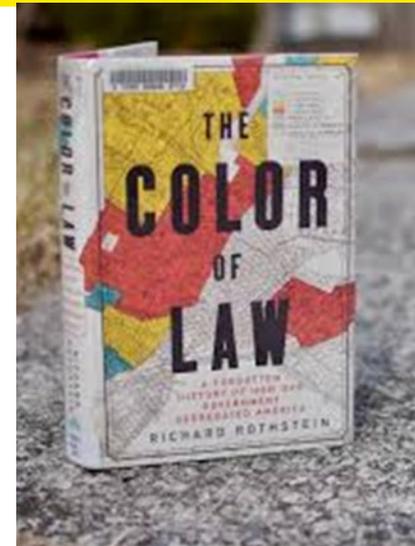
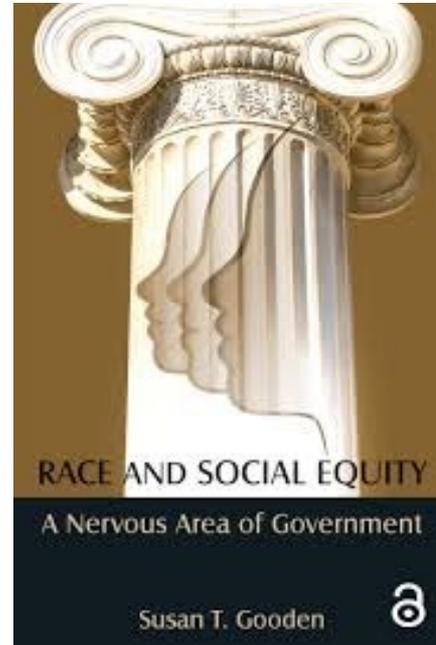
BEST PRACTICES IN IMPLEMENTING DIVERSITY INITIATIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- VP Reports to the Superintendent
- Executive Cabinet Role
- Institutional Memberships (NADOHE, AAAED)
- Faculty & Student Recruitment Plan (SREB)
- Staff (Compliance & DEI Initiatives)
- Equitable Budget
- Strategic Diversity Plan
- Accountability



HOMEWORK

- Do your homework
- Engage in honest dialogue
- Create a job description for a VP of Diversity
- Begin Your Search for a VP of Diversity
- Foster collaborative feedback and ask questions



PERSONAL DIVERSITY

- Race
- Culture
- Socio-Economic Status
- Geography
- Education
- Belief System

ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY

- What does VMI represent?
- How do you value your role in shaping diverse leaders?
- How do you make VMI sustainable over generations?

