CUNY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE | OPEN DOORS TRACK

BEYOND THE WELCOME

The Workbook: Putting Belonging Into Practice Across CUNY

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Name

Campus

Role

Date started

How to use this workbook

Your **Field Guide** is the quick reference from the session. This workbook is where you go deeper: current research, a self-check, and space to apply the ideas to your own classroom, office, committee, or department. Type directly into the fields and save your copy, or print it and write by hand.

1. **Look at the evidence.** Page 2 gathers current research on belonging in higher education and the wider workforce.
2. **Take the self-check.** Page 3 helps you see where your team is welcoming, including, and building belonging.
3. **Audit your doors.** Pages 4 to 6 apply the five barriers and the F.A.I.T.H. lens to real situations.
4. **Commit and follow through.** Page 7 turns your Open Door commitment into a 30-day plan.

What's inside

2	**Why Belonging Matters Now**	*Current research and what it means for CUNY*
3	**Belonging Self-Check**	*12 statements about your team or department*
4	**Door Audit**	*Where the five barriers show up in your work*
5	**The F.A.I.T.H. Lens, Applied**	*Integrity, Trust, and Habits on a real situation*
6	**Practice Scenarios**	*Four CUNY situations to rehearse your response*
7	**My 30-Day Open Door Plan**	*Commitment, weekly tracker, and reflection*

A note on privacy: this workbook is for you. When you describe situations, focus on patterns and practices, not on identifying individuals.

2 Why Belonging Matters Now

In CUPA-HR's 2025 survey, a sense of belonging, feeling valued, and being engaged were among the strongest predictors of whether higher ed employees intend to stay. Pay matters most when people consider leaving, but belonging is the part every colleague can influence.

25%

of higher ed employees are likely or very likely to look for a new job in the next year.

CUPA-HR Employee Retention Survey, 2025 (3,791 employees)

24%

of higher ed employees disagree that they are recognized for their contributions. 16% disagree that they have a sense of belonging.

CUPA-HR Employee Retention Survey, 2025

61% vs 18%

of workers dissatisfied vs satisfied with belonging had seriously considered quitting in the past year.

SHRM Global Employee Monitor, Q3 2026 (5,107 workers, 26 countries)

87% vs 44%

of workers recognized in the past week vs never recognized feel a strong sense of belonging.

Workhuman, Humans at Work Barometer, 2026 (6,024 employees)

53%

of higher ed employees took on extra duties to cover vacancies. Overloaded teams have less room to include.

CUPA-HR, Turnover in the Higher Education Workforce, 2026

20%

of employees worldwide are engaged at work (31% in the U.S. and Canada). 22% felt lonely a lot of the previous day.

Gallup, State of the Global Workplace, 2026

Foundational research. In BetterUp's 2019 study of 1,789 employees, high belonging was linked to a 56% increase in job performance, a 50% drop in turnover risk, and a 75% reduction in sick days.

These figures show associations, not proof of cause, and most come from cross-industry samples rather than CUNY. Use them to ask better questions about your own setting.

Reflect

Which number stands out to you most, and why?

If you surveyed your own department, which of these would you most want to know?

SELF-CHECK

3 Belonging Self-Check

Think about one team, department, or committee you're part of. Score each statement from the drop-down. Subtotals add up automatically in most PDF readers (or add them yourself); each ranges from 4 to 20.

1 Rarely true	2 Occasionally	3 Sometimes	4 Usually	5 Consistently true

		SCORE	SUBTOTAL
Welcomed *You are received*			
1	New colleagues are introduced and oriented with care.		
2	People are acknowledged regardless of title or status.		
3	Newcomers know who to go to for help.		
4	Our spaces, in person and virtual, feel open to everyone.		
Included *You can take part*			SUBTOTAL
5	Everyone gets meeting information and materials in advance.		
6	Remote and hybrid participants contribute as fully as those in the room.		
7	Adjuncts, staff, and newer colleagues help plan, not just hear about decisions.		
8	Different communication styles are given room.		
Belonging *Your contribution counts*			SUBTOTAL
9	Ideas are credited to the person who offered them.		
10	People can disagree or raise concerns without paying a price.		
11	We explain how input was used, even when it isn't adopted.		
12	Expertise is valued regardless of title.		

