Employment Scenarios & Cultural Competence

Professional Development Seminar

Cover Letter Feedback

- Remember: Hint for clues in the job description

- Don't assume they have your resume in front of them or that they have even seen it

- Share why this job and/or this company

- Add detail to stand out!
  - Academic Projects
  - Outside Projects
  - Extracurriculars/Hackathons

Class Assignments

- Any revised assignments are due in Blackboard by December 9th
  - You must earn a 74 or better to continue participation in the UML Co-op Program
  - Resume, References, LinkedIn, Bridging, Cover Letter

Today's Class

- Transition from full-time student to full-time co-op
- Managing Up
- Cultural Competence
- Workplace Scenarios

The transition from student → employee is a major one.

Class Webpages ⊕
Career Center
eNewsletter Archives
Worcester State Magazine
Donor Impact Statement & President's Reports
Yearbooks

Backpack to Briefcase (slideshow)

Mar. 16 2017

In March, the Alumni Office joined with Enactus and the WSU Business Club to offer Backpack to ... Life after Woo U, four days of career shaping advice for students. ... etiquette, and other

About the Backpack to Briefcase Series

Academics » Career Prep » Backpack to Briefcase Series

In September and October, CEE presents a series of informational seminars geared towards preparing students for their transition to a professional workplace. This annual event features topics ranging from résumé preparation to salary negotiations and is an excellent opportunity for students to begin working towards a successful career. Each Backpack to Briefcase session is followed by a network... pizza.

Details on the individual sessions and registration links are provided in the Session Gu... click on the "Register" link to sign up. Note that participation is limited to current CEE... University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus. Registration for each session op... that event.

If you are an alumnus or company interested in participating or sponsoring a ses... Ashman at kashman@illinois.edu or (217) 244-6804.

2017 Session Guide:

COMMUNITIES EVENTS CAREERS LEARN VOLUNTEER ABOUT Give Now

Communities > MIT Students > Graduating Students > Backpack to Briefcase

Graduating Students

Undergrads
Grad Students
Senior Election
Backpack to Briefcase
Alumni Talks

Backpack to Briefcase

Backpack to Briefcase events help MIT students transition from coursework to the work force. These events are designed for students nearing graduation from MIT (undergraduate and graduate) but spouses and partners, post docs, and all MIT students are welcome to participate. An Infinite Connection account may be required to view materials.

New Backpack to Briefcase events will be available in Fall 2017

Be a Sponge the First Few Weeks

- *Do employees socialize together often?*
- *What do people wear?*
- *What is the company trying to achieve?*
- *What are their traditions?*
- *What are typical working hours?*
- *How are employees managed?*
- *Do they think short or long term?*
- *Do people share ideas openly and freely?*
- *Is the emphasis on people or results?*

Technology Fundamentals

- Keep subject and message concise & professional (*in style and content*)
- Respond in a timely manner (*if a response is necessary*)
- Re-read EVERYTHING before sending
- Do NOT send corporate emails to friends

Managing Up

- Building a strong relationship with your manager, learning about his/her working style, and using this knowledge to be a standout employee

- Your manager is human! You might be working with someone…
  - Who has never managed a co-op before
  - Who works in another location
  - Who is hands-off (or maybe a micromanager)
  - Who isn't as technically inclined as you
  - Who is long-winded (or maybe very quiet)

Where to Start

- How and when do they work best?
  - In the morning/afternoon? Over email or in person?
- Provide regular, concise updates on your progress
  - Let him/her know if you need more or less work
- Seek regular feedback
  - Ask to set-up a weekly/biweekly 1:1 meeting
- Ask questions for clarity and context
- Assume full ownership of your tasks
  - Don't assume someone will check in on you constantly
- Come prepared with solutions not just problems

