



Virginia Military Institute

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

FACILITATOR'S

HANDBOOK

2023-24



OUR HISTORY

2021

Originally founded in July 2021 as the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Office has built on the objectives outlined by the Board of Visitors to:

- Create and foster a more diverse VMI
- Create and foster a safe, equitable and inclusive environment for all on post
- Assure that we maintain a safe, rigorous process for escalating issues which have even the potential to violate the Code of a Cadet.

We continue to make strides in enriching the lives of every cadet, faculty member, and staff member on post.



In the summer of 2023, we changed our name to the Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion. Due to disagreements over the meaning of the word, we removed "equity" to more clearly signal that merit was never abandoned and our goal is to create avenues of success for those who are willing to put in the work.



VISION

We strive to build a deeper sense of community where we respect and embrace the full spectrum of diversity that cadets and employees bring with them. We acknowledge and affirm that individuals should be able to be their full selves while upholding the mission, vision, values, and legacy of VMI. In collaboration with other VMI offices, we equip each person with the tools they need to fully integrate within the VMI system and the opportunity to achieve their highest potential.

MISSION

Through the Inclusive Excellence framework, we prepare cadets for the cultural realities of a modern world, honoring all aspects of diversity, by creating inclusive environments and by fostering deeper connections between the Honor Code, leadership concepts, character, and personal development.



OFFICE VALUES

Personal Growth



Although the terms personal development and personal growth are often used interchangeably, they have distinct meanings. While personal development focuses on acquiring new abilities, personal growth involves developing as a whole person, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. It is an ongoing process that requires self-reflection, self-awareness, and a willingness to make positive changes in all areas of life. Personal growth can involve learning how to manage stress, improving communication skills, developing healthy habits, and nurturing positive relationships with oneself and others.

Collaboration



We are One Corps, One VMI. Our objective is to master the art of collaboration, cutting across our differences to achieve mission success. Our goal is to foster a culture of inclusivity and unity on post. We believe that by valuing our differences and joining forces, we can achieve greatness. Whether it's in the classroom, on the athletic field, or in our daily interactions, we aim to embrace diversity and create an environment of respect and understanding.

Multiculturalism



People of differing backgrounds can coexist and even thrive together when we respect each other's diversity and recognize our common values. Multiculturalism is the acceptance of the various practices, traditions, languages, heritages, beliefs, and choices that make us each unique with the assumption that despite our differences we can find common ground, get along, and build strong foundations of community.





INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Inclusive Excellence is a framework developed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) to implement diversity and inclusion strategies on college campuses. Inclusive Excellence provides access, support, engagement, and opportunities for all students and employees.

4 PRINCIPLES

1. Achieving academic equity in inclusive, welcoming settings.
2. Teaching and learning the skills, knowledge, and mindsets cadets need in order to make constructive contributions in an increasingly diverse society.
3. Creating a climate in classrooms and on post that supports all cadets.
4. Developing learning opportunities that assume difference is an asset to problem-solving.



WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU



POSITIVE ENERGY

We train on Fridays at 0800. Your training session is the start of someone's day. Let's approach each session with enthusiasm!



PROFESSIONALISM

Show up on time. Communicate with our Office and your co-facilitators. Practice your presentations.



