Globally Inclusive Language and Images:   
Tips, Tools and Resources

Wednesday, March 30, 2022 • 3:00–4:30 p.m. EDT

**Ashley Green** 00:00

It is our duty to collaborate across campus to ensure that DEI discussions and activities have a global lens, and to ensure that when our campus is considering ways in which to enhance our community that we're thinking of how to be more inclusive of our international populations. As a quick refresher, the three part series aim to cover inclusive language, what does it mean and why it's important, inclusive practices, how it contributes to a welcoming campus, and inclusive guidance, actual tangible tips, tools and resources. So we're happy to continue our series with a third webinar today. Before proceeding, I do want to take a moment to reflect and recognize the turmoil between Russia and Ukraine and the impact that it is having on our Russian and Ukrainian colleagues and students, and others as well. The Center for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies in ISP has a website that details associated events and resources as well as leadership statements. If you're interested in learning more about the various responses and efforts from our campus, please visit that site. I'd also like to take a moment to read the Land Acknowledgement: "Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. The University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize, support and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan's 12 federally recognized Indian nations, for historic indigenous communities in Michigan, for indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm indigenous sovereignty, history and experiences." So with that, I will now introduce our illustrious panelists. Today's panelists represent a diversity of ethnicities, academic disciplines and positions within the university and they include Dr. Hilda Mejia Abreu, associate dean of admissions, student life and inclusivity in the College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Xinyu Wu, who's the director of the Visiting International Professionals Program, and co-director of the Office of China programs. Nikunj Agarwal, who's a senior in environmental economics and management, and the president of the International Student Association, and Sade Omoniyi, who's a senior in accounting and chief diversity officer for the International Student Association. The panel will run about 50 minutes, followed by about 30 minutes of q&a from the audience. So please begin to think of your questions and submit them when the time allows. So we're going to jump right into it. Each panelist is now asked to respond to the main prompt, or question of "what are some tangible tips or ways to make language, images and events more inclusive." So I'm first going to start with Hilda if you can start by telling us the tangible tips and ways to make language images and events more inclusive.

**Hilda Mejia Abreu** 03:38

Wonderful. Thank you, Dr. Green. It is a pleasure to be here with all of you. Thank you for joining us remotely. I wish this was in person, but COVID has given us some great opportunities to be much more creative. So I appreciate the question. And I'd like to share a bit of background about myself, in addition to the role that I played, I'm originally from the Dominican Republic. My land has no face, meaning you cannot tell who is from the Dominican Republic, because we were first populated by native of the Dominican Republic, Native American Indians of the Dominican Republic. And then we were colonized. So we have different shapes. And with colonization came the African slavery trade, so I am actually Dominican, but of German, African, Spanish and Arabic descent—can you believe that, I'm really a mutt. So I wanted to share that so that you can see, just to set the table for how I refer to the language of inclusion. So I'm going to start by making a few points. Actually, for one point is in words we use can show underpinning dangerous power dynamics. And that is in the words of Okun, who is an amazing social scientist. So that's the number one piece that I like to share. Number two: words shape realities. So our words, really shape realities, and the realities of our colleagues, our students our faculty. Number three: intentionally or not, words, we choose can impact power dynamics; example, I have heard a supervisor say many times, a supervisor referring to his or her staff, or their staff as my people, this has the dangerous underpinning of ownership, which brings us back to slavery. So I just want to share that with you, because many of us are supervisors. The last point that I like to make is that thinking before we speak, and to become more knowledgeable of language critical; an example, I had a colleague that stated, I hope you're hanging in there, to which I didn't say anything, but the person thought about it. And the next day, she said to me, while that was the wrong statement, because hanging in there is really associated with hanging lynching, and slavery, and some of the Emmett Till, and all of the history that we have in this country. So she actually thought about what she said to me. And I thought, wow, what a great lesson for her and for me. So inclusive language does not reinforce biases, that discriminates against people based on their race, gender, disability, immigration status, or other factors. It also does not set a dominant group as the norm, in minority groups as the other. And these are the words of Dr. Kikanza Nuri-Robins, who is an amazing scholar in cultural proficiency. So I want to open this by sharing this information with you. Whether it's powerful, or no, but the piece is: let's think before we speak, and I try to do that consciously whenever I can, when I'm not in a hurry, which is not an excuse. But Ashley, I don't know if I answered your question, but that's how I'd like to start.

**Ashley Green** 07:23

Yes, absolutely. Thank you for sharing some of those examples. They're important for us to think about. I like to move on to Nikunj.

**Nikunj Agarwal** 07:33

Thank you so much Dr. Green, it's a pleasure being here on this panel. I'm Nikunj Agarwal, I use he/him pronouns. And I'd like to break this question in three different parts to answer, particularly, and I think I'm going to start with language, because that is something so important that we use every day in our lives. It impacts a very large population than we think about, and I want to start talking about pronouns. In today's world, we assume somebody's pronouns with the way they look, the way they talk or the accent they have. We don't necessarily are conscious about how they would feel by misgendering them. So I always like to start off by asking, hey, I'm Nikunj, I use he/him/his pronouns, what are yours? And I and I really, highly encourage everybody to do that. We've had instances where in people have mentioned that the professor was late to class. And we reply by saying, Oh, how late was he? So are we associating the word with a particular gender? And this leads us to a point of power dynamics in about how male overpower the other genders, which is not generally true in today's world. I think everybody needs to have the right to choose what they'd like to be called, and how they'd like to be referred. And that's just the start of being inclusive. I think you're just making them feel belong in that arena and in that space. I'd also like to move on to language transition, translation. It's so important that we have folks from around the world who not, who do not necessarily speak English and I'd like to share my example with this. I've been speaking English and learning English from the age of three in India. But to most of your amusement, my dialect is not the same as the other persons in the room. And it is really difficult to understand what the other person is saying. When I came to MSU for the first time in fall of 2019, I have to repeat a sentence at a minimum of three times for the person to understand what I was saying. And not necessarily would that person still understand what I was trying to communicate So. And given that both of us speak the same language, just imagine that I didn't speak English and I spoke a foreign language and that person didn't know what I was speaking. And especially when we talk about events in general, we have people from the community from around the globe would like to visit it, but are hesitant because of the aspect that, hey, I might not be included, because I do not speak the language they speak, and I wouldn't understand what's happening out there. So another tip that I give everybody is that try to make a translation option, opportunity open, I know we have many administrators joining on this call. So talking to your webmaster, and having a translation option for your websites could be a good place to start at. You could always reach out to people and ask them if they'd want some additional help in their registrations that, hey, are there any accommodations that we'd like, that you'd like for us to make? And we could look at different scopes in that arena. Now. My next, my second part of this question is going to be image, I think, image is really something we all need to talk about. And be very cognizant about, because as to how largely impacts and gathers the community together. Talking about Halloween, last year, we always try to dress as people who belong to the Native American community, because it looks funny to people, they amuse people, they make people laugh. They have fancy, and they're even sexy in a way. And so but we always miss believing that that is a cultural bias. And how I define cultural bias is it's a term used to describe the taking over of a creative and an artistic form, theme of practice by one social group from another. It is generally used to describe Western appropriation of non-Western or non-white forms, and carries connotations of exploitation and dominance. I think it's so very important to not generalize people of a particular community, as we just saw from Professor Hilda as to how, she, how she doesn't really belong, or is shown that she's a part of a community, but she is a member of that community. It's not necessarily that everybody from a continent has to be of the same color, shape and size. And I think that's really important and how we can start advocating. I think, when we're talking about global context, I think it's important to have people sharing what they'd like to see, having some suggestions from people, having suggestions from, and learning about what different people look like at different areas, and trying to incorporate all of them. And my suggestion for that would be incorporate none, because you avoid any bias in that aspect. Have imaging as clean as it can, so that you don't hurt anybody's sentiment with bias, or hurt somebody's sentiment by not including them in that imaging. And finally, when I talk about events, I think we tend to ignore in the global context, people with disabilities, we don't generally talk about them. We think it's a very American problem to have disabilities and not global context. I think it is so very important to consider having, the first thing in mind is that accessibility and considering that if a person is on the wheelchair, will they be able to access this event without additional support? If somebody is virtually impaired or visually impaired, will they be able to access this event? Or would they need an additional support to come to this event? I think it's so very important when it comes to it. And this is this is something I learned two weeks back, the International Student Association hosted the winter annual ball. And some of my team members came up to me and said, they were playing a particular music from a particular nationality, and from a particular nation basically, and that wasn't necessarily resonating with the entire group. So I think it's very important that individuals look at the composition of the group that's coming in, and looks at, looks at different ways to getting everybody involved and making them feel inclusive irrespective of just getting the word to the society. So those are a couple of things that I wanted to start this conversation off with. Thank you.

