Guidelines for Creating a Safe Space for Discussion

1. Make a personal commitment to learning about, understanding, and supporting your student workers.

2. Assume the best of your student workers and expect the best from them.

3. Acknowledge the impact of sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, antisemitism, and ableism on the lives of your student workers.

4. Recognize and value the experiences, abilities, and knowledge each person brings to your department. Value the diversity of the people participating and working in your department.

5. Ask people for their views.

6. Call on people who haven’t spoken.

7. Credit people by name when what they have said triggers or shapes your thinking.

8. Listen actively. This involves paying close attention to what each speaker says without thinking of a response while the person is still speaking. It may also involve asking clarifying questions. These questions are meant to probe and shed new light, not to minimize or devalue comments.

9. Avoid interrupting.

10. Think through your comments before you make them.

11. Never make derogatory comments toward another person in your department.

12. Do not make sexist, racist, homophobic, or victim-blaming comments at all.

13. Disagree with ideas, but do not make personal attacks.

14. Before finishing up on a topic, make a final check for questions or thoughts.

15. Be open to being challenged or confronted on your ideas or prejudices.

16. Challenge and confront your student workers with the intent of facilitating growth. Do not demean or embarrass them.

17. Encourage others to speak up. Be especially encouraging of people who are working through their prejudices and attempting to grow.

18. Be willing to change.