Change Makers

Academic year 2018-2019 marks year six of our Change Makers program. This program allows people to engage in a personal journey to create a more inclusive campus at Northwestern University. The goal of Change Makers is in line with the third pillar of Northwestern University’s strategic plan, by moving from intentions to outcomes toward inclusion. The program begins with a two-day intensive self-reflection and dialoguing workshop, led by experts in the research-based Intergroup Relations (IGR) model from the University of Michigan. The initial training and overall program is led and guided by IGR experts, Dr. Kristie Ford of Skidmore College and Dr. Charles Behling of the University of Michigan. This is followed by structured time and activities to work on applying change management principles, and with best practices in diversity and inclusion efforts in higher education.

Change Makers is meant to supplement and facilitate information sharing around the broader diversity work being implemented at Northwestern regarding equity and inclusion. Change Makers differs from advisory boards, committees or task forces in that the program is largely focused on bringing inclusion to the center, and understanding how it is a substantive part of each of our jobs to create a more inclusive environment. Inclusion is the act of creating an environment in which individuals and groups can feel welcomes, respected, and valued to full participate. It is our belief that it is the multitude of small positive actions that can shift an environment.

MISSION
Change Makers are a part of a growing Northwestern community of committed individuals dedicated to building a more inclusive campus environment. Using the University of Michigan’s evidence-based Intergroup Dialogue Model, Change Makers explore social identities and apply that understanding and cultural competency to create more inclusive classrooms, departments and centers.

The goals of this program are:
1. To heighten and deepen understanding around social identities and privilege.
2. To build a cohort of individuals who share a commitment to establishing an inclusive campus across identities and social locations.
3. To develop a set of skills and techniques to redress individual, institutional and structural challenges of power and privilege at Northwestern.
4. To empower a cohort of people to act and make change at Northwestern and beyond.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS
- Two cohorts are composed of Northwestern staff and faculty members from across both campuses, representing a diverse background of identities, skills, and experiences.
- Participants commit to a two-day intensive workshop facilitated by IGR trainers in the fall and attend up to 16 hours of follow-up sessions through two hour monthly meetings.
- Participants may also participate in other social identity groups including, but not limited to: People of Color Group and LGBT Group, and a White Racial Identity Group for Anti-Racist Purposes. These groups create space to engage in an intragroup dialogue and provide support for people who face marginalization due to their identity and social location.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM
Intergroup Dialogue experts facilitate the initial two-day workshop. Follow up sessions use IGR exercises to continue to explore identity, while also providing a solid foundation of understanding around stereotype threat, unconscious bias, microaggressions and change management theory.
During the year, participants participate in experiential exercises and reflection exercises. Change Makers alum serve as advisors and mentors to current cohorts and can help to accelerate change by sharing what has worked for them. Curriculum for Change Makers is continually refined through regular evaluation and participants’ feedback. The evaluation process provides essential data around impact and outcomes.

OUTCOMES

Participant Behaviors
- 91% of participants have been engaging in new or different conversations about privilege and inclusion on a daily, weekly or monthly basis by the completion of the program.
- 82% of participants have acted differently about privilege and inclusion on a daily, weekly or monthly basis by the completion of the program.

Participant Confidence
- 100% felt confident or very confident about their ability to avoid using language that reinforces negative stereotypes.
- 100% felt confident or very confident about their ability to educate themselves about how diversity issues impact people in the workplace.
- 96% felt confident or very confident about their ability to challenge their own biases.

Themes from Qualitative Data
- Connecting with others
- Comfort with dialogue skills
- Heightened awareness of social identities
- Taking action

Participant impacts include: initiating classroom conversations about diversity, becoming a mentor for marginalized students, advocating for diversity on hiring committees, and actively seeking out more ways to learn about equity.

Participant Feedback
“[My proudest moment is] My own awareness of privilege – actually having space to reflect and talk about issues affecting not only our society in general, but the campus community.”

“Before I joined Change Makers, I didn’t think critically of my racial identity. I was white and that was that. Putting my racial identity in perspective by hearing stories about others’ racial identity has helped me understand other peoples’ struggles that I have never had to face. Some struggles I wasn’t even aware of. It has opened my eyes and empowered me to become an agent of change.”

“I talk far more frequently and confidently than before with both white students and students of color about race and diversity issues at Northwestern and elsewhere. I speak up in meetings more frequently and confidently on race and diversity issues. I look more actively for ways I can make changes.”

“[My proudest moment is] Becoming more aware of different lenses that people see through. Also, recognizing that we live in different ‘fish bowls’ and taking initiative to better understand, respect, or (alternatively) challenge myself and others to step ‘outside.’”

For more information on change, please see our Change Makers video at: http://www.northwestern.edu/womenscenter/programs-events/change-makers/change-makers-video.html.