

Spring 2015 College Meeting Questions

1. A suggestion or tip for making classrooms inclusive that has worked for you.

- Be open to being vulnerable and questioning—take that ride with your unique group of students each day
- I teach groups of <20, so I get to work closely with each. I get to meet one on one often by having the time/availability for these meetings. I feel I have an advantage in teaching/engaging over large GE classes.
- Tell my own story of poverty, first generation college, not being “college material.”
- Providing visual (on board), written (handout) outline/instructions & verbal instruction—pointing to the on board as often providing focus to point being addressed
- Opportunities to pick between varying perspectives/topics in order to fulfill same goal oriented assignments
- Turn the classroom into a conversation rather than a lecture.
- Small group work. Students facilitate the class. Honesty.
- Practical instructional methods. Emphasize mutual learning, not just a teacher-learner. Create student authority by letting them design/evaluate their own assignments. Do a lot of anonymous freewriting to generate difficult dialogue and model productive/inclusive communication.
- Acknowledge that you appreciate the student’s ideas/opinion/thoughts but their work must meet assignment requirements to pass the class.
- Model feedback—then have students rotate that feedback
- I have an activity in each class during the first week of school that provides each student the opportunity to tell the class about his/her background/biography.
- The best tip I received was to ask students how they can utilize the information in other areas of their life. Get them to connect the dots.
- Small group discussion in classes to get quieter/less dominant students involved.
- Try to communicate one-on-one with your students, especially if you notice disengagement.
- A technique called popcorn where students after commenting on a topic get to call on the next student to comment.
- Confirm everyone’s existence with body language. Address different learning styles.
- Ice breakers like scavenger hunt and speed meeting.
- Body language matters. How you hold yourself can make you more authoritative or approachable. Thanks Suzanne!
- Disclose personal/identity information that’s appropriate to course content.
- Learn their names. Interrupt the classroom to address any dehumanizing interaction. Make explicit the expectation that students have primary agency for their own education, as opposed to banking.
- Having and discussing a strong short accessible and challenging reading on day 1 that engages key issues and is something we can refer back to throughout the semester. Something that itself addresses unequal power relations, etc , e.g., Aurora Levins Morales “Teaching Racism: What

Race Isn't" or Evelyn-Alsulting "Los Intersticios"—short, rich and can be a touchstone all semester—gives us terms/lenses to apply to everything else.

- State that I have very high expectations and that I believe they can meet them.
- Learn students' names
- My best tip is to absolutely be myself in the classroom and to never go outside of my own personality. To be believable, you must be genuine.
- Have the discussions more often during the semester where colleagues can have how they integrated "diversity" in their syllabi.
- I learned to empower students by asking students to talk about why they are in the class and what they see as an obstacle to learning.
- The importance of learning students' names, both first & last. It is a challenge, but worth it.
- Improving communication between faculty and between faculty and administrators about what actually goes on in our classrooms and in our advising of students. Sharing of experiences/understanding challenges.
- An early assignment or (?) each student turns in about information about them particularly directed to give info you need (i.e.,(illegible))
- Meet students where they are (and find out where this is through formative assessment).
- Students should be required to attend workshops that remind them of their roles and responsibilities as learners vis-à-vis their professors and colleagues.
- Show real passion for material.
- Listening to the students, being aware of who they are, these make the classroom more inclusive. Don't assume the students understand your point of view.
- Body language. An authoritative stance has the speaker standing facing forward, feet equally weighted, about shoulder width apart. If students seem intimidated, go asymmetrical—placing weight on primarily one foot, for example, and asymmetrical hands/arms. This asymmetrical pose speaks of approachability. So: credible/authoritative or approach. See Michal Grinder's many books on teaching. There is information on voice use, etc as well.
- Link to past class sessions.
- Comfortable setting in classroom. Group activities in the beginning of the semester. Memory games: recall names (students, TAs, faculty)
- I suggest professors share their personal bias on the first day.
- Learn names as quickly as possible (if possible).
- Treat everyone equally.
- Pedagogical methods that speak to current students' natural modes of learning: presentation that looks like facebook.