Learning the Culture

- Learn how your role fits into the organization
- Read everything you can get your hands on (ask for an organizational chart)
- Learn both written and unwritten rules of your team/company
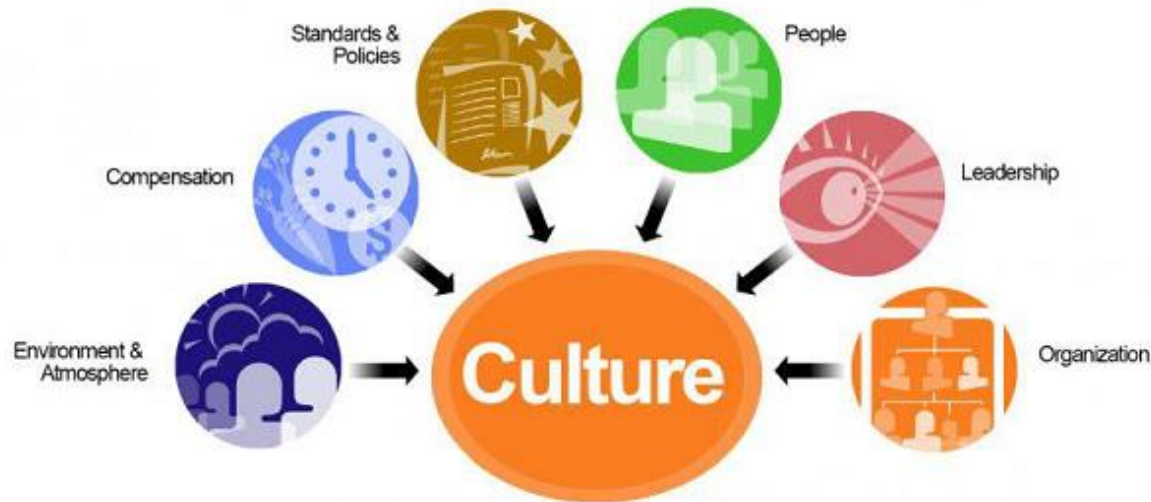
Workplace Culture
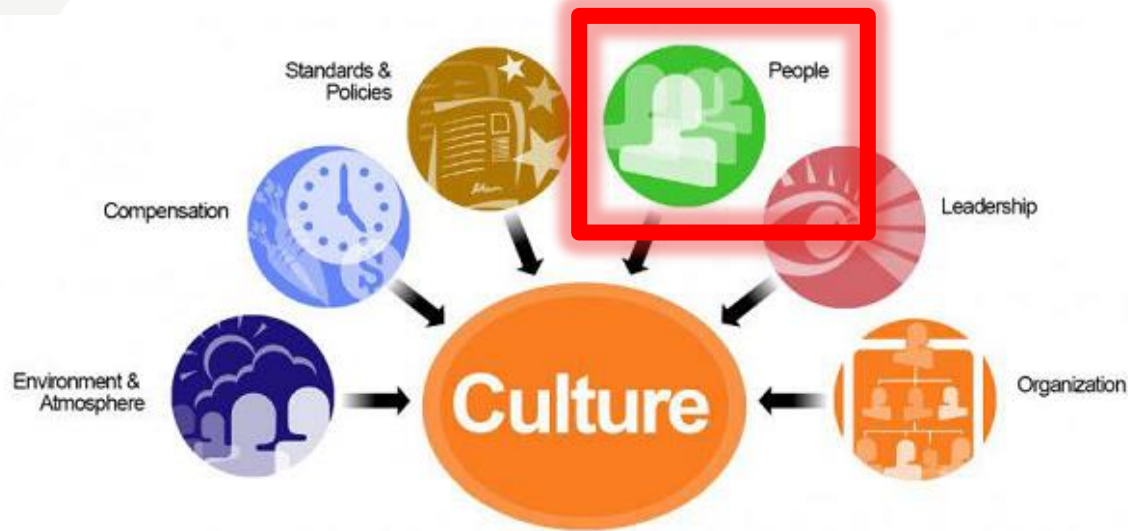
- Let's talk about workplace culture and the people you'll be working with.
- Everyone "brings" their own "culture" to the workplace.
- Impacts workplace behaviors, thoughts, actions—just like school
- But how does that impact your team?

ICEBERG MODEL OF CULTURE—WHAT EVERYONE BRINGS WITH THEM TO ANY SITUATION

Surface Culture:

Deep Culture:

Deeper Culture:
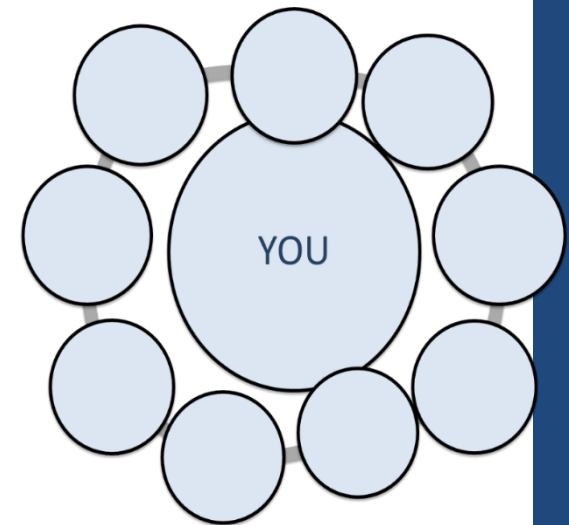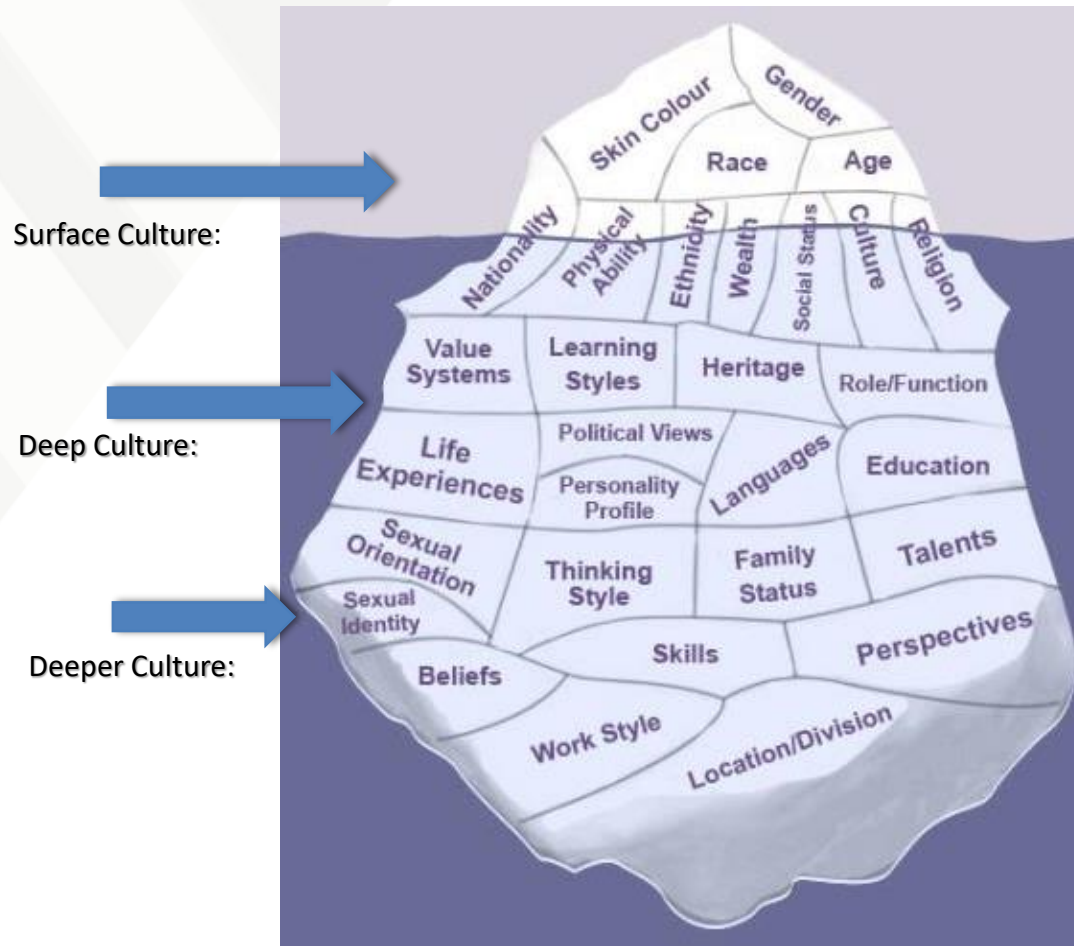
Pause to reflect on how these different identities shape the way you present yourself, make decisions, and view others.

WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

The ability to **interact effectively** with people who are culturally different than you

AND

awareness of and **respect/appreciation for the differences.**

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO ME? I'M JUST A CO-OP.

EMPLOYERS WANT & NEED CULTURALLY COMPETENT HIRES

- Global work force: you *must* be able to work with people who are different than you!

- Beyond race and gender…

You're not just a co-op: you're a <u>human being</u>.

IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE (CON'T)

GLOBAL BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

When everyone feels heard and valued, teams are more functional.

