Collaboration and Partnership
Where does DEI fit?
Transparency
Transparency:

- Increases collaboration
- Enhances trust
- Increases innovation
- Encourages people to communicate openly
- Increases the sharing of ideas
Group Discussion Questions:

• What are your objections to change?
• What objections to change have you heard from others?
• What are you sensitive about sharing with others?
• What are DEI mistakes your MA has made?
• What are shortcomings your MA has in the DEI space?
Group Discussion Notes:

• DEI Mistakes:
  • Other orgs results in less diversity – operators vs engineers
  • Forget the mission is to serve the members
  • Uncomfortable asking folks you do not know
  • Limited scope (race, sex, gender, role, socio-econ.)
Group Discussion Notes:

• DEI Objections:
  • What we have always done
  • Doing it wrong is worse than not doing it at all
  • Why should everyone get the same outcome
Group Discussion Notes:

• Our challenges (engineering):
  • From our process to our material
Group Discussion Notes:

• Suggestions:
  • Switch to doing a land acknowledgement instead of a prayer
  • Code of conduct for all members
  • Code of conduct for attendees
  • Look at non-STEM communicators, regulators, non-ops/engineers
Group Discussion Notes:

- DEI Collaboration:
  - Getting out of silos and having committees talk with each other
  - DEI Partnerships?
    - Tribal
    - Land acknowledgement (instead of prayer)
Group Discussion Notes:

• Shortcoming of MA:
  • Transparency at Board level as to how to get involved
  • New member welcome and opportunities
  • State water conference -> committee showcase
Group Discussion Notes:

• Improving Collaboration:
  • Reaching the people with the issues with change
  • Partnerships with tech colleges, HBCUs, and high schools to promote the water industry
  • The importance of role models that look like you
  • Bringing other ideas to the table
Group Discussion Notes:

• Improving Collaboration:
  • At first you need to be aware of your surroundings – listen

• Shortcomings/mistakes of your MA
  • If you are not moving forward you are falling behind
  • Realize that some things are out of your control
  • Silence is safety
  • In hindsight, there were calls for “women in water” many years ago that were dismissed

• Cliques
Group Discussion Notes:

• Inclusion -> Diversity -> Equity
Group Discussion Notes:

- Tough questions:
  - Is the role of a professional organization changing?
  - What is a professional organization?
    - “want” the things...don’t “need” the things it can provide
- Awareness of how to get involved
  - Take a first step but don’t hear back
  - What should I ask to go to?
  - Am I allowed to go?
Group Discussion Notes:

• First feelings of feeling welcome and represented are so important
Group Discussion Notes:

• “Emerging leader” more inclusive than “young professional”
• Not just about race, out operators, regulators, engineers, age, experience
• Ohio: Emerging Leader on Exec Committee
Group Discussion Notes:

• “We need talent!”
• DE&I good for annual meeting general/opening session instead of specialty track
• Inclusion and collaboration go hand-in-hand
• DE&I good for workforce development
Group Discussion Notes:

• Objection to change:
  • Comfort zone
  • Always done it this way
  • Listen
  • DEI is the flavor of the day so why should I get involved
Group Discussion Notes:

• Mechanism of DEI
  • What does DEI mean?
    • To new people
  • What does DEI do?
Group Discussion Notes:

• Partnership
  • Reach out to other MA, schools, etc.
  • Must take baby steps
    • No big swings
• Recognize and respect each person/organization for who they are.
• Listen, communicate