**Ashley Green** 14:59

I appreciate that, Nikunj. The example that you just gave talked about how sometimes we can focus on diversity, but not actual inclusion so that everyone feels like that they belong. So key takeaway is recognizing diversity and not over-generalizing and also being mindful of access. So thank you for sharing that. Dr. Wu, let's hear from you.

**Xinyu Wu** 15:19

Thank you so much, Ashley, and thank you for the opportunity. And I particularly am pleased to be able to share the stage with two talented international students. I was international student myself, long time ago. So it's really a great pleasure and happy to share some of my thoughts and experience on inclusive language and images. I will also start with a little bit information about myself. I grew up in Beijing, and in the in the 70s, and 80s. And then I went to Wuhan, to for my university for my bachelor's education in Wuhan University. And not many people actually outside China then knew about Wuhan or even heard about that city until really, just recently, two years ago, because of the COVID 19 pandemic, it certainly put the city on the map. And now seems to be a very famous city, the university certainly was a very top university, and was one of the most beautiful campuses in the world, at especially this time of the year, the campus is taken over by cherry blossom. So I then went to the UK, right after graduation and did my Ph.D. in computational linguistics with neural networks. And I worked and lived in quite a few different universities and cities. So I really resonate, I can resonate with some of the stories, experience just being shared. Although my training is very much in the area of science and engineering, I always loved language and culture. And that's probably why I chose my Ph.D. research project in computational linguistics related to language understanding, which actually soon, very quickly discovered during my research that to teach a computer to understand the meaning of a language, the challenge is always the context and what language can imply. With advanced AI technology, we all know that Google translation and some other translation software on the market right now can do quite a lot, but they quite often fail to interpret the implied or true meanings of even the simplest language. Where human being and on the other hand, we can understand fully the and also being impacted by certain language and images. A single word a short sentence or even just a few seconds of video clip can make us experience many different emotions: joy, motivated, loved, or confused, ashamed, angry and depressed. I remember when I first arrive in Belfast, that's where I went to for my Ph.D. in the early 90s. And the the peace protest was just about to start. And I had the really little knowledge about the political, religious and social conflicts and struggles in Northern Ireland. At times I was really frightened seeing soldiers in shopping malls, in streets. Once I must shown visibly my distress passing a department store security checking point; yes, if you go into a shopping mall or department store, you need to go through checking point in the 90s in in Belfast, so this lady behind me just touched my arm lightly and said, "Don't you worry, love." The Irish love the word love. So you'll find taxi drivers, bartenders, grocery checkout staff, even my department secretaries were always ready to greet me and many others with you know, good evening, good morning love, cheerio love. So it made me really feel at home being cherished and loved. I haven't been back in Belfast for more than 10 years. I'm not sure if the people are still using the words to greet strangers. Maybe that's a problematic word these days, but I hope they do. So the Irish to use the simple word to show their compassion and maybe unintentionally just in their in their culture. I'm sure some of the language choices made by American immigration authority were not necessarily intentional either. But in fact, it couldn't be more difficult, different. I remember when I apply for my H-1B visa, before I came to MSU in 2015. All the paperwork had to do with one thing really shocked me. My immigration status written black and white, was alien non resident. I had really flashback of the 70s Ripley's movie Alien, played by Sigourney Weaver. I remember sitting in the US Embassy in London, and staring at my visa application documents and thinking, Oh my God, I am an alien to the, to the US. So six years later, now I have a green card. I'm a legal permanent resident. But I quite often wonder, Am I still an alien here. Another new label I gained moving to the US is people of color, women of color. And this is actually the expression I heard first time while I was in the US, when I move to the US. Maybe it's just me, but I really found that expression unnecessary. I'm Chinese, I'm Asian, I'm a British, my skin has color, certain color tone, but isn't the white color too. So it struck me that people probably use this word to avoid word expressions like Black or brown or Asian. And it became to me it becomes a linguistic gesture. A gesture is not always a bad thing. It can lead to conversations and self examination and change. But the gesture is just means language and images are just means not the ends and not the completed work. So in preparing for this panel talk, I want to educate myself about inclusive language and images. As I'm not a DEI expert, as you can tell, so I looked at quite a lot of universities and corporate website. There are many definitions, tips and suggestions, even tables of words that suggesting we should be using against those which should not. And some makes sense to me but a lot to me is window dressing, the traditional jargon coated with market tested veneer of inclusivity, like people people of color POC to me is really a valueless catch all, that extinguish identity, instead of amplifying it. Look at the panel here, we are all people of color, but we are so different. And so it replaces the word of recognizing, acknowledging and perhaps even sitting uncomfortably in actual cultural distinctions like what we do right now. So whichever inclusive language and images we use, we need to really mean it. They need to come from the heart, otherwise, they're just valueless gestures. I want to share another personal experience, I this was a few years ago, before the pandemic, I was in Detroit airport, I cannot remember where I was flying to. And it was Sunday afternoon and the airport a fairly quiet and there's not a lot of people. And you see this zig and zag lines that leading to the security check by most of mostly empty. So I saw this I saw this two Asian women run towards the security check, obviously late for their flight. So instead of walking through the empty zigzag lines, they ducked under the belt and wanted to join the end of the queue quicker. And the security guys saw this and just shouted at the two. Hey, this is not China, we don't do that here.And as you can imagine, I was completely shocked. I was embarrassed and later angry. It took me quite a while actually to gather my thoughts process, what is what is going on? And I really wanted to confront to the security guy ask him how do you know the two women are Chinese? How do you know people in China duck lines? Do you know, do you, have you been to China? Do you know any people from China? And more importantly, would you call out white Canadians or European visitors like that? Well, I have to admit that I was not brave enough to speak up in public. And I hope I never need to after the last couple of years. We can have gigantic welcome signs very friendly, diverse, inclusive, smiling faces all over airport or university campus. But unless we truly welcome and respect people who do not look like us or speak like us. Unless we truly care, and show kindness and empathy, the language and images are worthless, and the people will always know. So I'll just stop there. I apologize if I was too bold and offended anyone. As I said, I'm not a DEI expert, and really just sharing how I really, really think and how I feel. Thank you.

