BEYOND THE WELCOME

A Field Guide to Strengthening Belonging Across CUNY

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1 Welcomed. Included. Belonging.

Welcomed
You are received.

Someone acknowledges you have a place here. A warm introduction at your first meeting.

Included
You can take part.

You get the invitation, the information, and the opportunity to contribute.

Belonging
Your contribution counts.

Your ideas are weighed fairly, credited accurately, and can shape what happens next.

> **Presence is not influence.** Attendance is not participation, and participation is not influence. Belonging does not mean every idea wins. It means every idea gets a fair hearing, and people learn what happened to it.

2 What Quietly Closes Doors

PATTERN	WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE
Status and hierarchy	An adjunct's or staff member's idea gets less attention than the same idea from a senior colleague.
Narrow communication norms	One style (fast, assertive, highly verbal) is read as more competent. Capable colleagues get underestimated.
Informal access	Decisions and opportunities form in hallway conversations and networks that some colleagues, or some campuses, can't reach.
Fear of speaking up	People hold back questions and concerns because speaking up feels risky. Important information stays unspoken.
Change without input	New processes, platforms, or AI tools roll out without input from the people whose work they change.

3 The F.A.I.T.H. Factor™ Lens

The F.A.I.T.H. Factor™ is a values-based framework of five leadership disciplines: **Foresight, Alignment, Integrity, Trust, and Habits**. Today we worked in three of them. Use these questions on any meeting, committee, or decision.

I Integrity
Values in Action

Do our actions match our values?

- What do we say we value here?
- What did we actually do?
- Was the same idea weighed the same way, whoever said it?

T Trust
Communicating Across Differences

Is it safe to contribute?

- Who spoke, and who went quiet?
- Whose style was rewarded?
- What did it cost someone to speak up?

H Habits
Turning Intentions Into Behaviors

What will we do every time?

- What practice would prevent this next time?
- Can it go on the agenda?
- Who will own it?

We can't always know intent. We can always see impact. Look at behavior, process, and consequences before drawing conclusions about people.

4 Five Practices That Open Doors

PRACTICE	WHAT TO DO
T **Invite perspectives on purpose**	Before deciding, ask whose experience or expertise isn't in the room yet.
I **Credit ideas accurately**	Name where an idea came from, and the expertise behind it.
I **Make decision criteria clear**	Say up front how ideas will be evaluated, so they're judged on merit and not on title.
T **Disagree with ideas, not people**	Challenge the point and respect the person offering it.
H **Close the loop**	Tell people what happened to their suggestions, including the ones you didn't adopt, and why.

You don't need a title to open a door. If you chair, you can change the process. If you don't, you can still credit an idea or ask a good question.

5 Words That Open Doors

To restore credit	*"I want to go back to the idea raised earlier. It connects to where we are now."*
To invite expertise	*"This builds on what was proposed earlier. Can you tell us about the experience behind it?"*
To level the field	*"Can we agree on how we're weighing these ideas?"*
To widen the circle	*"Before we decide, whose perspective haven't we heard?"*
To close the loop	*"Here's what we decided about your suggestion, and here's why."*

My Open Door Commitment

TOO GENERAL
"I will be more inclusive."

ACTIONABLE
"At our next department meeting, I'll ask for input from anyone who hasn't spoken before we decide."

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

_____

_____

I will do this: ☐ Within 7 days ☐ Within 30 days Date: _____

Where? (classroom, office, committee, department, team)

_____

How will I know I did it?

_____

Which F.A.I.T.H. pillar does it build? ☐ Integrity ☐ Trust ☐ Habits

Go deeper: Amy C. Edmondson, *The Fearless Organization* (2018), on psychological safety at work. Vernā Myers, *Moving Diversity Forward* (2011), on moving from invitation to inclusion.

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