



# Reimagining Inclusion

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CUPA-HR Webinar

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# Presenter



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ASU Office of Human Resources

# Overview

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## Exploration

Understand strategic evolution from DEI to Culture and Inclusion framework and workplace culture impact.

## Activation

Identify practical strategies to foster belonging and inclusive excellence in the workplace.

## Innovation

Align HR practices with institutional values to drive systemic cultural change and foster inclusion.



## From solo acts to a symphony model

# **The Overture: ASU's Transformation**

# ASU Charter

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ASU is a comprehensive **public research university**, measured not by whom it excludes, but by **whom it includes** and **how they succeed**; advancing **research and discovery** of public value; and assuming **fundamental responsibility** for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the **communities it serves**.



# Arizona State University (ASU) as a leader in higher education workplace excellence...

and as the New American University committed to excellence, access, inclusion and impact recognized as the “most innovative” university in the country by U.S. News & World Report — ten years in a row.



# Celebrating ASU's Recent Awards

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## **Newsweek's "America's Greatest Workplaces"**

Five Star Ranking and Recognition for diversity, job starters, mental well-being, parents and families, and women.



## **Forbes "Best Employers for Women"**

This recognition furthers the 2023 awards from Forbes as one of America's Best Employers by State and America's Best Large Employers.



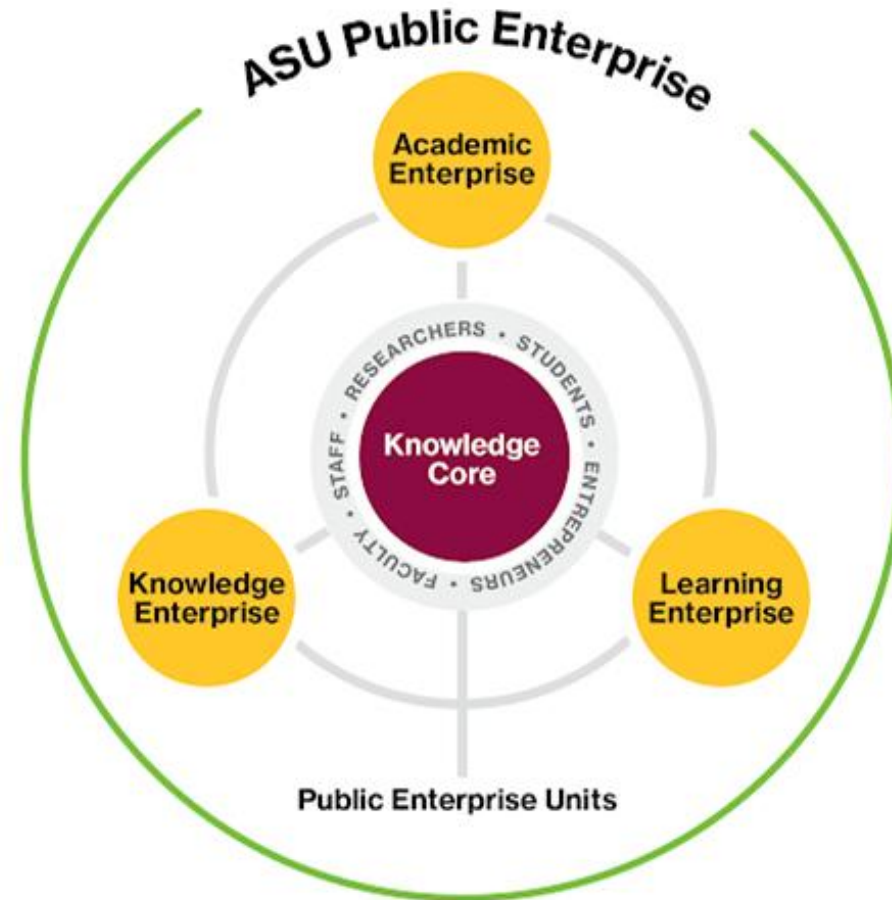
## **Healthy Arizona Worksites Platinum Award**

Demonstrated data driven programming improving the health, well-being, and equity of their community.



# ASU's Enterprise Model

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# Human Resources + Inclusion

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# The Journey to Culture and Inclusion

*The time for innovation is now*

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2023

- Michael Latsko joins ASU as Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer
- Strategic evolution to align with ASU's values and charter.
- Acknowledging the need for holistic, action-oriented approaches to workplace culture.
- Shifting the focus to inclusive excellence as a driver of belonging, performance, and success.
- Ensuring culture initiatives align with the **ASU Charter**

# Advancing a Culture of Inclusion

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“What do we mean by “culture”? It is not comfy chairs, ping pong tables, office social events and other feel good moments interspersed here and there. Culture is how employees act in critical situations, how they manage pressure and respond to various challenges, and how they treat colleagues and customers, and each other.”