**Ashley Green** 25:27

No, we appreciate that and boldness is exactly what we want. While we don't intend to offend anyone, this is a safe space, but also a learning space. And so all perspectives and experiences are welcome. So thank you for your boldness. And thank you also for sharing how powerful that common terms like alien can still provoke hurtful feelings or a sense of not belonging. I think that's also important to share, and also want to bring everyone's attention to the comment that Nikunj has put in the chat about our Provost's desire to move from saying alien and foreign in our institutional language. So you can read more about those efforts in the link that he provided—that is awesome. Alright, Sade let's hear from you.

**Sade Omoniyi** 26:15

Thank you, Dr. Green. So hey, everyone, I'm Sade, I'm international student from Nigeria and I'm also currently a senior studying accounting with a minor in entrepreneurship and innovation. So I have a couple of opinions as well regarding how to or what we can do to make sure that the language, images and events we're using are more diverse, but also accessible. So the first thing I have to say is, I know this is already been mentioned in the chat, but also like I also completely agree with this, which was always consider your audience. Like Nikunj already brought up about the dance that ISA, about the ball we had and about how the DJ was, you know, always playing a certain kind of music. But something that was not mentioned was I went out to talk to the DJ, I'm not sure if the DJ knew I was part of the e-board, I don't think the DJ knew. But I went out to talk to the DJ and said, I think you're playing like, like, you know, music from a certain country, I get that, you know, like, I'm glad it's international music, but you need to switch it up, and all of that. So I gave him like recommendation. And my friend was also with me. So my friend also gave him like, a recommendation. 20 minutes later he's still playing the same kind of music. So like, okay, oh, what's going on? You know, we've been waiting and all of that. So I go talk to the DJ again, and I'm like, I'm like, my friend was like, Don't worry, doesn't matter. But I'm like, no, like, we're trying to have fun and like, we don't know how to do you know, this, like, we don't know how to dance to this music. Like we enjoy it and we appreciate it, I'm always smiling, I'm just swaying left to right. But people from that like country that really understand the music, are doing actual dances to it. But all we can do is sway left to right, because you know, we don't know how to do those dances. So I was really looking at my friend. And I'm like, No, I'm going to do this again. I'm going to talk to him again, as I was waiting, you know, I meant to talk to him. I'm a really respectful person, but everyone knows that I'd also speak my mind, but I'll do respectfully. So you know, I told him again, that we've been waiting, you know, like 25 minutes have gone, but we'd like you haven't played any of our recommendations. And DJ tells me that oh, a lot of people made recommendations before like, they've already put down a whole bunch of recommendations. So ours hasn't showed up yet. And I said, okay, okay, we're gonna keep waiting, I was like, fine. But, [NAME] ends up, my friend, the other person on that's on events actually on IAC, the one that mostly plan the event goes to talk to the DJ. And suddenly, like in a couple minutes, maybe three minutes or five minutes later, my song like my song comes up. So it's like, Oh, nice, okay, but I was already sort of like, to some extent irritated because situation. So I sort of lost my mood or vibe, you know, as we like to call it, I lost my vibe and really into it anymore. So, but because of my friend, I was like, Okay, let's just, you know, dance and yeah. And then after that, I was just like, okay, then we're done with the event. And at the end of the event, the whole ball that turn of events also my friend calls to talk to me and says, Oh, he's really sorry for that, that the DJ didn't know I was on the e-board. But I'm like why, why should that matter? Why should it matter if I was on the e-board whether like I don't, no matter where I was from, no matter where I came from, you should always have diverse music as a DJ playing at an international event especially. You can't come to an international event and only play one kind of music. And that's why I say know your audience and fully understand the concept of the event when you're going towards it. Obviously when we like when we look at an audience, a lot of even like big companies do like to focus on majority. And the next one I have is stop always focusing on the majority. But look at it as a whole. So whether you're focusing on like, I don't know, how, like in America, you know, we have minorities and marginalized groups, you know, that tend to be smaller in number compared to Caucasians. But you should still look at the whole place, because everyone adds value at the end of the day. We all have like different things we're passionate about, and what we do, it only comes together to make America great. So if you remove all of, every single marginalized group, America is going to be lacking, 100%. So at the end of the day, stop focusing on majorities, but think of everything as a whole. Minorities, if we came together, then the population of all every single marginalized group, if we combine it together, it's like a huge percentage compared to like, Caucasian what you, like, consider the majority. So please always look at everything as a whole and that and when you're doing events, look at everything as a whole. Even if I'm the only Nigerian that attend aevent, I also add value to this event, and I have my place. So make sure you accommodate me and play actually something from my country just so I can smile and then I can go back to like appreciating other cultures as well. So that's what I ask for anytime an event is planned. Another thing I ask for is always ask questions. A lot of people feel scared of asking questions. So for example, when I pronounce my name, and people don't get it, they don't want to ask Oh, sorry. I didn't get pronounciation. Can you come again? Instead, they try doing their best guess of it. And best guess will be like, Oh, Sade, Sadie. And I'm like oh, no, it's it's Sade, like I already told you. But you could have just asked, and just, you know, told me that you didn't understand it. If I do something, I think that thing was rude, but I don't want to speak up and say, Oh, that thing is rude. It's always good to just ask me like, I feel like this thing I'm considered rude. Like, why did you do it? And all of that. And because these are things I've done, because I'm so always like, asking questions, so I'm never scared of doing it. So always ask it. And then some people might find you rude. But always ask it in a manner of like, I'm sorry for having to ask to this, but I'm so curious about it. And I really do want to learn, like what exactly this means. So can you please tell me. Another situation I always ask questions is when it comes to my Chinese friends. So the first Chinese friends I made, they told me an English name, and I watch like a lot of Chinese movies, and series, especially series on, because you know, it's something I personally enjoy. But also watch a lot of K-dramas, you know, for those people want to do that as well with me. But I would always want to learn Chinese names. So when I came here, I was expecting, you know, like to hear some Chinese names, I would learn how to like better pronounce the names, but a lot of my Chinese friends told me like English names. And at first I was like, confused, like, oh, like, obviously, I don't want to make assumptions like, obviously they're from China, so they should obviously have a Chinese native name. But I just had this like expectation. So it was just something I was curious on. So I asked like, very respectfully that, Oh, my God, I love your name, it's lovely. But I was just wondering, like, is this like, is this officially your name? Or is it just a name that, like, it is the name that was given to you, for example? Or do you have like a Chinese name, that was like actually given to you like, in a special like, like documented, rather, that would be, the right word, do you have a Chinese name that is documented? Or is this you know, the name that you always use among friends. And the Chinese friend told me that well, a lot of Chinese students, when they come here to America they come with an English name, they try to make it sound, you know, because they want to help the English you know, they want to help the Americans, so they don't have to stress too much about their names, so they don't receive too many questions. So they just use that English name wherever they go. And if anyone's ever curious, they show the person their Chinese name. And it was it was just like, wow, so like, you're personally doing something just to accommodate like another culture, but our culture is not really trying to accommodate you. So when so whenever you meet someone that's not from your cultural background, just ask questions or anything you're curious about. If you think like, you really want to learn the person's name, just ask them, How do you pronounce your name? If you don't get it on the first try, it's fine. Because like a lot like a lot of us understand that not a lot of people get it on the first try, so just ask again, it's really not that difficult. So I would say like, overcome that fear, if you have of asking questions, just do it, and just go for it. And the last thing I would like to say is to always remain open. That will be the last thing I like to say, um, I know that a lot of people because there's something that I've learned in my ANP class, which is called navigating other cultures. And it was about, it was pretty much talking about culturally specific assumptions. So how some, like cultures have some certain words or traditions attached to them, when it's not every single person in our culture that practices it.One thing might be about like Nigeria as a whole, when some people just make this assumption that African countries don't really speak English, their English is not fluent, they probably speak you know, other languages that we're never going to understand. Another word that may be attached to Africa as a continent would be, for example, poverty, everyone in this continent is poor. And they don't know how to use technology properly. And it's sad and all of that. So when I come, when I was a teaching assistant for an elementary school I was in, I was doing it as a volunteer work. On my first day, I told the students I was from Nigeria, but they do not understand, you know, like, they have probably never hear of the country, it's fine. So I was like, Oh, it's a country in Africa. And I Oh, my God, she's from Africa, like Africa is a country and all of that, whole, you know, situation, like people never think there are countries in Africa, they just think Africa is the actual country. And I was like, no, no, I mean, it is a continent. So I don't understand everything in Africa, but I'm specifically from Nigeria, but they still you know, this what they don't understand. I just like 10 year old so he's fine. But when it was breaktime and we're chatting, they were asking me questions like do lions like do you have lions on your streets? Do you drink dirty water? Like, where do you live? And once student specifically was like, I'm sure your house is not as good as mine. And, okay, I don't Yeah, yeah, and Nikunj I see your reaction. They're 10 years olds, okay. So they like to have fun. So I'm just laughing. I like they're like, this is the reputation like my continent has in America. I tried educating them, you know, by telling them like, oh, well, actually, yes. You know, we unfortunately, it's sad, but we don't have lions on our streets. You know, we just have cars, mostly have people walking by. And I do not live in a hut, I do not live in a village. I live in a building that my dad built, you know, like, he got like a permit to build it according to his plan for his dream. So I'm like, also, sadly, I'm not poor. You know, my dad doesn't like, you know, saying, Oh, he's a successful man. He just because he's a very humble fellow but personally when I see my dad, I see a very successful man that made it almost by his own. So I'm happy, you know, I mean, that group of people, but I'm sorry, I didn't meet your expectations. And you know, they were like, Oh, this is incredible that we didn't know this. And I'm like, Thank you. Thank you. I seemed like the first person you ever met from Africa, but thank you. Thank you so much. But I just mean, I just like, wish they were more open from the beginning. And they just didn't attach those culture specific assumptions to me. So I would say generally, in your education systems, when you're making examples, for example, from like, Africa, as a continent, don't always put images that represent poverty. Because every time I see Africa, the next image I see is about like poor black students in like some school that is not great. Why? Doing those would just make students like 10 year olds think that oh, Africa is definitely poor. So when you're using images like that, always be cautious, always remain open, think of value, rather than like image of physicalities or color, things like that, think the value that comes from these people, like what is this person going to do with this position, rather than just saying, I want a Black person because we show diversity, that that that should never be the option, that should never be the option. So. That's all I wanted to say.