→ Functional = productive

→ Productive = $$$

If not everyone on the team feels heard/valued, not everyone will contribute

→Missed opportunity, stifled progress, lost $

"The idea of cultural competence isn't political correctness… it's a business imperative to understand a changing marketplace."

- Brand Quarterly, 2017

MOVING FORWARD WITH CULTURAL COMPETENCY

PRACTICE & NOTICE

- Begin by noticing things at school & work:
  - Who is present? Who is missing?
  - What is assumed? What is said?
  - Who talks? Who is not represented?

How might that shape the workplace, team, product, etc.?

- "Tell me about a time where you worked on a team…"
  - Great opportunity to highlight your success working in groups that benefitted from/had differences

Workplace Scenarios

[Groups of 4]

Scenario 1

Kelly became friendly with 2 of the full-time employees on her team. Unfortunately, they did not get along with each other. Last week during a meeting with about 10 people, they got into a heated disagreement about how to approach a technical problem. Kelly couldn't believe that two professionals were shouting at each other in a room full of people.

Afterwards, she was put in an awkward situation because they both approached her separately and asked who she thought was in the right.

- What should Kelly do?

Office Politics

"I don't think it's a matter of right or wrong but you both have different opinions. It's ok to disagree but at the end of the day we are here to work and get things done. It's best to let our manager decide and not let things get so heated."

- Avoid office gossip
- Do not badmouth coworkers/managers (even if you think you are among friends)
  - Excuse yourself from the conversation
  - Listen, but don't partake
  - If asked, say "I'm not sure, I haven't experienced that"
- Talk to your co-op advisor if you feel uncomfortable or don't know how to handle a certain situation

Scenario 2

Malcolm is out on a 6 month work experience. About a month into the job, he feels the work is different than what he was expecting. Based on the interview, he thought he'd be interacting with clients more to troubleshoot issues. Instead, he finds the work to be tedious and feels like he spends the entire day pointing and clicking. He's learning some technical skills and likes the team, but he doesn't feel like this is the best use of his time. It's his first time working in the software field and he's realizing this particular type of role isn't the best fit for him.

- What should Malcolm do?

Manage Your Experience

- You were hired for a job and you may find it's not a perfect fit – that's the point of co-op! Make the most of it and learn all you can.

- That being said, this is your experience so don't let it pass you by either. It's ok to speak up, but do so respectfully.
  - Talk to your manager, HR rep, or co-op advisor

- Look around for other opportunities
  - Sit-in on meetings
  - Attend networking events/workshops
  - Conduct informational interviews
  - Observe another team
  - Invite someone to lunch/coffee

SCENARIO #3

Kalika's annual company BBQ is a big event for networking and face-to-face time with one another. Everyone on the team was sure to invite the newest co-op employee, stressing how important and fun the traditional company event was. Kalika is Hindu. She arrives and when it's time to eat inquires about a vegetarian option. A coworker responds, "Nah! This is a BBQ, hot dogs and hamburgers! That's real America!" She smiles, nods, and stays at the picnic. But you notice she doesn't eat anything.

- What is the issue or concern?
- What needs to happen to resolve or improve the situation?
- Who needs to get involved?
- What are some of the tactics that you can employ to deal with the issue and move forward to resolution?

Cultural Competence is Important to Teams

Singular situations may not feel like or be a big thing for a person. However, let's say this happens often.

1. Would Kalika be more or less inclined to share her personal thoughts with others? Would she feel heard?

2. What if she has the lab background needed to make the next best advancement and what if she leaves and takes that with her to Company B?

Employees who feel strong social connections at work have higher levels of well-being and engagement than those who do not.

Scenario 4

Diego is working on a project and using an internally created tool to test his work. The tool is quite old and since its creation many new technologies have been released that would make testing this feature substantially easier and more repeatable. He doesn't want to rock the boat and is not sure how he could demo the other technologies or if they would even work.

What should Diego do?

Take Initiative

"I used some downtime to enhance this tool using modern technologies. I originally intended to use it myself but months later my mentor happened to see it and inquire about it. Based on his advice, I asked my manager if I could spend a few weeks towards the end of my co-op to truly develop this tool. He thought it was a great idea!

We ended up using this tool in a customer demo that I was a part of and the customer liked it so much they asked the company for a copy of my tool so that they could use it themselves!"

Next Class – 12/13

- Course Wrap-Up and Evaluations
- Next Steps for Job Seekers
- Send-Off Information
  - Required for those going out on co-op