The *RACE* Toward Difficult Conversations

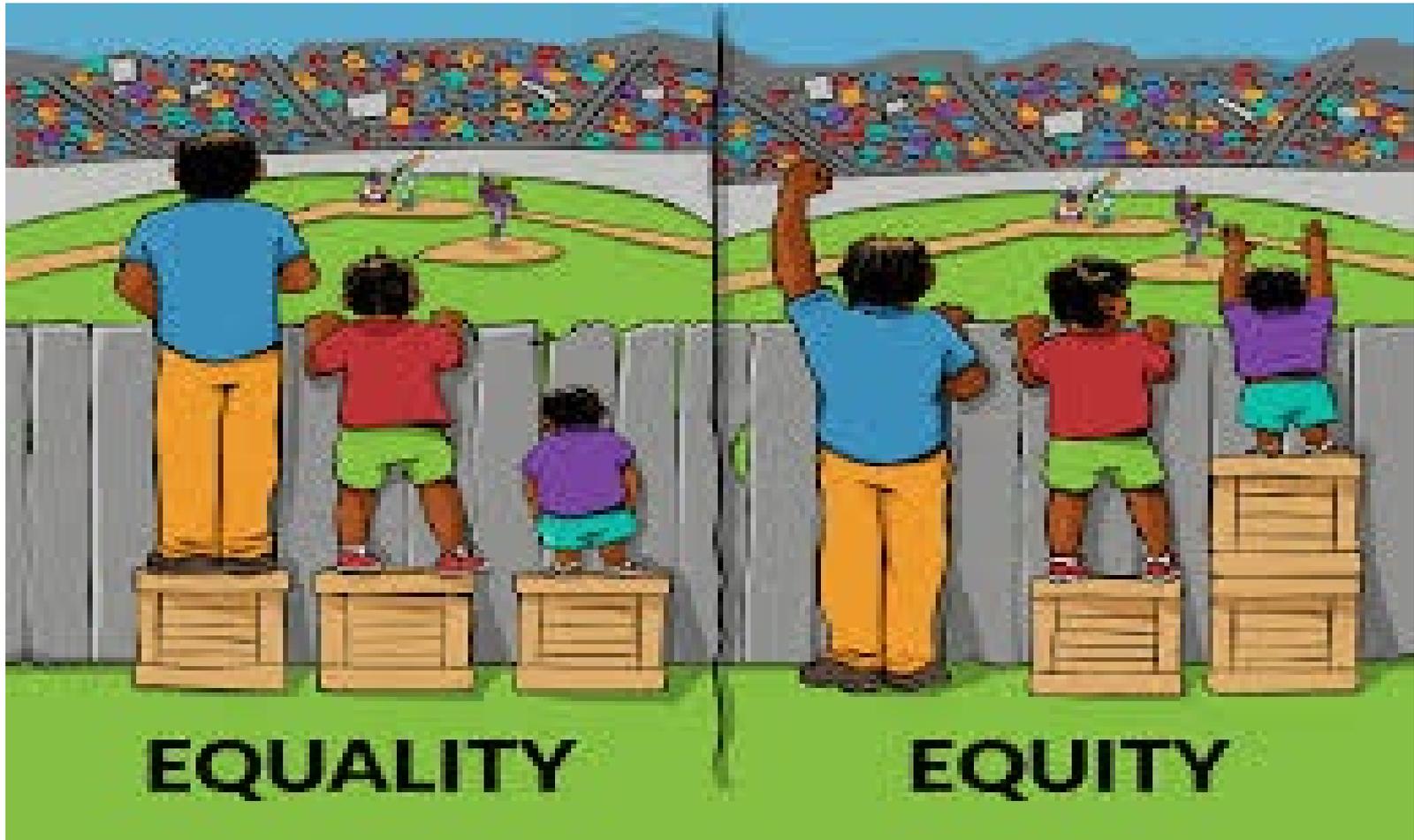
Discussion Norms

- 3C's - Speak with compassion, clarity, and courage
- It's okay not to know everything about race and racism
- Discomfort is to be expected – **Walk (or lean) towards the discomfort**
- Listen to others
- Engage in self reflection and examine your own racial engagement
- Resist a discourse of defense
- Talking about race and racism is a good thing; it doesn't equate to racism or invalidate other forms of oppression

Terminology

- Race – a fictitious social construct; remains complicated and nuanced in the 21st century
- Racism – an institutional system of oppression controlled by a dominant group of people
- Prejudice – discriminatory beliefs or individual acts
- Racism and prejudice exist as different constructs

The Problem



The Problem



Equally



Equitably



JUSTICE

Contemporary Racism: *Invisible Binary (Diangelo, 2018)

Racist = Bad

- Bigoted
- Ignorant
- Prejudiced
- Hateful
- Mean-spirited
- Lynching

Not Racist = Good

- Educated
- Progressive
- Open-minded
- Well-intended
- Polite
- Having diverse friends

*This Binary makes talking about race and racism so difficult; maintains racism as the status quo.

Why is it so difficult to talk about...

Race

And

Racism?

Bystanders

Bystander Statements



Joseph William Turner, The Slave Ship
© Burstein Collection/CORBIS

My parents taught me to love everyone.

I don't see color.

I am a person of color and don't need to talk about race.

I don't care if you are purple, pink, or polka dotted.

Everyone struggles in life, but if you work hard you will be successful.

I'm not racist.

We all bleed red on the inside.

I see people as individuals.

I have black friends.

Racism is in the past.

Race doesn't have any meaning to me or anyone I know.

When my great grandmother immigrated to the U.S, my family was discriminated against too; so, I know what it means to be a person of color.

I have black people in my family. I am married to a person of color.

**We have women and black people
on our team.**

I have black friends.

I went to a very diverse school that celebrated all people.

We adopted a child of color.

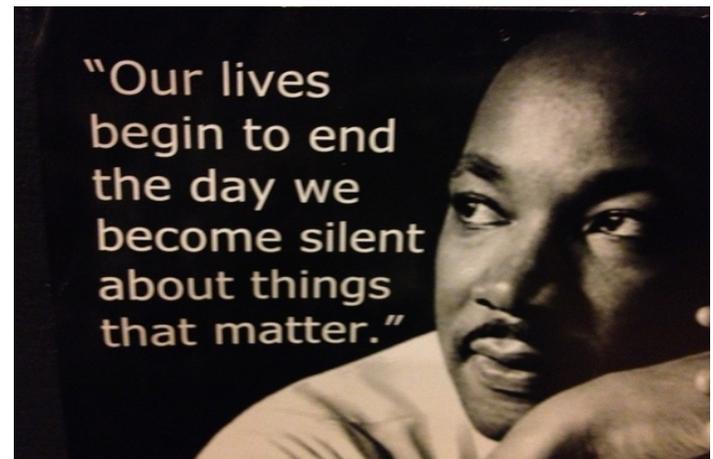
What is Bias?