**Ashley Green** 38:56

Sade, thank you for saying all of that and explaining some of the experiences and comments that you've had to endure, and Nikunj, I think you have a comment related to what Sade has shared?

**Nikunj Agarwal** 39:08

Yeah, I have a small comment about it. First of all, I'm so sorry that somebody has to bring up assumptions like that. I do realize that the world portrays different parts of the world, as you just mentioned, but it is no way funny or cool. And I highly suggest that as an individual, you report that person because if they have done this to you, they have done this to several different people and it's not okay. And it's a violation of the anti discrimination policy that is at MSU. And, and if you report that person today, that person is going to understand how not to generalize it. And I'm sorry, reporting is not easy. It's not the best option always. But I think it's the only option to educate that person. And then put that person in place that hey, this is not okay. Yeah.

**Ashley Green** 40:07

If you ever like to have a teachable moment or a conversation, I hope you feel comfortable doing so. And if not, there are many people across campus who can help you with that conversation for educating. So thank you for that. I also appreciate the song and party example, because using that experience, it would be like diversity is inviting everyone to the party. And then equity is everyone having the same opportunity to dance at the party. But then inclusion is actually having the variety of music that appeals to everyone at the party so that they feel included. So everyone, please keep in mind, there is a difference between diversity, equity and inclusion and Sade's example highlighted that. So I'll ask a few of the panelists to drill down a little bit deeper. Again, this is a learning space. And so we want to be able to provide examples where communications and or images were not inclusive, so that we can learn and stay away from those type of practices. Maybe they can describe ways in which language and image selection can be insulting, can be exclusive or homogeneous, so that we can learn and be conscious of that. I know some of you have already addressed that in your comments. If you have additional examples to share, that would be great.