16 to 20	11 to 15	4 to 10
A real strength. Protect it.	Inconsistent. Look for who's left out.	A door to open first.

Which section scored lowest? What might explain the gap between being welcomed and belonging?

Which single statement, if it improved, would make the biggest difference?

This is a reflection tool for conversation, not a validated measure.

APPLY

4 Door Audit

Most doors close quietly. For each barrier, note where you've seen it in your work, then one small thing within your reach that could open it.

1 Status and hierarchy

Titles shape whose ideas get heard. Watch for the same idea landing differently depending on who says it, and for adjuncts and staff being consulted after decisions instead of before.

Where I see it

One door I could open

2 Narrow communication norms

When fast, assertive, highly verbal styles read as competence, reflective or indirect communicators get underestimated. Culture, language, and neurodiversity all shape how people contribute.

Where I see it

One door I could open

3 Informal access

Decisions often form in hallway conversations, side chats, and networks. On a multicampus system, distance and schedules decide who is in those rooms.

Where I see it

One door I could open

4 Fear of speaking up

Psychological safety is the belief that you won't be embarrassed or punished for asking, disagreeing, or admitting a mistake. Without it, the people closest to a problem stay quiet.

Where I see it

One door I could open

5 Change without input

New systems, platforms, and AI tools often arrive without input from the people whose daily work they change. The rollout itself can signal whose expertise counts.

Where I see it

One door I could open

5 The F.A.I.T.H. Lens, Applied

The F.A.I.T.H. Factor™ has five pillars: Foresight, Alignment, Integrity, Trust, and Habits. The session focused on three. Use them here on a real situation from your work. Describe it without names.

The situation

I Integrity *Values in Action*

Integrity is the distance between what we say we value and what we actually do. Close it by noticing where practice drifts from stated values.

What do we say we value here?

What actually happened, and where did it differ?

T Trust *Communicating Across Differences*

Trust grows when people can contribute in their own way without cost. Look at who spoke, who went quiet, and whose style was rewarded.

What made it easier or harder for people to contribute?

What would make it safer next time?

H Habits *Turning Intentions Into Behaviors*

Habits keep belonging from depending on one person noticing. Choose a practice small enough to repeat every time.

What practice would prevent this next time?

When and where will I do it?

Going further: Foresight asks what's coming that could open or close doors (a reorganization, a new platform). **Alignment** asks whether goals, processes, and culture point the same direction.

6 Practice Scenarios

Rehearsing a response makes it easier to use in the moment. For each scenario, name the barrier and the F.A.I.T.H. pillar at stake, then write what you could actually say or do. Use the Field Guide's "Words That Open Doors" as a starting point, then put them in your own voice.

1 The hybrid meeting

Half the committee is in the room, half on Zoom. The in-room conversation moves fast, and remote members' raised hands go unnoticed for 20 minutes.

Which door is closing? (barrier and pillar)

What could I say or do, in my role?

2 The forwarded idea

You shared a process fix in an email. Weeks later a colleague presents it to the department as their own, and no one mentions where it started.

Which door is closing? (barrier and pillar)

What could I say or do, in my role?

3 The new adjunct

A new adjunct has strong industry experience but hasn't been invited to the department's curriculum conversations. They've stopped asking.

Which door is closing? (barrier and pillar)

What could I say or do, in my role?

4 The platform rollout

A new AI-enabled scheduling tool is announced to front-line staff the week it launches. Staff had concerns that were never asked for.

Which door is closing? (barrier and pillar)

What could I say or do, in my role?

Which of these is most likely to happen where you work?

7 My 30-Day Open Door Plan

One door I can help open at CUNY is...

Where

Start date

30-day check-in date

Weekly practice tracker

Check each practice you used that week.

PRACTICE	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
T Invite perspectives on purpose	☐	☐	☐	☐
I Credit ideas accurately	☐	☐	☐	☐
I Make decision criteria clear	☐	☐	☐	☐
T Disagree with ideas, not people	☐	☐	☐	☐
H Close the loop	☐	☐	☐	☐

30-day reflection

What did I do, and what happened?

What changed for others, or for me?

Who could I invite to do this with me?

What's the next door I'll open?

Share Your Feedback

Scan the code or visit
talk.ac/drlisa
If prompted, enter code **CUNYPD**

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