- The stories we tell ourselves or others about an individual or a group
- comes from our limited personal/life experiences
- Creating a shortcut - Our brain's way of summarizing large sums of data from our specific life experiences

Microaggressions

- **Microaggressions are seemingly benign statements that are actually rooted in bias and bigotry.**
- **TSA motto: When you see something, say something**

- What Would You Do?



Microaggression, honest mistake, or something else?



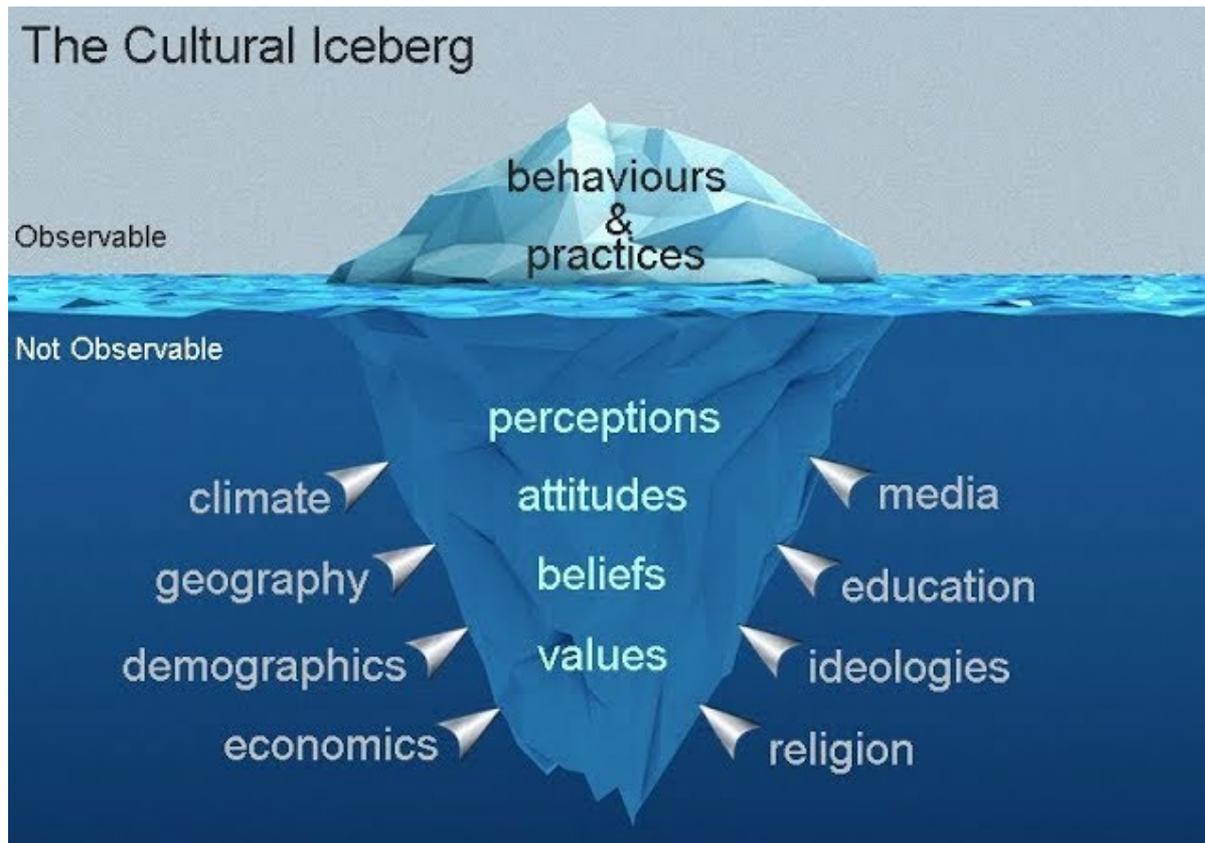
Microaggression, honest mistake, or something else?



PROMOTING INCLUSION



CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION



QUESTIONS?



Governor's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The Honorable Dr. Janice Underwood

Alaysia Black Hackett | Mona Siddiqui

Yewande Austin | Mikaela Swann | #DiversityWins | #CommonwealthConversations

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