**Xinyu Wu** 41:29

Maybe actually, I can start. I like also just follow up on Sade's talk on names, Chinese names, I would like to learn what's your Chinese name later. But as you can imagine, my name is very difficult to pronounce. And then I love people coming to me ask me, how do you really pronounce your name. And that's really just a way to strike a conversation telling myself a little bit. And my name in Chinese actually does not reveal gender. So I always tell the joke that, well, it's actually more so the male, boy's name than a girl's name, and my parents had named before they had me and they were so lazy, they wouldn't want to change the name when you know, I'm not a boy. But so that's kind of a give us the opportunity to have a conversation. So definitely, that's my suggestion to ask people you know, the name and the meaning, if there's meaning, the tradition, how to pronounce. On the other hand, I think a lot of Chinese young people especially now want to have a Western name, a strong name, a simple name, easy to remember, isn't pronounced, that actually there's research evidence showed that provide people more opportunity. If your name is easy to remember, people like to ask you to do things ask you to be on the team on on the project, where I tend to be left out and in Zoom, this happens all the time during the last two years, Zoom meeting introduce each other. I'm always the last because people doesn't just don't know how to pronounce my name. So that is something that I think, again, just sort of inclusion and trying to to be mindful it doesn't matter if you pronounce it horribly wrong. I don't think I mind or any Chinese people mind, just say sorry, I don't know how to pronounce your name, I gave a try and correct me. So that's, that's the inclusion piece. I also want to just say the assumption piece, yes, a lot of you are making that assumption. I think the example I gave in the airport is how could you just assume assume that someone looked like Chinese, they are Chinese actually, in that case, those two young women were not not even from China. So making assumptions sometimes really dangerous. And again, I think we just need to be openly asking questions of knowledge that we don't know and want to know. I think especially in university in our educational institution, and it's our duty to educate ourselves and our students, I think, you know, a lot of those assumptions because of ignorance, and they feel they know everything, people, I made assumption myself as well, I just feel I know it, but we don't. And so we really need to be very cautious about that.

**Hilda Mejia Abreu** 44:43

So if I may add, Ashley, thank you so much, Dr. Wu for for sharing with us and for the words of all the colleagues here. One of the things that I do in order to be mindful because language matters, as we have said, and I tried to describe, and I will describe my practice. And what I do first is try to become more research informed. So looking at the variety of cultures, and that is a lot of work, but it's important work, especially as our university is moving into a different direction, in trying to be much more culturally proficient than we have been in the past. And one challenge that I would like to pose, our university is to look at all policies so that they're culturally proficient. I was at the University of Texas where we went through that exercise, it took us five years to get it done. But we did. And that is so important. So becoming more research informed to ensure that we're learning daily is really important. Today, I feel that I'm learning, I am a learner with you, I am not the expert. So this is really important. The second thing that I try to practice and I share with my colleagues is that it's important to implement lessons learned and make them into strategies in practice, the more you practice, the more aware we become of who we are and how we're going to engage with others. And the third piece has actually an A to E. Number one, be personal. Think before we speak. Develop and nurture relationships. And I'll give you an example. Sade Omoniyi, right. Is that correct? Sade? [Sade.] Sade Omoniyi said something very important to us. Ask if you think you don't know. And that is so beautiful. Because I love when people tell me, how do I pronounce your last names? There are two last names, because in my [cross talk], because in my culture, we adopt the mother and father's last name. So my last names are Mejia Abreu. And I love it when people ask me, which, is your last name, Dr. Abreu, or is it Dr. Mejia Abreu; love it. Because that's really important to me as a human. So, so develop and nurture those relationships, so that I can ask Sade, how do you say your name? I think that's critically important and I'm so glad that you mentioned that. Make a concerted effort to be authentic. To let people know I'm asking because I care. I'm asking because I like to connect with you on a human authentic level. E: As I was saying, if you make an error, acknowledge the error; example, I went to school in Boston. And I have the bad habit of saying "you guys," well to some groups, that is offensive. And I have said, I am so sorry, I just say "you" as a group, or XY and Z. So I admit that I have this awful habit that I created when I was in school in Boston. And it's okay to ask to be excused and I'm so sorry, to provide what you're learning and how you're going to move forward. So I wanted to share that with you, because this is so important. I think that language is not only that matters, but behavior, the communication behaviors, and those changes take time. And they and you have to be present in the moment. But communication is a behavior. I just wanted to share that with you.

**Ashley Green** 48:52

I really appreciate you sharing that because the honest truth is sometimes we could be a little nervous to ask for help or to ask for a better understanding. And so hearing everyone reinforce that it really is okay to ask hopefully will put people at ease to take that necessary step. Nikunj I do see your hand, but I've got some questions in the chat about the kind of analogy that I used. So just to repeat it again, my feeling is that diversity is that everyone gets invited to the party. And then equity is having an opportunity to dance like everyone, everyone has that equal opportunity to participate. But then the inclusion piece is really playing a variety of music that appeals to everyone and their culture so that everyone at the party feels that they are included and that they belong. Emily also has a nice description in the chat as well, so feel free to look at that. With that. I'll go to Nikunj, do you still have your hand up?

**Nikunj Agarwal** 49:46

Yeah. So I think everybody on the panel shared some great ways to communicate with people. And I did realize especially on the International Student Association, when I follow up with my team, I used to use the word "hey guys" a lot too, in a way that I'm talking to my peers. It's a way that we often talk too. And I started moving on to using the word "team", I'm using the word "friends", using the word "gorgeous people", that that just gives people a sense of affirmation, that, hey, you're doing great, and respecting how they like to be called, at the same time. I do realize that pronouns can be personal at some times, and people are not willing to share them always, but, ways to be more inclusive at different events could be just adding a pronouns like most of us have done out here, so that they aren't hesitant to ask you about them. There can be times where people tend to be rude, I've been called rude when I ask somebody's pronouns, and it is with an intention that I only want to make sure that I address them the right way, and nothing else. Um, so those are a couple of ways that you could be inclusive. We, we haven't spoken a lot about events in a way. And I just want to kind of talk a little bit about how we can be inclusive at events. Again, all of these conversations are great. And we again missed talking about disability and people with disabilities. I think it's of prime importance, even at the International Student Association Leadership Summit, past February, this point was raised about how important and how mindful should we be around people with disabilities. I think not everybody again, talks the same language, people might have different barriers to communication. And I think it's important that we keep them in mind while planning such events in terms of language and imaging too. Thank you.

**Ashley Green** 52:04

Very important points, Hilda is that a new hand that you have raised?

**Hilda Mejia Abreu** 52:07

Yes, it is, if I may, because I want to illustrate it's great to ask for help. But it's also great to give others help. And let me share this with an illustration that I have here, which I hope you can see my screen, can you see my screen? Great. So often time our colleagues do not know and they don't know what they don't know. So I have become a person that I like to teach my colleagues and I like to share. And Dr. Green knows me well, that's who I am. So just to give you an example, what you see here is when a colleague actually said to me many times, "I really want to learn how to make tacos", they assume that I know how to make tacos. But in my country, only we eat rice and beans. So I take the opportunity to share with my colleagues, the background of certain dishes in Mexico versus the Dominican Republic. And I believe that they appreciate that. And so I make it my business, not to insult, but to really be compassionate, how I go about telling them, this is the reason why we eat rice and beans in my country, this is the rationale for tacos in Mexico and other countries in South America. So I think it's great that we learn but also is good to teach. Because sometimes we don't know what our colleagues do not know. So that's the way I approach it.