**Michael Latsko**

ASU Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer

# Culture of Advancing Inclusion

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“Creating a culture is only one part of it; we also need to collaborate, co-create and develop with our colleagues creative, strategic, and impactful surveys, assessment tools, inventories, etc. to measure mindsets, behaviors, and outcomes so that we can have insight if we’re making strides to develop a robust, cohesive organizational/institutional culture of “Advancing Inclusion.”

**Michael Latsko**

ASU Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer

# Culture and Inclusion

## Building an innovative approach



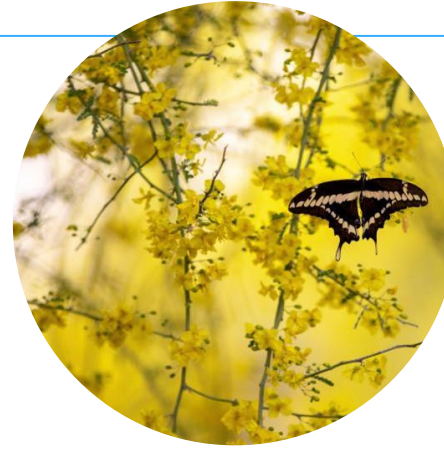
### Advancing Inclusion

Implementing a strategic framework in alignment with ASU Charter and Design Aspirations. Coordinate collaboration emphasizing shared responsibility.



### Organizational Culture

Conducting cultural assessments, enhancing employee engagement, supporting organizational development, mindfulness, and cultural competency.



### Initiatives and Programs

Affirmative Action planning, change management and cultural integration of processes, digital transformation, communication and branding.



### Education and Training

Training customization, content development, delivery methods at scale, leadership and employee development, metrics and evaluation.

# Vision and Strategic Realignment

**Focus:** Establishing clarity on goals, values, and outcomes.

## **Actions:**

- ❑ Listening sessions with HR leaders, faculty, and staff.
- ❑ Development of new learning frameworks: Inclusive Pathways and Workplace Culture.





# Develop Programs and Initiatives

**Focus:** Meet immediate needs and build for sustainability

## **Actions:**

- ❑ Launch of training opportunities
- ❑ Creation of inclusive workplace toolkits for HR professionals to support decentralized efforts.





# Build Networks for Collective Impact

**Goal:** Develop a shared vision for workplace inclusion

## **Actions:**

- ❑ Introduction of the Inclusion Network & Inaugural Inclusion Network Exchange
- ❑ Develop actionable priorities and strategies



## What We'd Do Again and What We'd Rethink

# Harmony through Best Principles and Lessons

# What We'd Do Again

## Best Principles



### Shared Responsibility

Inclusion is everyone's job; everyone must have a stake in it.



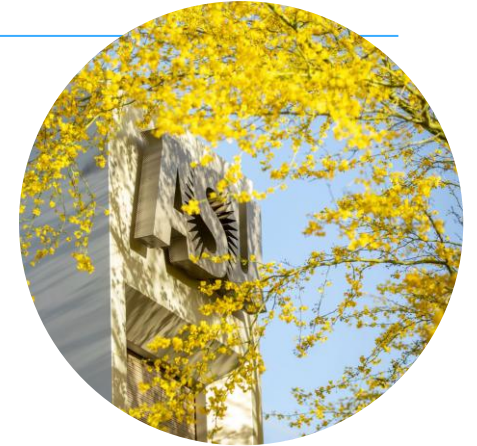
### Values-Driven Strategy

Align efforts with institutional mission. At ASU, everything we do ties back to our charter.



### Localized Leadership

Empower HR and unit leaders to drive change. In our enterprise structure, efforts need to happen everywhere at every level.



### Language Matters

Shift from compliance to culture. **“Culture is not an initiative; it’s how we show up every day.”**

# Shared Responsibility

## Everyone Has a Part to Play

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**Best Principle:** Culture isn't the work of a single department—it's a collective effort.

## Implementation

- ❑ Created role-specific expectations (e.g., HR as ambassadors, leaders as culture drivers).
- ❑ Inclusion goals were embedded into leadership evaluations and unit planning, not separated.