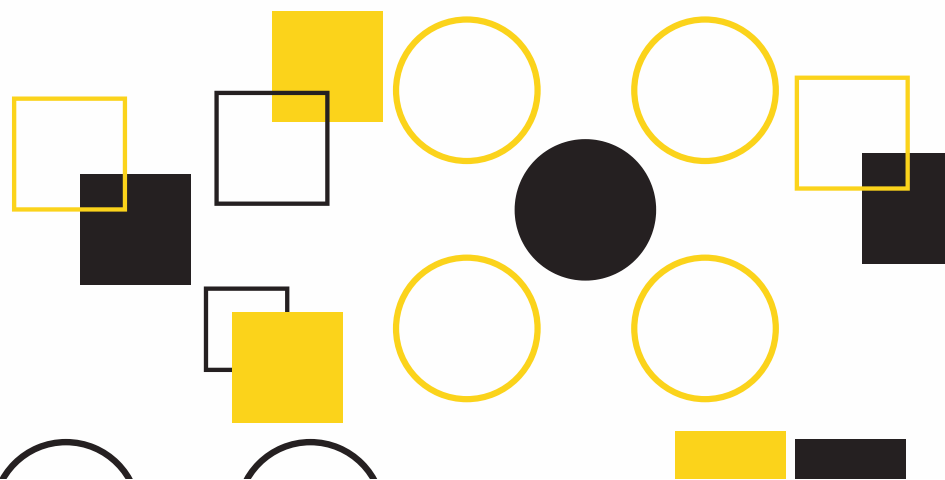
GIVE YOUR BEST

Although public speaking is a daunting task for many, putting forth your best effort will undoubtedly lead to a noticeable improvement in your skills, which your audience will appreciate.



INCLUSIVITY

You should make an effort to be inclusive in your daily life at VMI.





UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLE AS A FACILITATOR

- 1.** Your job is not to be a subject matter expert. You're encouraged to know as much as possible, but ultimately, your job is to facilitate dialogue. Your role is to establish a safe environment for participants to feel comfortable exploring sometimes uncomfortable topics and often emotionally charged issues. Help participants understand that this is a learning experience and not an invitation to argue.

You Should:

- Remain impartial
- Emphasize that the goal is to learn together
- Keep the discussion on track
- Be a good listener
- Be open to various viewpoints
- Provide clarification where necessary
- Provide the opportunity for everyone to participate

- 2.** It's essential that you set the tone for the session. Be relaxed and open. Welcome everyone and let them know this is a friendly atmosphere. Set ground rules for participating in the session.

These rules should include:

- Respect for everyone in the room
- Modified "Vegas Rules". Share the lessons but maintain confidentiality
- Assume that everyone has good intentions even when they express a view that may be challenging to you
- Make room for others in the conversation
- Be open-minded



UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLE AS A FACILITATOR

- 3.** Stay vigilant and help the group be successful in the activity. Remain attuned to the energy and dynamics of the room. Help the group stay focused on the activity. When it's time to report out, be mindful of who has spoken and who hasn't had the opportunity to speak. Try to encourage people who may be more introverted to contribute to the conversation.

Key things to remember:

- Try not to intervene in small group discussions unless necessary. It's okay to let people grapple with concepts.
- Don't be afraid of silence! Give people time to consider their answers. If silence is uncomfortable for you, practice counting to ten slowly in your head and then rephrase the question. Don't rush to provide your own response or move on to another question just because the room is silent.
- Keep track of time. We only have 50 minutes with each group so be mindful of where you are in the activity so that key points aren't missed or skipped over.

- 4.** To make sure that discussions remain productive, help the group be open to all points of view. Don't take sides and remain neutral. If differences arise, help the group find common ground. However, never try to force consensus or agreement. Don't let the group get stuck on one person's experience or anecdote. Try to broaden and generalize the conversation if that happens.

You can do this by asking open-ended questions such as:

"How might others understand this issue?"

"Why is this topic important to society?"

"What's the opposite side of your opinion? Why might someone think differently than you?"

"In what ways can you help us understand the reasons behind your opinion?"



UNDERSTANDING YOUR ROLE AS A FACILITATOR

- 5.** Maintain control of the session so that there is a positive environment that is conducive to learning. There will be faculty and/or staff in the room to support you. Additionally, DOI Office staff will float between sessions to offer assistance.

If someone says something offensive or disagreement occurs, some strategies to manage the situation include:

- Paraphrase what you believe you heard and the feelings that were expressed.
“It sounds like you’re saying _____?”
- Ask for more information on the person’s viewpoint.
“What information has led you to believe this about _____?”
- Ask for counterexamples to counter stereotypes.
“Does anyone have an example that differs from this point of view?”