**Ashley Green** 53:54

Awesome, awesome. Thank you for sharing that and in the way of teaching, Anjam has posted a fabulous comment in the chat that if you would like to share how your name is pronounced, you can actually go to a website and put that in your signature line on your email. So look at the chat if that's something that you're interested in. Now, panelists, I'm going to give you the next prompt to think about but we are at the time to open it up to the audience as well. But I do want you to begin thinking about describing or explaining practices that actually has highlighted inclusive language and images. Did you read something? Or did you attend an event lately where inclusivity in the language and imagery was prevalent? So we spent the first part talking a little bit about some of the things we shouldn't do, but it would also be great if we can let the audience know some of the things that we've experienced or read that we should be doing. So as you reflect on that I will see if there are any questions from the audience and turn it over to Anjam to help facilitate that part.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 54:58

Thank you, Ashley. And I think there is Patricia who would like to ask a question? So I am going to allow you to talk Patricia here. You're unmuted Patricia you can go. Patricia, you want to talk?

**Ashley Green** 55:29

I'm almost wondering if it's an accidental hand raise.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 55:33

Okay, once she asked the question earlier, but that's all right. So while we have our attendees thinking about questions, and if you do raise your hand, and I can unmute you, so you can ask your questions. And while I'm waiting for people to raise their hands or add a question to the chat, I do have a question that was sent to me. So the question is, could you please share an example of visual or language use that made you that made you or your global peers feel included? Or excluded? Nikunj would you like to answer that?

**Nikunj Agarwal** 56:23

Yeah, thank you. So it is not that long ago, the Chinese Student Association at MSU, were celebrating the Lunar New Year at the Union. And so the pamphlet has had prints on either sides of it, and both the sides, my bad. And one side, it was written in Chinese, I assume, I'm assuming because I don't know that language. And the other side, it was written in English. So this, this surely made me feel inclusive, as in a way that I don't know the particular language that was printed in on the other side, but on the contrary, there was translation in English and I was invited to the event to attend and celebrate Lunar New Year with them. So that's an instance which made me feel really inclusive.

**Xinyu Wu** 57:15

I can also share a—

**Anjam Chaudhary** 57:19

I just had Hilda who had her hand raised, but please go ahead. And then Hilda can answer.

**Hilda Mejia Abreu** 57:25

Yep, I yield the floor to Dr. Wu.

**Xinyu Wu** 57:28

Thank you Hilda, sorry, I didn't see your hand. And sort of just to share another inclusive experience. As some of my colleagues in ISP know that VIPP celebrated our 30th anniversary last year, and we had a series of virtual events. And the team, my team talked quite a lot about how we make our everyone basically feel comfortable at the event feel they can participate without the language barrier, because a lot of our alumni are from China and Korea and their language, English language is not that strong. Same time, we also have alumni from other parts of the world. So we, we know, that was a lot of work, but we decided to provide one of the subtitles. So when people talk, the English subtitle is displayed. So if they don't, the, our alumni doesn't hear it properly, or hear it fast enough, there's subtitle. And we also provide a translation that's very complicated and costly. But we feel that's important, so people who need some help, they do have the help. And then, because it's a series event, we also organize events among just our Chinese alumni and events with our Korean alumni, that's the biggest alumni body. So then they can run event in Chinese or Korean that it's more so they will feel comfortable. So kind of just a make sure that we put in the effort. And then they really appreciate all the alumni appreciate the efforts, that they have the opportunity to experience different types of events, be able to participate at their comfortable level.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 59:37

Thank you Hilda would you like to comment?

**Hilda Mejia Abreu** 59:40

Yes thank you. My comments are right along the same line, that Dr. Wu made a comment. I will share why I'm in this country. I went to boarding school in the Dominican Republic and I had an offer to attend three institution, three in the United States in one the former Soviet Union with a scholarship from my government, I chose the school they came with information in Spanish to my boarding school. And they actually sent a recruiter that was bilingual. And while not a native Spanish speaker, but we could understand each other. I chose that institution over three other institution, because they spoke to me in my language, they actually facilitated immediately, this is going to be your international advisor, a woman from Colombia, 5'11", about 5'1" and full of energy, her name was Elsa Orihuela. And that's why I chose the institution that I came to school with. So language and culture matters, and especially when we're trying to invite international students to our country, to our school, to our venue. The fact that our Provost is really looking at the word alien, and removing that from all materials as well as foreign, I think that deserve huge applause. I wrote my master thesis about undocumented students in the public school in Boston. And to me, this is really good progress at MSU, because I cannot stand the word alien, because we're not alien, we're people. And we're people of this universe. So I want to share that with you, because when that institution came to my country, they spoke to me in a language that I understood that I appreciated. And that told me a few things. Maybe they're just doing the marketing piece, but at least they know how they can communicate with me and to my parents. And that was really important to me, I just wanted to share that piece that really language matters and how we communicate with others.

**Ashley Green** 1:02:03

Thank you so much for sharing that Dr. Mejia Abreu, I had to jump in and say how impactful that was, and obviously, because they help you make a very critical decision. Anjam, I turn it back over to you.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 1:02:15

Thank you. Um, Sade, do you want to answer? Do you want to comment? Or should I read the next question that you could maybe answer and comment to the previous one as well?

**Sade Omoniyi** 1:02:28

Oh, okay. Yeah. Yes.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 1:02:32

So it's a question from at Liz McDaniel, who is, which is also in the chat, "I would be interested in hearing about the idea of asking for help, versus relying on the labor of others to learn, leaning on members of marginalized group to educate me when I should be doing the work to educate myself." Can you speak to that nuance?