2. What should the next steps be in our ongoing conversation?

- Learn about who our students are
- Work to develop inclusiveness and retention mind-set within departments and colleges. If the departments do not operate with inclusiveness between their faculty and staff and between departments how can an expectation of circulating power, recognizing and emulating non-positioning and removing (?) threats. If a clear hierarchy exists and is used to maintain power, learning and change cannot effectively occur. If this were happening in departments and between departments then it would naturally flow into the classroom.
- How to engage students in large lecturer vs small seminars. I want to see how learning/teaching takes place in other formats of class.

- Be more mindful and intentional on this.
- Smaller/departmental workshops for few different departments together (similar class formats/context) that are similar to what happened today.
- Keep challenging our perspectives on Marlon's point: the "language tags" are often insulting to us and our students and often remove our efforts from the real "heart" of matter.
- More consistent conversations between department faculty.
- Expand and find a theme or marketing tool. Appoint facilitators for small groups. Make these kinds of discussions mandatory for all faculty.
- More inclusive instructional methods/assignments/ideas
- Reduce intellectual academic language on handout prompts. Room 109 was particularly problematic for a bunch of us in the group. Keep meetings interactive. No speakers from various administrative offices.
- Get topics from faculty for next time.
- It would be helpful if we could discuss from feedback from students. Beyond the student evaluations, is the university reaching out to find out from students what we are doing that is working?
- I think we should somehow share all of this with students so they will come to expect these things in the classroom.
- It might help to have an ongoing discussion about these topics in the CAHSS weekly newsletter.
- Small classes are more successful.
- More discussions & moving between groups.
- More on classroom communication body language workshops?
- Have conversations about explicit identities and privileges. Create more opportunities for the faculty in the college to meet each other and work across disciplines. Compensate lecturers to increase their attendance and participation in these important conversations given the institutional position lecturers have; I think it is ethical to compensate their efforts to be more effective in their teaching.
- Student panel to let us just hear from students about their experience. This seems to be what's missing when we get together. I'd be interested in having my grad students develop a video we could use/show to keep students safe.
- Have a short common reading for faculty that we actually have time to discuss in depth. And bring in more lecturers who teach the majority of our students!
- Use Claude Steele's Whistling Vivaldi work on "cues" to ask everyone to examine the "cues" of their curriculum and pedagogy to look for whose positionality is at the center of your curriculum, pedagogy & department culture.
- Same next semester. Next faculty meeting. Could the college send list of university services available to students with life or learning problems?
- I enjoyed the intro lecture by our faculty colleague. Do more of that/let the faculty speak more.
- Have these discussions with the students, invite them to hear their perspectives.
- I would like to see more structure to our activities so that discussions can be focused. More structure may also prevent individuals from taking the conversation on a tangent.
- More inter-college, cross-disciplined discussion groups.
- Allow students to struggle (don't tidy things up for them automatically) while acknowledging the value of their individual contribution.
- More of the same, +. Substance abuse/mental health resources (e.g., meetings, housing for students).

- Practice sessions! Round table with topics. Large class section. Tie to the Institute for Student Success.
- +
- Maybe have people choose a reading group and then come to meeting and have group discuss reading with guided questions.
- I wish students were required to attend similar sessions with regard to their behavior. Often the actions of faculty are in response to the actions of students (i.e., rude, defensive, “face-threatening”). The level of disrespect some of us face is disheartening and I wish students were forced to look at their own prejudices/biases/assumptions. The burden is disproportionately on the faculty.
- Define “inclusiveness” ...I’ve not seen it defined.
- Force those professors who have repeated problems with students to either quit or change. Single out specific problem professors or staff.
- Provide more opportunities like this. 😊 Provide these suggestions to us. (As you will, I believe).
- Compile everyone’s list of tips—maybe you’ll do this and send it out?
- More workshops for faculty excellence in teaching (like the classes Tasha used to teach). Practice/Mentoring for newer faculty—active not just “I’m her mentor on paper.”
- More Harvard tests for teachers to do on their own time.
- Hire more diversity.
- This was cool. Something along the same lines. I second Dave’s suggestion: get Veterans’ Affairs in next time and Upward Bound (whatever it is) for discussion groups, or how about getting them to bring a couple of Vets with them.