## Culture Shift

Inclusion is not an add-on. It's woven into daily practices and decision-making at every level.

# Values-Driven Leadership

## Let the Score Guide the Sound

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**Best Principle:** Institutional values serve as the shared "sheet music."

### Implementation:

- ☐ All culture initiatives were explicitly aligned with ASU's charter ("measured not by whom we exclude, but by whom we include").
- ☐ Efforts framed around aspirational identity, not compliance.

### Culture Shift

When leaders act based on shared values, inclusion feels authentic, not performative.

# Localized Empowerment

## Different Sections, Same Song

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**Best Practice:** Each college, unit, or department needed flexibility to interpret the Culture & Inclusion model in ways that fit their context.

### Implementation

- ❑ Provided toolkits and coaching so local leaders could tailor approaches.
- ❑ Recognized that the "tempo" and "style" might vary, but the overall melody must remain consistent.

### Culture shift

Culture change succeeds when people feel agency, ownership, and are invited to build it.

# Language Matters

## Framing Shapes the Performance

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**Best Practice:** The words we use shape how people perceive the work—and their willingness to engage.

### Implementation

- ❑ Shifted from compliance-heavy DEI terminology to action-oriented, outcome-driven, inclusive language (e.g., “Culture & Inclusion,” “Shared Responsibility,” “Belonging”).
- ❑ Regular storytelling sessions reinforced positive identity and progress.

### Culture shift

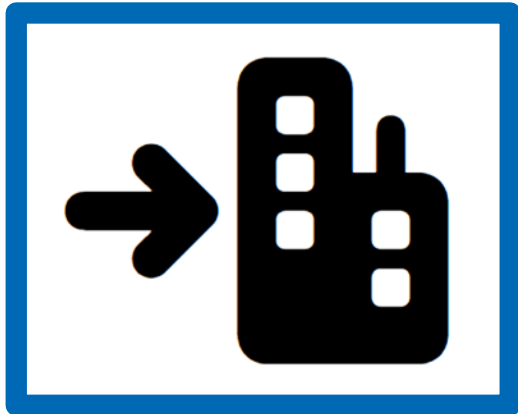
Reframing the work opened more hearts and minds and reduced defensiveness.