TRAINING ALIGNMENT

This training aligns with:

CLE theme for 2023-24: Adapting to a Complex Environment

BOV Executive Committee Objectives 1 and 2 adopted in July 2021:

1. To create and foster a more diverse VMI
2. To create and foster a safe, equitable and inclusive environment for all on post

Inclusive Excellence Plan: Goal 2, Objective 1 & Goal 3, Objective 1

Goal 2 (1) – Create and maintain a climate that acknowledges and celebrates diversity and employs inclusive practices throughout its daily operations, aligned with VMI's vision, mission, and values

Goal 3 (1) – Offer courses, art/artistic events, and learning opportunities at the undergraduate level that achieve DE&I learning goals

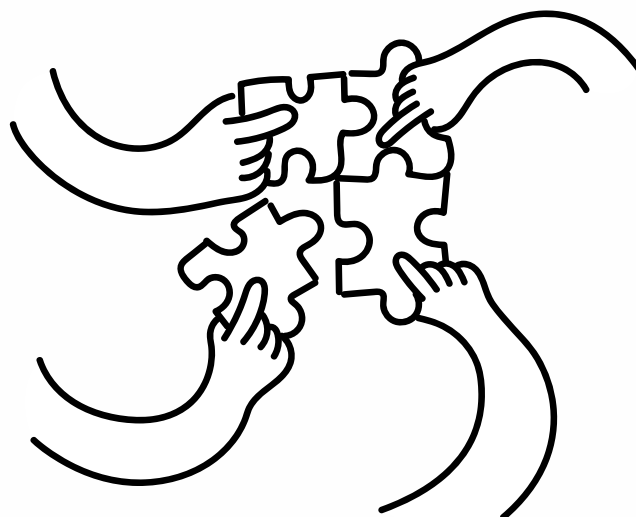
Department of Defense Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan 2022-23

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Position Statement (excerpt below)

While there are no specific benchmarks regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts for SACSCOC member institutions, all are encouraged to continue to regularly engage in thoughtful discussions about diversity, to intentionally cultivate and sustain inclusive and equitable processes, and to implement strategies to create and maintain respectful and supportive learning environments in which to learn and work.

NCAA Inclusion Statement (excerpt)

As a core value, the NCAA believes in and is committed to diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its student-athletes, coaches and administrators. We seek to establish and maintain an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds. Diversity and inclusion improve the learning environment for all student-athletes and enhance excellence within the Association.





RAT CLASS

Objective: Understand what DOI is and their individual identities within VMI's culture.

Leadership Development Stage: Lead Self/Followership

VMI Core Leadership Principles: Respect & Honor

ACTIVITY

Social Identity Wheel: Facilitators will give a brief overview of DOI and the dimensions of diversity. They will then hand out the social identity wheel and give participants time to complete it. Facilitators will emphasize that it is okay to leave a section of the wheel blank if a student is uncomfortable with sharing or unsure about their answer. While participants are completing their wheels, facilitators will set up signs with the various identity categories around the room. Once the wheels are complete the facilitators will read off four or five questions about the wheel. Students will move to the sign that best fits their answer and comfort level. Once every student has made a choice, they will discuss with the small group at their station why they chose that particular aspect of their identity. At the end, students will share out as a larger group what they learned about each other and themselves. They will be asked to reflect on how we can respect our differences while also upholding our shared VMI goals.



THIRD CLASS

Objective: Analyze Their Own Biases

Leadership Development Stage: Influence Others

VMI Core Leadership Principles: Fairness & Trust

ACTIVITY

Circle of Influence Bias Assessment: Facilitators will give an overview to cadets about various types of bias. Facilitators will then lead cadets in the circle of influence bias assessment activity to analyze their peer relationships. Once the assessments are complete, cadets will read out words that are associated with diversity such as gender, religion, educational background, etc. Cadets will then place check marks by the names of the people that share that same identity. Once all the diversity categories are read and checks have been made, facilitators will lead cadets in a discussion about what they noticed about the activity. They will ask questions such as, "What makes you comfortable about the people in your circle?" or "Who are you most comfortable with?" Facilitators will then ask how many cadets find their circle to be diverse and explore what made the circle diverse. For cadets who felt their circle wasn't as diverse, they may discuss in what areas and why they think that is. Facilitators will emphasize that having a homogenous circle doesn't mean you should get rid of your friends but that you may want to consider avenues for adding more diverse perspectives into your thinking. Facilitators will offer suggestions such as reading a book, listening to a podcast, or inviting someone who is different from you to hang out.



