

KLC Case Consultation: KLC Staff Ownership related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Case Name: *How do we, as staff of KLC, individually and collectively take ownership of building our competence related to DEI to ensure an equitable and inclusive workplace?*

Synopsis: For the first time, KLC has been explicit that DEI work is an organizational priority and allocated significant resources to build the capacity of our staff in this area. ***Strategic Goal #5: Make inclusion and racial equity central to KLC's work.*** In January, we overviewed staff development plans re: DEI. We collected staff perspectives on why building our competence re: DEI is important to meet our mission, what nuances of DEI we'd like to learn more about, and how we'd know if we had made progress. Since then, we've had multiple capacity building sessions covering a variety of DEI topics. We've had follow-up conversations to share progress and keep pushing work forward. We've collected feedback to gauge the effectiveness of specific sessions in helping build our competence and to get other feedback on progress.

Some themes in the feedback:

- Appreciation for investment in these efforts, recognition that DEI work is a continuous journey, and that it implicates all of us.
- We've made individual and collective commitments, but it seems the focus of feedback is on KLC's piece of the mess, the individual piece has been forgotten.
- Left "wanting," expecting deeper experiences, more heat, vulnerability, and engagement from others.
- Frustration with pace of work, a sense that the work is "performative" and "KLC is not doing enough."
- Frequent questioning about why it's important for us to do this internal capacity building work.
- Some interpretations that there are systemic issues related to equity, inclusion, and opportunity for minoritized staff and in hiring and promotion practices.
- A sense of blame on "the system", "authority", and "management" for speed of progress, and not implicating ourselves as individuals as part of the mess.
- Some interpretations that KLC treats people differently, unfairly, and that "management" needs to talk to people.
- Curiosity about the impact that general change and conflict in the system may be hindering our progress with DEI and allowing for work avoidance.

Key Players: Specific to this challenge, mostly KLC staff. Contractors and those we engage with (partners, participants, prospective partners/funders) are also impacted.

What's at stake? More people feeling implicated in making progress, experimenting, and holding one another accountable for deep learning will strengthen us internally and we'll be better able to serve our partners, engage different audiences, and advance our mission. Internally, would lead to a more supportive environment, valuing diversity, different perspectives and lived experiences, and ensure an inclusive and equitable workplace. Losses: Wasted resources if we don't take full advantage of the learning experiences, pushing one another. Won't as effectively engage new audiences and better support our partners. A hit to culture and employee morale.

Why do we care? It's critical to our mission and meeting our goals, for remaining an employer of choice with a strong culture. Critical for future funding.

What's been done so far? Feedback from staff on types of experiences or topics to cover. Staff involved in helping define what Inclusion and Racial Equity mean for KLC. Employee engagement and culture survey.

Questions I'd like case consultants to address:

- *What is each of our work related to DEI?*
- *What policies, procedures, hiring, or promotion practices are leading to the inequitable experience of minoritized persons at KLC?*
- *What competing values might be involved?*
- *What hard choices might we need to make in order to make progress?*