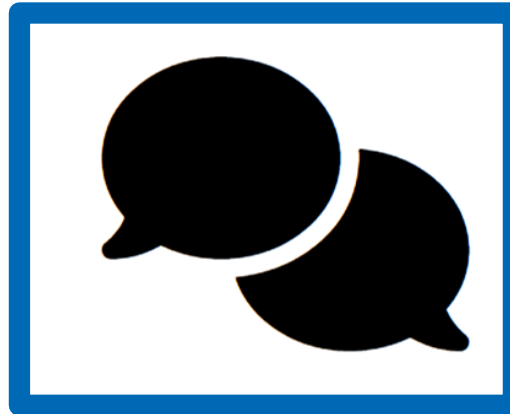
# What We'd Rethink

## Lessons Learned

**Pitfalls of over-centralization**



**Importance of storytelling and listening sessions**

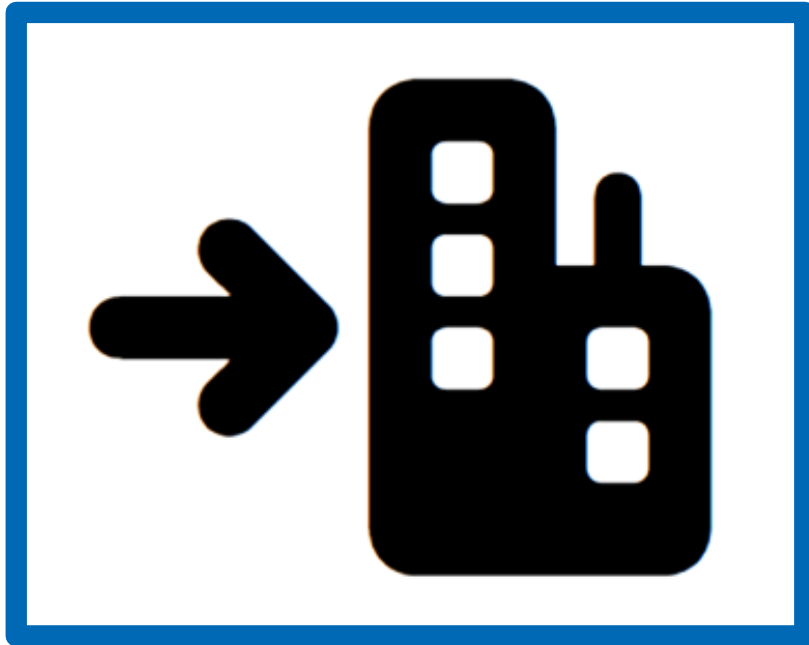


**Navigating discomfort and resistance**



# Centralization Limits Engagement

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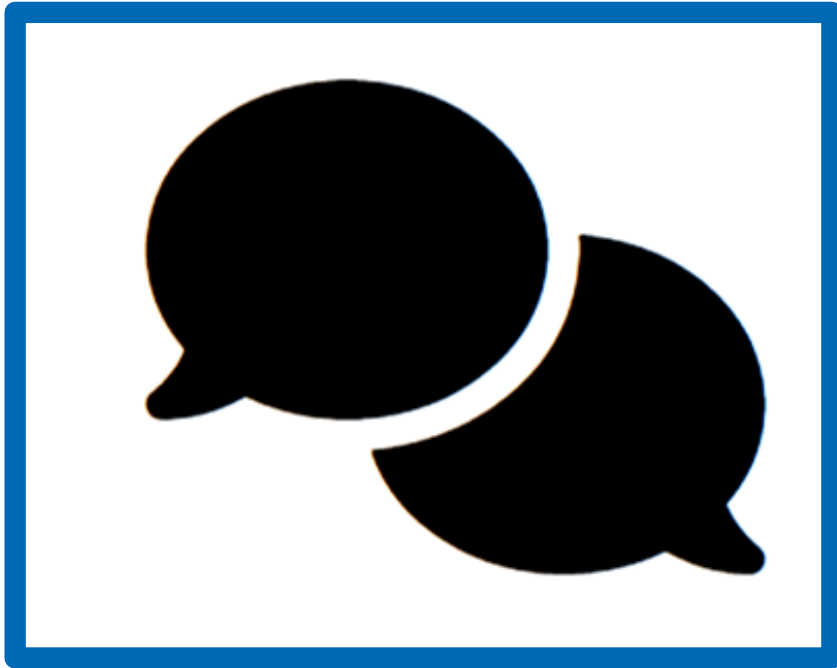
Over-reliance on one central DEI office created bottlenecks and perceptions that inclusion was “someone else’s job.”

## ***Adjustment***

Decentralized ownership with centralized guidance.

# Listening Must Precede Leading

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Early efforts sometimes prioritized launching initiatives over listening deeply to community needs and pain points.

## ***Adjustment***

Built listening tours, surveys, and open dialogue spaces into the foundation of all programs.

# Discomfort is Necessary for Growth



Initial attempts to "smooth over" discomfort led to missed opportunities for real change.

## ***Adjustment***

Framed discomfort as part of learning and normalized critical conversations without fear of failure.

# What We'd Do Again



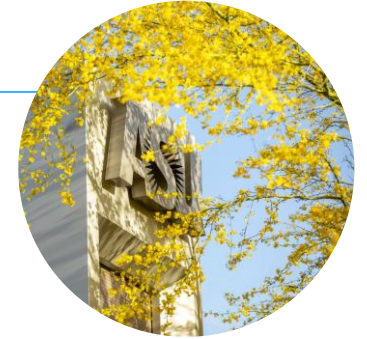
**Shared  
Responsibility**



**Values-  
Driven  
Strategy**

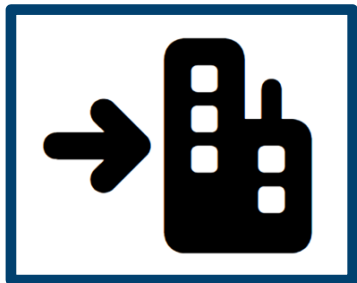


**Localized  
Leadership**

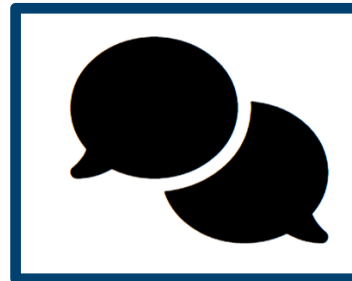


**Language  
Matters**

# What We'd Rethink



**Pitfalls of over-centralization**



**Importance of storytelling and  
listening sessions**



**Navigating discomfort and  
resistance**

## Instruments and Rehearsal Spaces

# **Practice & Performance: Tools for a Culture of Inclusion**

# Tools for Innovation



## Capacity-Building Pathways

Tiered learning  
(Explorer, Activator,  
Innovator).