SECOND CLASS

Objective: Evaluate Their Core Values

Leadership Development Stage: Lead within the Organization

VMI Core Leadership Principle: Honor

ACTIVITY

Core Values Reflection: Facilitators will hand out a sheet with a list of values and a core values worksheet. Selecting from the lists of values, cadets will be asked to rank their values from “always valued” to “least valued”. All spaces on the worksheet should be filled out at the end of the first round. Over the next minutes, cadets will be asked to narrow the values lists they’ve created. Facilitators will remind cadets that narrowing the list does not mean the value has been discarded from their lives. The point is for each cadet to reflect on some of their core values. Cadets will continue to condense their lists until they each have two core values (that they are willing to share with others). Then in small groups, cadets will be asked to discuss (as much as they are comfortable) what their core values are. They will then discuss their process for narrowing their values list, the difficulties they faced, and examine ways in which their core values show up in their lives at VMI.



FIRST CLASS

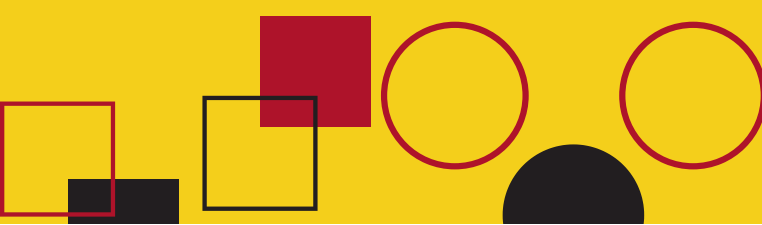
Objective: Design and develop solutions to diversity-related problems

Leadership Development Stage: Command

VMI Core Leadership Principle: Lead-by-example

ACTIVITY

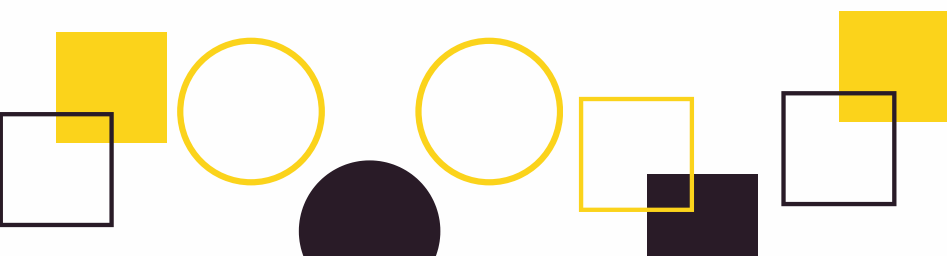
Diversity, Opportunity, & Inclusion Capstone: Guest Speaker



DOI DEFINITIONS



<p>Accessibility</p>	<p>The design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them. Accessibility includes the provision of accommodations and modifications to ensure equal access to employment and participation in activities for people with disabilities, the reduction or elimination of physical and attitudinal barriers to equitable opportunities, a commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities can independently access every outward-facing and internal activity or electronic space, and the pursuit of best practices such as universal design.</p> <p><small>Definition from Department of Defense Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan</small></p>
<p>Cisgender</p>	<p>Individuals whose current gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.</p> <p><small>Definition from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention</small></p>
<p>Diversity</p>	<p>All the different characteristics and attributes of individuals from varying demographics that are consistent with the DoD's core values, integral to overall readiness and mission accomplishment, and reflective of the nation we serve.</p> <p><small>Definition from Department of Defense Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan</small></p>
<p>Equity</p>	<p>The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.</p> <p><small>Definition from Department of Defense Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan</small></p>