**Sade Omoniyi** 1:02:55

Sure, sure. Um, okay, that's a very good question. And I guess I could use the example I was gonna use before for the previous question about how I was sort of like, felt excluded, and put it into this one, as well. So I, when it was Black History Month, we had a roundtable discussion on, they do that in a lot of residence halls and neighborhoods on campus. But we had the roundtable discussion that night. And I usually go for these because you know, ISA, organize it, intercultural aides, so that one is always plan these events out, okay, I always love talking about, you know, these topics, and it's always different. So I'm going for the Black History the discussion we had on Black History and what it meant to you. And when I went on that I found out that pretty much representation, or the event was surrounded around African Americans and their history. So while so I was like, so the first question I had was, like, like, okay, I get that, I'm in, you know, America, you know, as a country, but when you're talking about a race, race is not restricted by country, everyone knows that, you know, so when you, at least when you know that you're in a very diverse environment, and you know, that your IC is you're literally intercultural aide, so your job is to think about, you know, like bringing different cultures together. That's what, that's what these events are for. So if you have an event on Black History, I would have appreciated a surprise, like, oh, wow, they actually thought about some, you know, some practices in other countries related to you know, like, related to the Black race, you know, they actually brought things like this up, but, you know, I didn't receive any surprise, unfortunately, it was just African American. So during the discussion, there was, it was divided by Oh, when did you learn about Black History? Did you learn about it at this age, or at this age or when you were in high school or later on in university. And a lot of like me, and also like other friends that were international, you know that were international students, a lot of us, we moved to this separate group. And it was mostly us in that group, because we didn't because we were like, and the question we had when we joined that group was, what do they mean by Black History? That was the first question that we asked amongst us only, okay, I was like, I thought I was the only one confused by this Black History. And the reason I didn't want to go to a group that learns about Black History, at a young age, I didn't want to go to that group, because I was like, Oh, they probably mean African American history, and I definitely, you know, know very little about African American history. But if we only say Black History, I know a lot about my country's history. And I learned that a very young age, and a lot of us in my country, um, we are from the Black race. So like, which group do I stay in, but we just went to that last group, because like, we don't want to be judged for our for our knowledge. So let's just stay in this group, it's the safest because we're not sure what they meant. And this is a situation and this is a more recent situation where I felt really, really excluded. And not just like a little bit, but really excluded. Because throughout our events, I was confused, throughout the event, I felt really excluded. I'm bringing it to the question right now about asking for help, or just on using, on relying on someone else to explain the whole situation for you. In that kind of case, if you are an intercultural aide, do your research. Don't wait for someone else to come tell you that this event is not as it's not as inclusive, because if you mention Black history, when you were advertising it, you shouldn't just have advertise it as like the Black race, you should have been more specific. You know, don't don't be afraid to be specific. Just want to say, I'm mostly going to discuss African Americans, you know, and the history share in this in this country of United States of America. That's what it's mostly going to be, just let us know. So that we don't come in looking very confused. And then you wait for us to tell you the whole situation about how, well actually, this is not, you know, unfortunately, our question is that this event was not really like about your culture, so sorry. You know, do your research sometimes, um, rather than asking the funniest questions to people, because people might find that very offensive. I know, like in that situation, a friend told me about how because "because I'm from Brazil" and a lot of people would come up and like, speak, and speak Spanish to him. And he was like, actually, international language in Brazil is Portuguese. So why did they come up to me to speak Spanish? And, you know, that would be the easiest thing to look up on Google, it will literally take you 30 seconds, if you just looked up? What is international language, you know, in Portugal, rather than me just going up and trying to you know, speak Spanish because I'm definitely don't understand, you know, don't don't do that. Sometimes, you should just do your research. And after doing your research, if you have extra questions, feel free to ask like, I went on internet, I saw this, I still have a couple questions, then we're going to be very intrigued. And like, wow, this person actually did some research. Like it's nice. So that would be my own opinion.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 1:08:21

Thank you very much Sade. Hilda, do you want to answer that?

**Hilda Mejia Abreu** 1:08:25

Yes. Thank you so much, this was really good. That's an excellent question, Liz. I think you're right DEI professionals, and there are a few of us here, have been exhausted for the past few years. And the work is rewarding and really overwhelming sometimes because we are considered the expert. And there are areas where we might not know the answers, and it's okay to ask for help. What I have decided to do in my career as DEI expert and because I really care about our community and our colleagues, that when I can I offer to teach, but also when I can I offer for my colleagues to do additional research. I know that that's a huge task. But one of the ways that we have started to do this at MSU CVM in our college is by holding anti racism town halls every month, where we can use PALS, which is pause, acknowledge, listen and discuss with the colleague, which is a tool used by Dr. Klapawitz from Michigan State University in order to learn and to speak and do dialogue. The other piece that I have recommended to my colleagues is sign up for MSU Dialogue, which is an amazing tool for us to communicate. I know many students at MSU have been part of the MSU Dialogue and those courses, but I would say, yes, it's tiring, but what an amazing, rewarding experience to share with your colleagues that you're from the Dominican Republic, and you don't need tacos, or you don't know how to make tacos, but you can teach them how to cook rice and beans. To me that is contributing to my community that I so deeply care for. While it's more work, but I take on the challenge, because it's important to me. So I just wanted to share that. And that's a great question. Thank you.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 1:10:33

Xinyu?

**Xinyu Wu** 1:10:35

Yeah, I love that question, I think is brilliant. And I just want to say that, you know, we, we are all adult learners, we are lifelong learners, we continue learning never stop. And it's also because we are curious, if you have the curiosity, you never stop learning something come up, you just want to Google you want to then sit down seriously reading it and learn it, educate yourself, and simply because we care. And I like what Hilda said is because we care, this is important you feel this, this is important to ourself and to our audience. And I want to give a few very small, quick examples. One, the last two, two years working from home and giving, what's going on with COVID, and xenophobic, xenophobia, and anti Asian hate in the environment, I started, I just realized, actually, I know very little about Asian American and Chinese American history. I'm new to the US, as you you heard, I only moved here 2015. And I actually made an assumption when I moved here, 2015, I thought the UK and America are very similar. But I had enormous culture shock, even on campus, the way we work, the way approach things are actually very different. So I started reading books and OCP was very, you know, just in a good position last year, we were able to create a small collection of relevant books. So I just started reading and I enjoy that learning so much that lead to, you know, that feed into a lot of my work, the events we organize, and the courses, the program we are developing. So that's that's just, you know, something I feel really rewarding. The other example I want to give it so we are expecting a group of university faculty from Kazakhstan in May. And we're super excited. So there'll be here between three, four months to a year for staff develop faculty development program. And we have a number of instructors hired to work with the group. And I was so moved by some of the instructors study study studied learning about Kazakhstan because so we never taught people from Kazakhstan, I know little about it. And they started reading about Kazakhstan sharing the articles, they are reading the the website information. And I feel that's a very good example, say we need to educate ourselves because we care, we want to do a better job, rather than sitting here waiting to be fed with information.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 1:13:30

Thank you very much. And Nikunj you you want to answer and I have one more question for our panelists.

**Nikunj Agarwal** 1:13:39

Oh, what do you want me to answer first then let you ask the question and then answer.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 1:13:43

No, you can answer and then I can.

