

# Navigating Contemporary DEI Challenges in Higher Education

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2024-25 ADVANCE Leadership Workshop Series in Conjunction with  
Opportunities in Leadership Program (OLP)  
December 5, 2024

# Agenda

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<b>10:00 – 10:10</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>
<b>10:10 – 11:00</b>	<b>Panel and Discussion</b>
<b>11:00 – 11:45</b>	<b>Small Group Breakouts</b>
<b>11:45 – 12:00</b>	<b>Wrap Up</b>
<b>12:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>

## Panelists

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- > **Rickey Hall**, Vice President for Minority Affairs & Diversity and University Diversity Officer
- > **David Reyes**, DNP, MPH, RN, PHNA-BC, Dean, UW Tacoma, School of Nursing & Healthcare Leadership, and Interim Dean, UW Tacoma, School of Urban Studies



# Rickey Hall

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Vice President for Minority Affairs & Diversity and University Diversity Officer

# **Navigating the Current DEI Context as a Leader**

- > The issues are complex and ever changing
- > Institutional Values vs. Individual Rights
- > Challenging Rhetoric vs. Actions Taken
- > National vs. State



# Tips for Consideration

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- > Begin with the personal move to the local then to the institutional
- > Know and reinforce the institution's values of DEI
- > Align efforts with the Diversity Blueprint
- > Be informed of University Resources
- > Ensure Accountability & Transparency



# Resources

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- > [University's Central Diversity Website](#)
- > [University's DEI Framework](#)
- > [Education, Training, and Learning](#)
- > [Affinity Groups](#)
- > [Compliance](#)



# UW ADVANCE Leadership Workshop: Navigating Contemporary DEI Challenges in Higher Education

David Reyes, Dean, UW Tacoma, School of Nursing & Healthcare Leadership  
Interim Dean, UW Tacoma, School of Urban Studies

# *EQUITY-MINDED LEADERSHIP*

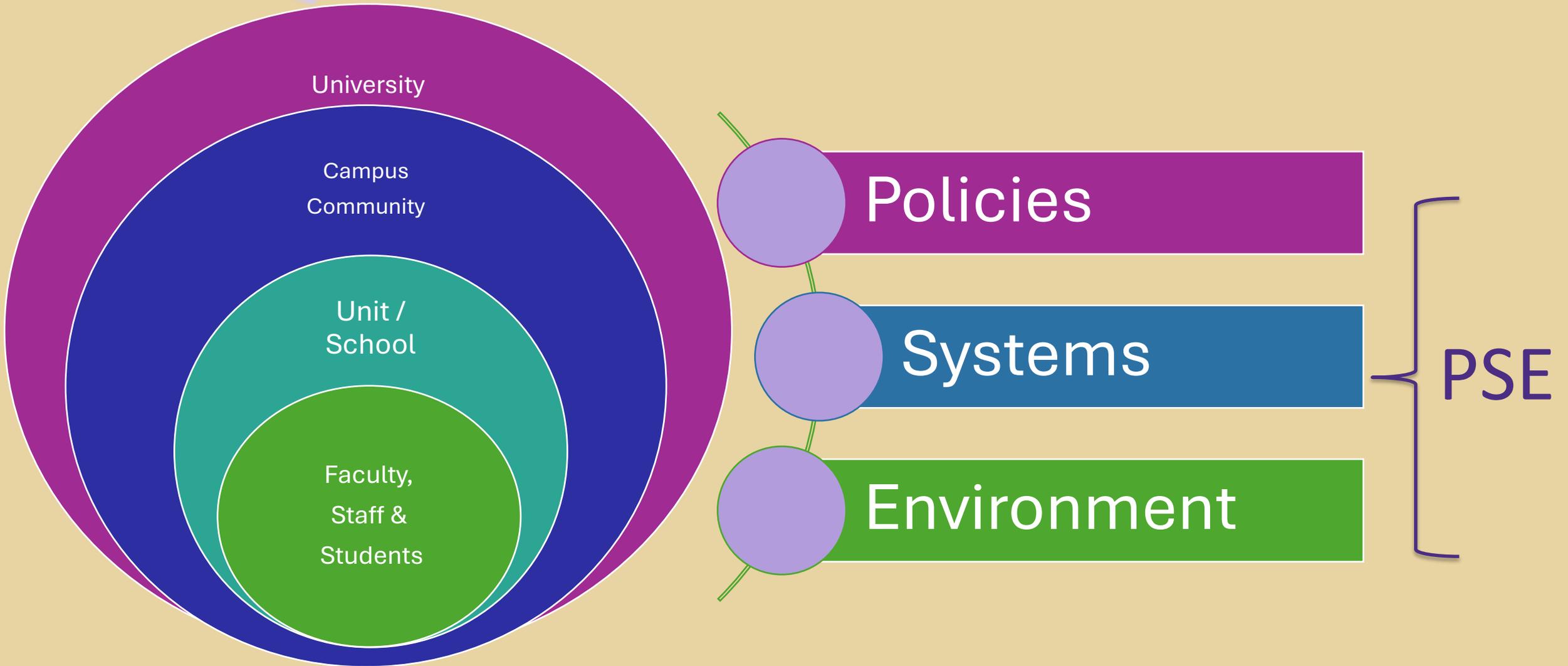
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## *Applying a DEI Lens to...*

- ❖ Achieve our vision & mission in higher education
- ❖ Assess systemic & structural inequities in academia
- ❖ Examine ones own power, privilege & positionality