3. What did you learn today?

- If we want to change the environment we need to change the expectations or definition of “success” as a teacher—orderly class, controlled students, etc
- I found the intrapersonal communications breakout helpful. I think more can be explored in a seminar for new faculty (like me), periodical self-analysis of self-perception/student perception would be advantageous.
- Minority faculty struggle to establish respect. I am biased against older (senior) students.
- I am not alone in this challenge of change. I am doing some good things (validating of what I do well & others appreciated the sharing). The college (university) should provide a calendar of all religious holidays for campus
- That my perspective of “moving towards” my students (rather than bringing them to me, my world, my perspective) is also an indication of privilege, i.e., I am/feel empowered to step into/explore other cultures whereas others do not feel that same empowerment.
- That we fall back to academic language rather than just talk.
- The discussions today seemed not to be as much about learning as about affirming what I already know.
- Access to empowerment is better than inclusivity; create silence to recognize each other, more assignments focused on listening to students, vulnerability/subject position is so important. Make sure I provide opportunity for students to share their own background.
- Some others share my experience in the classroom and are equally frustrated.
- The best part was sharing meaningful conversations with colleagues.
- I have a slight preference for old people—the tests were fascinating. Thanks!
- Much of my groups’ discussion regarding teaching strategies differs from subject-to-subject.

- Face threat as a corrupt/?
- I enjoyed the Harvard bias tests and will be more aware of my own biases as a result.
- Learned that both the topics & sizes of classes greatly influence how instructors are perceived
- Communication instead of teach.
- Any time spent with colleagues from different departments is time well spent.
- See #1 (Body language matters. How you hold yourself can make you more authoritative or approachable. Thanks Suzanne!)
- “Pass the Pen” strategy to help all students be involved. Issues of faculty identities and authority are not understood or discussed in some departments.
- Face threat
- “Pass the pen” and “popcorn” to diffuse authority in the classroom
- Met faculty colleagues with similar experiences and similar commitment to learning.
- The power of silence and looking at people to simply let you know that they are present and that we are together now. Also, I feel that large GE sections (over 50 → 180+) present different problems than smaller classes. Perhaps have a group discussion/sharing for people who teach those large sections to discuss strategy & practices.
- A different way of increasing student attendance; how to enforce my authority in the classroom.
- Harvard implicit is a website that I will return to for more work. I would appreciate hearing from staff who work in offices/programs that are supplemental to our academic work in classrooms. For example, perhaps we could rotate through leaders from 1) Learning Center 2) Library, especially technology 3) Psychological services and 4) Office of Diversity.
- There are a multitude of factors that contribute to the professor-student authoritative relationship.
- That faculty across disciplines struggle with similar issues in the classroom and we don’t have a way of evaluating faculty who create non-traditional learning experiences in the classrooms. We are still evaluated by our peers by how much our classrooms mirror a “successful” traditional (passive) classroom.
- That what it means to be a faculty member of this (a) university is an ever-changing phenomenon requiring constant commitment, responsiveness and team work.
- From the art faculty, I got some good ideas on how to empower students to offer constructive criticism of other students’ work during an oral critique.
- Art and music and practice classes.
- Body language information and how we are perceived. I really enjoyed Marlon’s discussion of building communication in the classroom and suggest more of this type of dialogue.
- That I take issue with the implicit Harvard test (I never made it to the results).
- Having non-white faculty talk about the ways that students challenge and question their authority was eye-opening and depressing—underlined point about white privilege.
- I appreciated the discussion “Face” and inclusion in the classroom. These are good conversations to have just prior to the start of the semester.
- That most people like to think that it is possibly and maybe even ideal to treat students as co-equals. Frankly, that may not be the best solution to inclusive learning communities.
- I learned what “face threat” is?
- That other department professors have the same problems with students.
- Discussing how faculty struggled to get where they are.
- Cards, student facilitators in class for discussion.

- The language & authority workshop was great. I learned from other faculty for encouraging circulation of power. I thought Marlon's opening discussion was phenomenal and inspiring. Just what I needed for a great beginning of the academic semester. We need more of these "talks."
- I learned I have religious bias because of lack of knowledge.
- What others are doing & how they feel about it.
- Good to meet people in different areas. Learned some new people's names.
- I liked Marlon's language: communication instead of inclusion, etc.