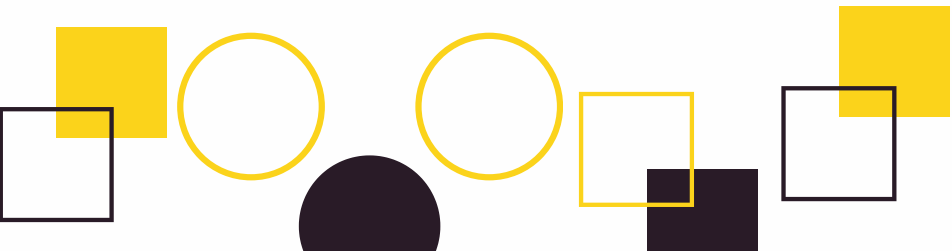


DOI

DEFINITIONS



Inclusion	<p>A set of behaviors (culture) that encourages Service members and civilian employees to feel valued for unique qualities and to experience a sense of belonging. Inclusive diversity is the process of valuing and integrating each individual's perspectives, ideas, and contributions into the way an organization functions and makes decisions; enabling diverse workforce members to contribute to their full potential in collaborative pursuit of organizational objectives.</p> <p><small>Definition from Department of Defense Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan</small></p>
Intersex	<p>Persons with variations in physical sex characteristics, including variations in anatomy, hormones, chromosomes or other traits, that differ from expectations generally associated with male and female bodies.</p> <p><small>Definition from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention</small></p>
Gender Identity	<p>An individual's internal or personal sense of gender, which may or may not match the individual's biological sex.</p> <p><small>Definition from Army Directive 2021-22 (Army Service by Transgender Persons and Persons With Gender Dysphoria)</small></p>
Gender Transition	<p>A form of treatment for the medical condition of gender dysphoria that may involve—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• social transition, also known as “real life experience,” to allow the patient to live and work in a self-identified gender without any cross-sex hormone treatment or surgery and that may also include a legal change of gender, including changing gender on a passport, birth certificate, or through a court order• medical transition to align secondary sex characteristics with the patient's self-identified gender using any combination of cross-sex hormone therapy or surgical and cosmetic procedures• surgical transition, also known as sex reassignment surgery, to make the physical body, both primary and secondary sex characteristics, resemble as closely as possible the patient's self-identified gender <p><small>Definition from Army Directive 2021-22 (Army Service by Transgender Persons and Persons With Gender Dysphoria)</small></p>

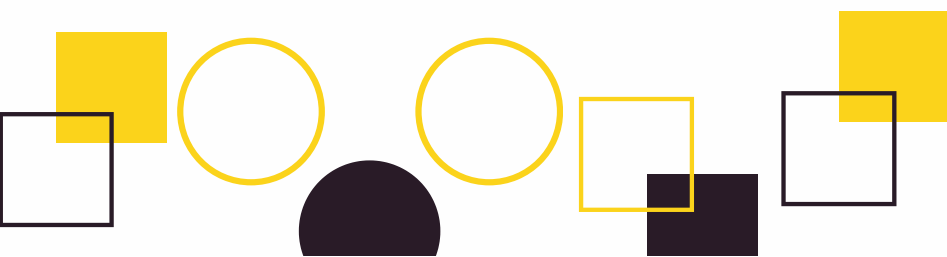




DOI

DEFINITIONS

<p>LGBTQ</p>	<p>Acronym that refers to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning community.</p> <p><small>Definition from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention</small></p>
<p>Nonbinary</p>	<p>Individuals who do not identify their gender as man or woman. Other terms to describe this identity include genderqueer, agender, bigender, gender creative, etc.</p> <p><small>Definition from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention</small></p>
<p>Transgender</p>	<p>Individuals who identify with a gender that differs from their biological sex.</p> <p><small>Definition from Army Directive 2021-22 (Army Service by Transgender Persons and Persons With Gender Dysphoria)</small></p>
<p>Underserved Communities</p>	<p>Populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, who have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. In the context of the Federal workforce, this term includes individuals who belong to communities of color, such as Black and African American, Hispanic and Latino, Native American, Alaska Native and Indigenous, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and North African persons. It also includes individuals who belong to communities that face discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity (including LGBTQIA+ persons); persons who face discrimination based on pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions; parents; and caregivers. It also includes individuals who belong to communities that face discrimination based on their religion or disability; first-generation professionals or first-generation college students; individuals with limited English proficiency; immigrants; individuals who belong to communities that may face employment barriers based on older age; persons who live in rural areas; Veterans and military spouses; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality. Individuals may belong to more than one underserved community and face intersecting barriers.</p> <p><small>Definition from Department of Defense Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan</small></p>





