Case Study: Nationally Known University

Flexability delights in working with organizations who are either initiating or jumpstarting their equity and inclusion efforts. An alumna of this University initiated this engagement after the alumna and administrative members of the University attended a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion panel discussion featuring Flexability leadership.

We listen. Our first task is to build relationships, create trust, and demonstrate our expertise and capacity. Flexability initiated several conversations with the leadership of several departments including the medical school. Our consultant team conducted introductory workshops to two different offices within the University. Based on this experience, our team held then several follow up phone calls with a specific administrative office and the head of Human Resources.

The University had already completed the initial diversity and inclusion journey and was interested in strengthening their inclusion skills with staff. The University's goals included developing a sophisticated understanding of bias in the workplace, seeing intersecting identities as a kaleidoscope of lived experiences, building trust, and transforming mindsets to sustain an inclusive work culture. The leadership team identified its challenges in the workplace, including alignment of values and workplace culture. With this input, Flexability designed a climate survey for both administrative leadership and key staff. Generally, climate surveys explore equity and inclusion strengths, opportunities, and pain points. In this case, the climate survey also explored issues of leadership and management.

We align. Flexability conducted the climate survey of members of the administrative office to identify strengths, challenges, and gaps. After reviewing the learnings from the climate survey, the Flexability team proposed the topics and building blocks for each of five workshops. We use the initial educational sessions to spotlight foundational equity and inclusion strengths and to identify organizational-wide equity and inclusion gaps that inhibit company cohesion, innovation, and productivity. These specific workshops centered around diversity, equity and inclusion education and included activities to increase well-being,

connectedness, and trust building during the pandemic. After each workshop, the leadership and Flexability held debrief conversations to make upgrades for the next workshop. Examples of upgrades included adjustments to learning styles, content, and break out session activities.

As a follow up to the workshops, Flexability and the leadership team focused on systemic changes to the organization with an emphasis on demographics, employee job descriptions, office culture, interpersonal experiences, hiring and retention, inclusion along the interacting and intersecting "Big Eight" identities, unproductive workplace norms and language, knowledge of existing anti-discrimination policies and processes, and suggestions for how the University' administrative office might "do better." Flexability scheduled 45-minute interviews with key staff members to explore leadership strengths and challenges. Presently, Flexability is working with leadership and staff to develop a common vision and value statement, to cultivate and grow the "office culture", and develop a common understanding of open, honest, vulnerable leadership.

We deliver. Equity and inclusion efforts are unique to each client's needs. We build programs with everyone in mind, not just a single segment of any one demographic. A proven strategy for sustainable inclusion, the Flexability Team devises strategies to listens and consider the broad views, concerns, and ideas. We believe in collaboratively and compassionately getting people to "row in the right direction." Building upon this simple fact is the difference between equity and inclusion success and failure. In many cases, Flexability develops a roadmap specific the organization's starting place and goals. The company receives a readable report based on collected data that outlines the company culture and suggests next steps. In collaboration with the leadership team, we often develop a multi-year strategic plan that outlines equity and inclusion priorities, company initiatives, and best practices and processes, for execution of the plan to achieve the goals. Successful Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts are not a "one and done" event; building a culture of equity and inclusion is a strategic decision. This University has made that long-term commitment to its unique journey.