



Catalyzing change in the chemical engineering community: An open forum

Canadian Chemical Engineering Conference, 29 October 2020

Thank you to all who participated in the CCEC 2020 “**Catalyzing change in the chemical engineering community: An open forum**” workshop facilitated by *Gordon Jolly* from *National Research Council Canada*. This document aims to serve as a reference for future conversation; summarizing discussion items from the workshop brought forward by participants through MentiMeter and open discussion into **central themes**.

Strengths of a diverse team

- **Strength through diverse perspectives and ideas**
 - One view is never complete; alternative perspectives are essential to scientific and cultural progress
 - Diverse teams help to eliminate blind spots, provide richer perspectives
 - Enables the breaking of 'group-think'
 - Innovation thrives due to the diverse experiences of members
 - Learning from different perspectives
 - Different perspectives and experiences allow us to find multiple solutions
 - Covering blind spots
- **Strength through diverse talent**
 - Effective diversity and inclusion allow for greater access to higher-quality talent
 - New candidates who see themselves reflected in leadership, are more likely to apply, more likely to stay
 - The multi-cultural environment in Canada, including indigenous students, adds social value to the team, which creates a stronger professional environment
 - Cultural diversity in different countries adds additional perspectives to a team

Strengths of an inclusive team

- **Openness to contributing and to hearing new ideas**
 - Inclusive teams allow us to be ourselves and actually focus our energy on the objectives of the team
 - An environment that is safer so folks can focus on the work (rather than survival)
 - Allowed to be self and be well; not being "odd one out" more focus on work
 - Allows the team to focus on work without stereotype assumptions
 - More welcoming climate – ideas flow easier and performance improves
- **The team comfort zone encompasses everyone**
 - A safer space is created in diverse teams when sensitive topics arise.
 - It is a more welcoming environment, that is more respectful of personal constraints such as religious or cultural factors

- Not needing to hide myself wastes less mental effort
- Stronger sense of belonging to the team
- Draw strength from different background
- Being more compassionate

Value through effective diversity in teams

- ***It is about the ideas, not the person***
 - Team and leadership look at my ideas first, not my identity
 - Being allowed to make mistakes
 - Open, frank, collaborative
- ***It is also about the people!***
 - Allyship when the world is on fire
 - Humour (positive but can be negative!)
 - Supporting each other and allies with privilege speaking up
 - Leadership that explicit stands against things that undermine inclusivity
 - Free discussion offered by colleagues at any time available
 - Listening

Challenges working within a diverse team

- ***Building and maintaining a diverse team takes effort***
 - Compromise is more difficult, as is getting to a final result
 - It takes more effort and resources to make progress
 - Setting up the environment for the team is more difficult
 - Consensus is hard
 - Being the leader requires more flexibility around how to be inclusive for that team
 - Accessibility cost for accommodations
 - Preconceived notions hard to manage
- ***Context of history and the wider organization matters***
 - Local team diversity may be out of sync with the larger, wider team
 - Having diversity higher in an organization empowers diversity lower in the organization; it is very difficult to flow diversity up into a larger organization's culture
 - Being successful in 1 aspect of inclusion does not = masterfulness in all forms of inclusion
 - Management ensures that all needs are met.
- ***EDI is not supposed to be the day job***
 - People who are most impacted, are the people asked to do most work to advance inclusion, which takes away from their day job.
 - Time to support EDI takes time away from the day job

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED!