

Year 3 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Harvard University

Harvard Kennedy School: Cultural Ambassadors Program

Relevant Rubric Areas:

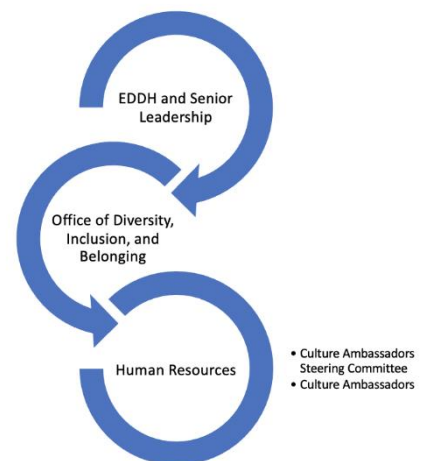
- ✓ Ally or Ambassador Programs
- ✓ Embedding the Values of Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect into Recruitment, Hiring, Admissions, Retention, Promotion, and Advancement;
- ✓ Leadership Education and Skill Development.

Description of Work:

The Culture Ambassadors (CAs) program, launched in April 2021, is a staff-focused initiative that began at Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) that aims to create sustainable impact and change around diversity, inclusion, and belonging at HKS. This train-the-trainers program builds an inclusive culture by developing the facilitation and leadership capacity of staff to advance anti-racism in centers, departments, and beyond.

The Culture Ambassadors consist of a staff representative from every center or department who embrace HKS values and try to live them out in their daily work and interactions. In addition, they work with peers in the Culture Ambassadors Program; serve as liaisons in their department, and partner with the Culture Ambassador Steering Committee to recommend training and resources for the broader HKS community.

Research in the field of diversity and inclusion trainings suggests that one-off diversity trainings are not effective in creating organizational change ([Paluck et al., 2021](#), [Chang et al., 2019](#); [Dobbin & Kalev, 2018](#)). However, academics in the field of diversity and inclusion have found that it is important to implement structures that foster opportunities for high-quality intergroup contact ([Onyeador et al., 2021](#)), as well as create diversity programs that include experiential learning ([McCormick-Huhn et al., 2020](#)) as part of its curriculum. The novel aspect of our program is that this is an ongoing sustainable effort that considers evidence-based research on what works to create effective diversity and inclusion changemakers at organizations.



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The role of the Culture Ambassadors is to partner to engage the HKS community on education and conversations around diversity, inclusion, and belonging. The overall goal is to allow for courageous and empowering conversations to take place and progress the Kennedy School toward a culture of greater inclusivity, institutional awareness, and understanding. In Year 3 of the Action Collaborative, the Culture Ambassador Program partnered with University offices across Harvard to bring diversity, inclusion, and specialized gender equity, climate, and gender equity training to staff, faculty, fellows, and students across the School.

To this end, the Steering Committee has created three learning objectives that will better focus this program and its curriculum.

Community Building

- Create a network of cultural ambassadors who can engage with diversity, inclusion, and belonging concepts as a group on a long-term basis
- Discuss challenges and successes on advancing DIB in their centers
- Share resources and initiatives they have used at their Centers to advance DIB

Facilitation (Train-the-trainers)

- Develop leadership and facilitation capacity of Culture Ambassadors
- Build skills on having difficult conversations on DIB
- Sharing methods and training as usable tools for Culture Ambassadors

DIB Skill Building

- Examine and reflect on the impact of oppressive structures (e.g., racism, white supremacy, sexism, heterosexism, classism, and the other isms) within individuals, systems, institutions, and communities we exist in
- Identify and understand the actions we can take as individuals, departments, and an institution to advance diversity and equity at HKS

Short-term Outcomes (Individual and Interpersonal Outcomes) to increase:

- Facilitation skills and ability to have difficult conversations
- Understanding of their own identity, and their role in building an inclusive culture at HKS
- Comfort and willingness to discuss the concepts of equity and justice
- Knowledge on the core concepts of power, privilege, oppression, and anti-racism

Medium-term (Community Level Outcomes):

- Diverse cross-unit partnerships formed among HKS units to advance DIB
- Increased conversations and action planning amongst staff members across HKS on DIB, providing a platform to discuss, strategize, and execute DIB initiatives for HKS units

Long-term (Institutional Outcomes):

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- Collective action taken towards creating an inclusive culture at HKS with a set of shared values and shared responsibility
- A community of agents of change who can collaborate with their team or unit leadership and staff to make deliberate, committed, action plans to advance DIB at HKS

Point of Contact Name: Jen Goodman

Email Address for Point of Contact: jennifer_goodman@hks.harvard.edu