**Nikunj Agarwal** 1:13:45

Awesome. So, so I love how you spoke about it can be a burden to somebody else to continuously ask them to educate you about something. And as a student leader, I have felt this or my past experience at MSU that I always have to step up and voice our concerns or point out things that are not being done the way they should be. So I think education is always the first step you can take individually to enhance your knowledge and enhance your skills. One quick reference, which is not related to DEI in a general context is that, as watching the show called The Crown on Netflix yesterday, it's about Queen Elizabeth and her entire tenure as the Queen. And in the first few episodes, they showed how she had minimal education of the real world but just education of the constitution throughout early years. And once she became the queen, she had to meet with different political leaders from around the globe. And she was always lost in conversations about what are conversation starters what are somethings that she'd be willing to talk about or she should talk about, are there are things which are a big no or a big yes. And that's when she called in professors from universities and said, Hey, I want to learn about politics and about these leaders that I'm going to meet. I want to know about the background that they come from so that I, it helps me build conversation, it helps me know who they are. Exactly in today's context and in this conversation it's about taking the ownership onto you and going through the spaces today. MSU offers several different resources where you can go and educate yourself at no cost. And just learn more about cultural communities, I know Dr. Green just put in a link with MSU Dialogues. It has a semester long series in different in different arenas, such as race, religion, where you can go and learn more about those. So it's about you, and about your interests and about your urge to gain as much as knowledge as you can, rather than depending on somebody.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 1:16:02

Thank you, Nikunj. So our last question is, we've talked a lot about translations and accessibility. But one thing that I think about is how sign language as I have experienced it, is predominantly American Sign Language. How can we make sign language more inclusive for different cultures? And that question is from Daniel Puentes. So whoever would like to start first.

**Hilda Mejia Abreu** 1:16:33

I'm fine starting first. I think that's an excellent question. ASL, American Sign Language is something that we always provide when we need to. I can remember commencement right now I'm planning the medical school commencement in my college, and I have ASL interpreter. That's a great question. And it's something that we as a community might want to share with our institutional diversity colleagues in Dr. Bennett's office. How do we provide ASL, sign language for different languages? Spanish, Korean, I think is important. And I think we need to be aware of those needs. If we know that we have the needs. Of course, I think making the investment, initial investment could be something to be shared and discussed. But I think if we are to become a more inclusive, university, more inclusive college, I think this is a great opportunity for all of us to suggest recommend to Dr. Bennett's office the importance of sign language in different languages, such as Spanish, and Korean and other languages. I think whomever I think, Daniel Puentes, thank you for sending that question, because it's something that I think about all the time, including some of our websites in different languages, which is how I came to this country. And I was attracted to the University of Massachusetts, because they really wowed me with their cultural approach to their recruitment practices. So thank you for that question.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 1:18:23

Xinyu, if you want to add?

**Xinyu Wu** 1:18:25

Yeah, just quickly to add, I think sign language is going to be more and more popular. If you know that the Oscar Best Movie Award goes to CODA which is really about this family and deaf parents and how they brought up their daughter who went ahead to be a musician and the whole movie the award, Oscar won going to make this in a way very sexy. So probably it'll be very popular for resources to pour into sign language, at least American Sign Language. And I think I agree with Hilda, we need to we need to make a resource available to it while we do programming, if we want to provide that we need to provide it then, you know, it just we need to have the resource to do it. So fully support that but at least I think it's a good start with the Oscar winning and I enjoy that movie tremendously if you haven't seen it I strongly recommend it.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 1:19:37

Thank you, Nikunj.

**Nikunj Agarwal** 1:19:40

Yeah, so this conversation was brought up by student leaders a couple of years ago as well, about MSU offering the American Sign Language and for those of you who don't know, ASL, or the American Sign Language is the third largest US language in the United States. This was a surprise to me when we researched about it. And I know MSU has a partnership with the Lansing Community College with those individuals who are willing to study this language. I think it is also very important that we utilize this resource in the way which is best efficient. For example, today, we're talking over Zoom. And we could use that resource to reach out to more people, but at the same time, with organization hosting smaller events, it's always about asking the audience if they prefer a particular accommodation as necessary, because it could be a waste of resource if nobody is using that, or it's not, it's helping nobody with that resource, if that helps.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 1:20:54

Yes, that's very true. Thank you very much. Sade, do you want to add or do you want to add?

**Sade Omoniyi** 1:21:01

Yeah, yeah, sure. Um, so the, the time I went learning about the American Sign Language was actually when, was Switched at Birth. And this is, uh, okay, so this is actually I really love it, it is one of my first series, but Switched at Birth is it really like, actually introduced me to sign language. It was after watching that when I was like many years ago, um, pretty much like around the time it was still like going on. That was when I really saw the impact of this language and how it was because I never really thought about it. So that's what I was talking about, it's always good to do your research. And sort of, I think a way to make it to sort of spread this, it's sort of like thinking about treat the American Sign Language like you treat any other language. Like how we were talking before how events you shouldn't just have like, only if you do have an event, and you are able to accommodate ASL, try to accommodate like other you know, different sign languages, you know, from like, different countries that different countries use. But like also, as Nikunj also mentioned that it's always good to ask the audience just so you don't waste resources, because I know that improving DEI is expensive. And that's why some organizations always use that, to excuse them from actually accommodating and including. They always say, oh, it's expensive, it's gonna be expensive. But if you're able to study your audience and tell them, this person actually applied for this event, so this person will be coming, but this person's first language is not even American Sign Language, like this person's first language is like, I don't know, like British Sign Language, for example, like it's just from like different, like country I know. So we need to be able to accommodate this person, don't just think about, oh, this is only one person among 200 of people coming, but you have to think about it like this is one person, like I said before with value and if this person has a great impact on the world, like the person could actually impact the country as a whole. So think about it as any other language and just study your audience to make sure you're accommodating every single person with the whole diversity, equity and the most important part to me, inclusion.

**Anjam Chaudhary** 1:23:21

Thank you very much, Sade. And I think that we just have a few minutes to to close, I will give it back to Ashley to to end.

**Ashley Green** 1:23:32

Oh, I can't believe we're already near time, it never feels like enough time. Although I know none of us really have more time to give. So thank you, everyone for joining. Thank you so much panelists for the insight and personal experiences that you've shared. The four of you are truly DEI champions, and have done so much work and advocacy in different ways, which is to be respected and commended. I have to give another thank you to many of my ISP colleagues who have been doing this intercultural work for decades who I've learned from and for this series of specific thanks goes to Anjam, who's ISPs DEI coordinator, ISP communications team, our assistant Barbara and of course, associate provost and dean Hanson, the Global DEI Task Force and all of the phenomenal panelists over the three webinars. We are so grateful for the engaging discussions and the space to share openly, freely and feel safe doing so. We are mindful that for some this is the first time engaging in difficult discussions and topics like this, but we want to be able to share experiences and ask questions in efforts to continue our learning, which informs our actions and thereby impacts our climate. And finally, the goal was to take this information that was shared across the three webinars, along with other sources of expertise, and then document that to provide tangible tools and tips in writing to share with the broader campus. Lastly the recording will be available on the ISP DEI website so please share with your colleagues and stay tuned for future sessions and resources on other relevant topics. Thank you everyone.