# EQUITY-MINDED FRAMEWORK



# *EQUITY-MINDED STRATEGIES*

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- ❖ Use engagement practices & principles
  - Authenticity, Mutuality, Reciprocity
- ❖ Engage in PSE change –
  - Clarifying roles & responsibilities
  - Quality improvement
- ❖ The “MRI” Approach > *What is the Most Reasonable Interpretation?*
  - Seek to understand root causes
- ❖ Relate the work back to vision & mission

# **Small Group Discussion: 4 Scenarios**

- > Staff member attacking faculty's research**
- > Harassment of faculty of color**
- > Tension between DEI statements and free speech concerns**
- > Graduate student activism**

# Scenario #1: Staff member attacking faculty's research

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A faculty member of color from a different unit has reached out to inform you about an incident involving one of your staff members. This staff member sent the faculty member an unprofessional email that criticized their research on diversity and equity. The email included derogatory language, referring to the faculty member as a "social justice warrior" and stating they are an "embarrassment to the university." While the faculty member is not requesting any specific outcome, they wanted you to be aware of the situation.

## Discussion Questions:

- > What immediate thoughts or concerns come to mind regarding the impact of this incident on the faculty member, your staff member, and the wider university community?
- > What steps would you take to address this situation and how might you use this opportunity to reinforce the values of professionalism and inclusivity among members of your department?
- > Suppose you have concerns about the quality or integrity of the critiqued research. Should you acknowledge these issues to your staff member? Should your concerns about the research be factored into your response?

## Scenario #2: Harassment of faculty of color

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An underrepresented faculty member in your unit has reached out for support. They are experiencing a pattern of harassment, including hate mail and online attacks, due to their work in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) research and teaching. This harassment stems from a coordinated effort by individuals outside the university community who oppose DEI initiatives. This harassment has affected the faculty member's sense of safety in performing their job duties, and they are specifically asking for help to make their work environment safer so they can continue their teaching and research without fear.

### Discussion Questions:

- > What are the potential personal and professional impacts of this situation on the faculty member and their work?
- > What immediate steps can you take to protect the faculty member's safety and security, both physically and digitally, as they continue their work?
- > What support could you offer to counteract the external hostility and to support faculty academic freedom in challenging environments?

# Scenario #3: Tension between DEI statements and free speech concerns

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A faculty member in your department has voiced strong objections to the university's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. In particular, they are openly critical of the use of diversity statements in job applications, graduate admissions, and promotion and tenure evaluations, viewing these as infringements on academic freedom. Additionally, this faculty member has expressed resistance to the presence of departmental diversity committees, arguing that they are unnecessary and impose ideological conformity. During faculty meetings, they often monopolize discussions with critiques of DEI policies, and they frequently send detailed emails to the entire department reiterating their views. This behavior has led to concerns among faculty, staff, and students, who feel the environment has become hostile and unwelcoming, especially for those who support DEI efforts.

## Discussion Questions:

- > How can you balance the faculty member's right to express differing views with the need to create a respectful and inclusive environment?
- > How would you approach the faculty member to discuss their behavior, focusing on maintaining a respectful and collaborative department culture?
- > What resources or support might you offer to department members who feel unwelcome due to the faculty member's behavior?

## Scenario #4: Graduate student activism

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A group of graduate students in your unit has escalated their advocacy efforts by staging a sit-in at the department chair's office to protest what they see as inadequate progress on their demands for more inclusive teaching practices. The students' demands include mandatory DEI training for all faculty, the removal of faculty from teaching if there is a history of student complaints about their lack of inclusivity, and other changes they feel are essential for a fair and inclusive academic environment. The protest has gained attention, with the UW Daily publishing an article that highlights the students' grievances and calls for immediate action from the department. Some faculty members support the students' demands and their right to protest, while others are concerned that the protests disrupt department operations and risk creating an adversarial climate. The department is under pressure from department members and the public, and there is a need to respond effectively while balancing respect for student voices with institutional policies and faculty autonomy.

### Discussion Questions:

- > How would you engage with the protesting students in a way that acknowledges their concerns while maintaining department operations and protecting the chair's ability to perform their duties and comply with university policies?
- > How can you build trust and encourage collaborative efforts to address DEI challenges in a sustainable and constructive way?

# Additional opportunities

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# Conflict Engagement and Resolution Training

**Apply by Dec. 16!**

- > 8-hour interactive training
  - Alan Kirtley, Emeritus Associate Professor of Law, University of Washington School of Law’s Mediation Clinic
  - Christine Cimini, Professor of Law, University of Washington School of Law’s Mediation Clinic
- > Application Materials due Dec. 16, 2024, to [vpap@uw.edu](mailto:vpap@uw.edu)
  - Brief biographical sketch
  - 1 paragraph statement indicating how participation will benefit both the unit and the nominee
  - The preferred quarter for participation (winter or spring for academic leaders)

**Winter Quarter:  
(Academic Leaders)**  
March 20 @ 1:00 p.m. &  
March 21 @ 9:00 a.m.

**Spring Quarter:  
(Faculty)**  
May 29 @ 1:00 p.m. &  
May 30 @ 9:00 a.m.

**Spring Quarter:  
(Academic Leaders)**  
June 12 @ 1:00 p.m. &  
June 13 @ 9:00 a.m.



# January Campus Workshop: Making Faculty Evaluation More Equitable with Dr. Beth Mitchneck

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Jan 27, 2025: 3:30 - 5:00 pm in HUB 145

**RSVP: <https://tinyurl.com/EquitableFacEval>**

# Save-the-Date: Upcoming ADVANCE/OLP Leadership Workshops

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- Winter: March 6, 2025, Topic TBA
- Spring: May 8, 2025, Topic TBA
- Time and Location: 10:00 am to 12:30 pm in HUB 250