

# FACULTY ADVANCEMENT NETWORK

## INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP:

### ENGAGING WITH STUDENTS AROUND RACE AND RACISM

August 28, 2020: noon–1:30 p.m. EST/11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. CST

#### TOOLKIT FOR FACULTY LEADERS

Students, postdocs, and faculty members are looking to departmental leaders (chairs, DGSs, DUSs) to model competence, empathy, and stability. Effective communication requires listening empathetically and without defensiveness, building trust with frustrated students, and motivating and inspiring all students.

L.A.R.A. is a tool used to communicate when we find ourselves in a potential conflict due to a difference in point of view, perspective, or experience. It involves four steps (**L**isten, **A**ffirm/Acknowledge, **R**espond, **A**dd Information). Use of this tool helps to reframe engagement in conflict and create shared understanding through empathy and effective communication.

#### **STEP ONE: LISTEN (Make an effort to hear and show regard for the speaker)**

Listen to what the person is literally saying. In trying to understand what might be behind their words, you don't want to miss what the person has actually said.

Use empathy as your guiding principle to understand what lies beneath their words. Withhold judgment. Do their words and inflections reflect fear, frustration, or some other emotion? Consider the intention behind their words.

Pay attention to body language, both yours and the speaker's. Notice what the speaker is communicating through their body language. Pay attention to facial expressions, body positioning, etc. Notice your own body language: face the person directly and maintain appropriate eye contact.

#### **STEP TWO: AFFIRM/ACKNOWLEDGE (Positively restate and confirm what the speaker said)**

Be genuine and truthful in your affirmation. It is generally best to be honest rather than to develop "pat" answers. To affirm might take the form of a question. For example, if you need more information or an example to help understand what the speaker is saying, ask for that. "Can you say more about...?" "I'm not certain what you mean by...?" "Can you give me an example so I understand?"

Paraphrase the content of the speaker's words. This step is especially helpful in confirming that you and the speaker are on the same page. If you can put what the speaker says in your own words, it demonstrates you have listened attentively and allows the speaker to correct or clarify

any misunderstanding. Affirming does not suggest agreement.

Express a connection between what the speaker said and what you heard. It could be a feeling, an experience, or a value that you have in common with the other person. “I understand how frustrating it can be when you’re asked to do something without a context or information.”

### **STEP THREE: RESPOND (Share what you think or feel)**

Responding is an opportunity to react directly and to identify the impact of the speaker’s words on you, the listener.

Respond in an honest and respectful manner. If the person asked a question, do your best to answer honestly. If you agree with their statements and sentiments, tell them that. If you disagree, share your own thoughts using “I” statements.

### **STEP FOUR: ADD INFORMATION**

Now that you have shared your point of view and feelings, you can add relevant facts and information.

Additional information can take many forms, such as sharing information about context (history of a place, policies and procedures that may be unknown or misunderstood), or potential impact of the speakers’ point of view on others. If relevant, offer information about resources such as books, organizations, or specific people who can assist or share more information.

## **ARTICLES**

[Lessons Learned from a Racial Crisis](#) and [Leading After the Crisis](#)

Two reports from the American Council on Education (ACE) about the 2015/2016 racial crisis at the University of Missouri–Columbia. The first explores what led to the crisis and the possible lessons to be learned from what transpired. The second documents activities that have helped the University make progress, including its Inclusive Excellence Framework, leadership training, and resource investment in DEI work at all four University of Missouri campuses.

[Addressing Systemic Racism in Academia](#)

A brief Princeton University guide to best practices in defining, recognizing, and combating racism in academic environments.