DOI OFFICE CONTACT



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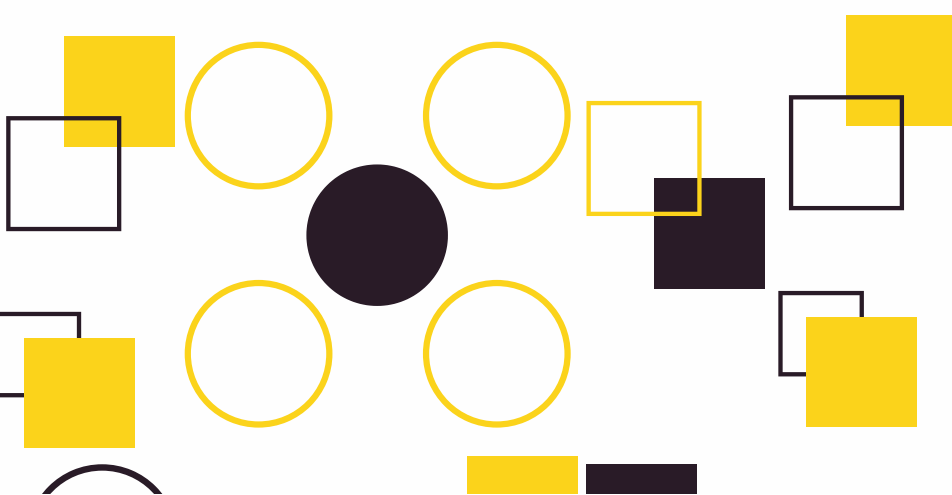
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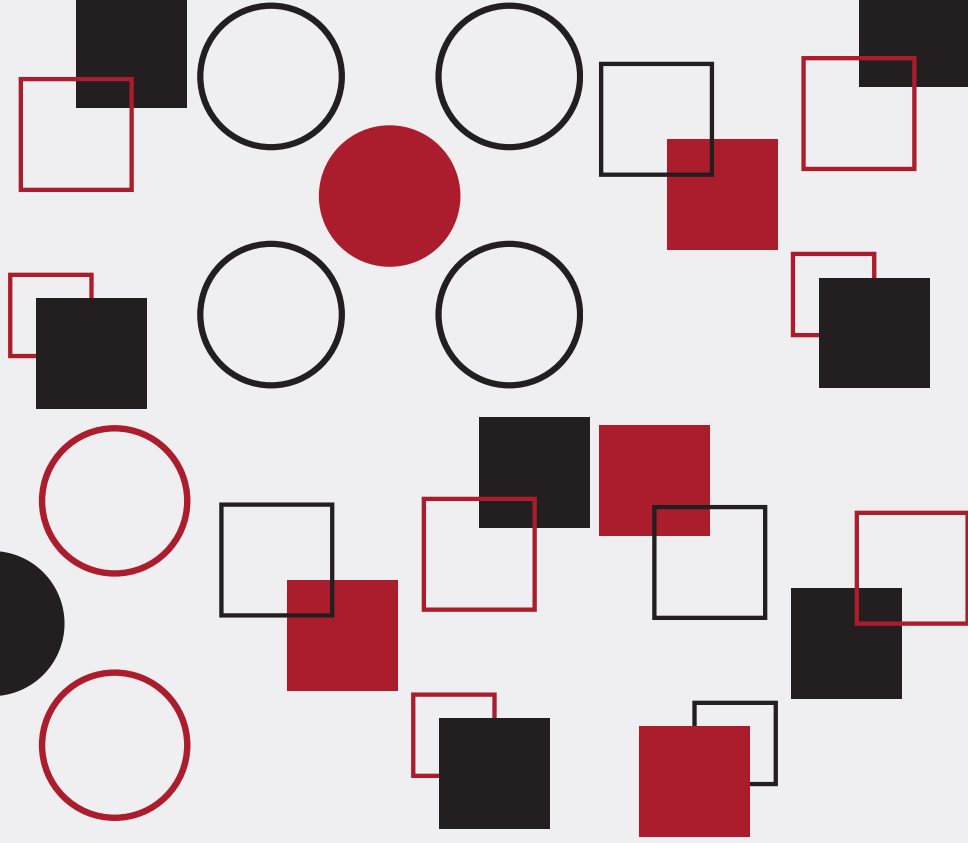


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LET'S LEARN & GROW
TOGETHER