## Leadership Coaching and Micro-Actions

Supporting behavior  
change and  
accountability.

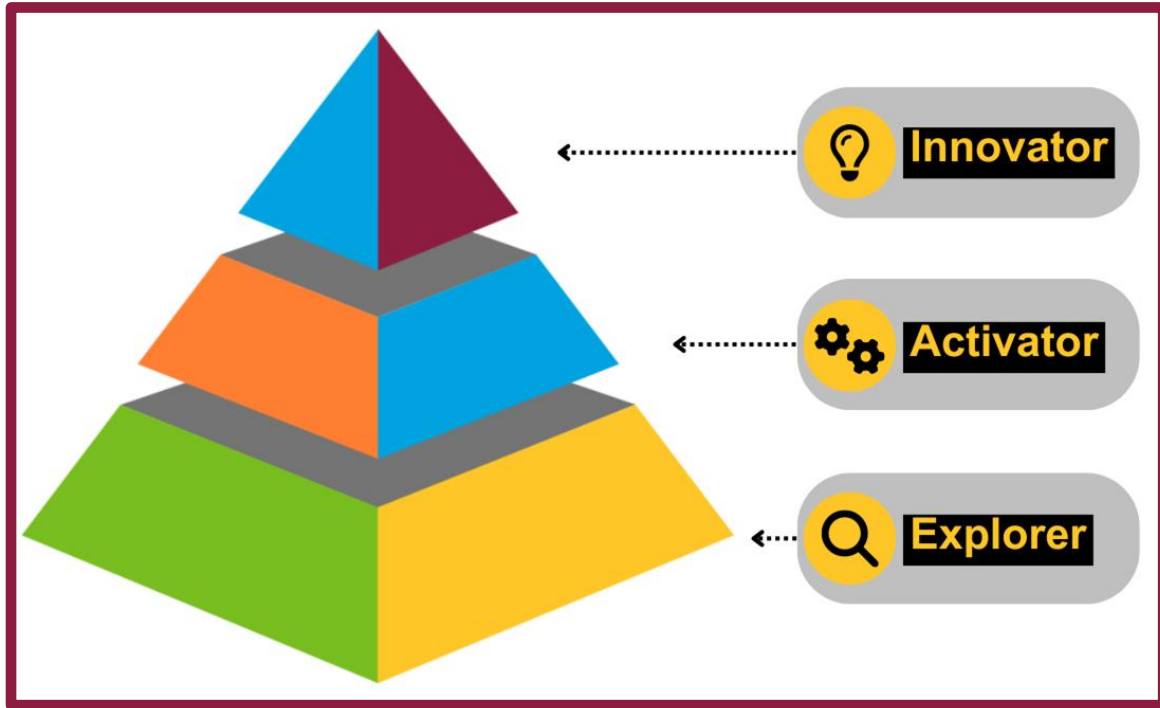


## Building Bridges and Systems

Establishing the  
Inclusion Network to  
unite culture builders.



# Learning Pathways for Capacity Building



A structured, tiered approach (Explorer, Activator, Innovator) that meets people where they are and builds from awareness to action.

- ❑ Mix of on-demand, cohort-based, and experiential learning.
- ❑ Pathways aligned to inclusive excellence, leadership competencies, and real workplace challenges.

**Make learning accessible,  
meaningful, and tied to outcomes  
for scalability.**

# Leadership Coaching and Micro-Actions

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A focused approach to developing leaders through coaching conversations, guided reflection, and small, achievable behavior changes that cumulatively build inclusive culture.

- ❑ **Leadership Coaching**
- ❑ **Micro-Actions**
- ❑ **Behavioral Anchoring**

**Focus on progress, not perfection.** Small visible acts,  
repeated over time, create a powerful ripple effect.

# Engagement through Communities of Practice

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Structured peer networks and leadership forums where HR professionals, culture champions, and unit leaders come together regularly.

## How It Works:

- ❑ Communities share challenges, workshop ideas, and celebrate successes.
- ❑ Build relationships that allow for honest conversations about barriers and breakthroughs.
- ❑ Foster a sense of belonging among those leading change, avoiding isolation.

**Prioritize psychological safety within these groups.**  
**Trust fuels creativity and resilience.**

# The Final Bow

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***“Remember:  
Inclusion is a  
Symphony, Not a  
Solo”***



# Have a Question?



Submit questions to our presenters  
using the Chat.



# Thank You

*Please complete your event evaluation*

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