

A Case Study in Defining Community Values at an Integrated Center for Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

As post-COVID work environments continue to shift, our organization sought to develop a statement of community values to promote a respectful, dynamic workplace culture. The purpose of this paper is to share both the iterative process we used to formulate a unique statement of values that encourages ongoing reflection by each colleague, and demonstrate the ways we have kept that statement alive through community activities. Over a nearly three-year period, a volunteer committee at the Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning developed a community values document. We collected input from over 50 staff members via virtual and in-person all-staff meetings and surveys, all-staff zoom chats, and zoom polls and analyzed qualitative feedback to seek themes to create our document. Adopting a culturally responsive evaluation design that utilizes multiple modes of gathering feedback, the committee shared its work with the entire staff on multiple occasions. Two spring activities, a year apart, were designed to enhance engagement with the values and keep the community values document living. This case study considers the underlying values that drive staff's experience of working on interdisciplinary teams in the field of educational development and advances the field by considering how we do the work, bringing our humanity and the relationships we build into daily conversation. It can serve as a model for centers for teaching and learning of any size looking to develop a statement of values that both reflect and shape the center's work.

Keywords: community values, collaborative assessment, higher education

1. Introduction

1.1 Social and Organizational Context

Many universities have centers for teaching and learning with myriad missions for supporting the academic environments they serve (Wright, 2023). The COVID pandemic presented these centers with various opportunities and challenges to support their academic institutions. At the Poorvu Center at Yale University, during the shift to emergency remote teaching, staff members were thrust into navigating new technological concerns as well as challenges with accessibility and equity, promoting novel collaborations across teams (Berkey & Lauder, 2021). Many staff acknowledged experiencing both psychological and administrative pressures as the initial pandemic period unfolded in 2020 (Aebesold, et al., 2020; Hatfield, et al., 2022; Trotter, et al., 2022).

Returning to a physical workspace in 2021, highlighted different expectations of what "working" really means, including how we work, where we work, what we value about work, and how we develop and keep our work culture alive. At the Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, (the Center) we, like many other organizations, experienced increased demands on our time as well as the cognitive and emotional loads of hybrid working during a pandemic (Paterson, 2020).

The Poorvu Center was established in 2014 to support students and faculty across the entire campus community. It consolidated and integrated teaching, tutoring, writing and technology-enabled learning programs that had been distributed across the University. Almost 50 full-time staff across 12 teams currently operate the Center, (see Appendix A), in addition to almost 600 undergraduate and graduate students, who serve as tutors, fellows, research assistants, Student Advisory Board members, and as front desk support.

1.2 The Desire for Articulating Values

Center staff returned to our physical workplace a couple days a week in 2021 per Yale University guidelines for returning to work after COVID-19. The Center sought to support staff in exploring the context of our working environment as we rearranged our lives to support a return to in-office work. Within this post-COVID hybrid work environment, the Center's leadership team believed it was an appropriate time to articulate how we relate to one another as we carry out our Center's mission. A new community values statement could build structure during this challenging transition and ground the heightened interconnectivity among teams that developed during the pandemic (Mejia, 2021).

The interconnectivity was established as our diverse teams consistently communicated using a variety of channels. We started weekly check-in meetings via Zoom where colleagues shared their work and announced new initiatives. We also initiated monthly in person all-staff meetings with attendance consistently above 90%, and an annual retreat in early summer with close to 100% attendance. A Zoom Workplace group chat also exists for all members of the Center to ask questions, or direct message one another outside of structured meeting times.

1.3 The Current Study

Amidst the continuing turbulent times, we asked ourselves who do we aspire to be as individuals at work? Equally important to answering this question was the desire to preserve the culture we deeply valued during the pandemic. Leadership asked for volunteers to explore these ideas and generate core values that guide our work. Seven volunteers from different teams formed a committee to tackle the development of a statement reflecting what we value most about our work together.

The main goal of our committee was to develop a community values document (see Appendix B). Articulating the values that underly our shared humanity is not easily undertaken by a 50 person staff working on 12 teams. As elaborated by colleagues, "building a common identity [across a large CTL staff] can be very sensitive and requires intentional action to facilitate collaboration between teams" (Mihai, et al., 2025, p. 8). The post-pandemic highly charged emotional environment of teaching and learning raised awareness of the importance of building resilience in staff and deepening interpersonal connections (Hatfield, et al., 2022). Various research avenues have repeatedly demonstrated the importance of staff feeling connected to their positions, engaged in their community spaces and to the people with whom they work (Guetterman, & Mitchell, 2016; Milne & Hamilton, 2021).

Center Leadership encourages activities such as taking time to connect with one another outside of the office (going out for coffee or lunch), providing funding for cross-team community building activities (i.e., pizza making, pottery class), and encouraging taking time off to replenish energy after projects finish. Developing a values statement that could capture these aspects of the Center's culture and promote productive reflection as our work environment evolved became a way for our committee to articulate how we were accomplishing the work of our Center. We needed a strong foundation defining our working relationships within and amongst each other in order to best serve our campus community during this time (Ramaley, 2014). Using iterative assessments in various formats, our community values committee sought to build a document that every individual at the Center could resonate with and grow from, forefronting our shared humanity while at work (Mihai, et al., 2025; Waytz, 2019).

2. Method

Our committee started by addressing fundamental questions that would guide our work: How can we create something that lives beyond the page? What do we want this document to do for us? We agreed we wanted the values statement to be both affirmative and aspirational. First, our committee explored how other institutions and companies consider their values (Nichols & Williams, 2019; Wright, 2023). To achieve this, we reviewed statements and slogans at other higher education institutions (e.g., Fairfield University's *Cura Personalis*; St. Norbert's *Radical Hospitality*), and other companies, (e.g., Nike's *Just do it*; Marines' *semper fidelis*). As we reflected on how these short phrases are easy to remember and are potentially powerful as motivators of behavior, we discovered we wanted both a slogan that was quick and memorable to invoke, and a document that invited ongoing reflection with how we engage our colleagues in our working environment. Having both would allow us to elaborate our values and culture in a document and use the slogan to reinforce those ideals concisely (Rybczewska, et al., 2020). We then distinguished between a mission statement (a document of what we do) and a community values statement (a document of how we do it).

Before gathering input from the entire community at Poorvu, we agreed on a system within the committee itself. We recognized that as an interdisciplinary team, each person brought unique expertise to the group that could be leveraged to generate complex discussion. Throughout the process, our team set up anonymous feedback forms for

qualitative open-ended reflection. These reflections were developed by the entire committee and built in Qualtrics (online assessment platform) by one member who also sits on the Educational Program Assessment (EPA) team and routinely analyzes qualitative data using the Braun and Clark 6 step approach: familiarize yourself with the data, generate initial codes, search for themes, review themes, define and name themes, produce a report (2006; 2013; Ahmed, et al., 2025). Trusting one another to engage in open discussion, we examined methods that would embrace colleagues' perspectives by centering colleagues' work experiences as expertise (Frierson et al., 2002; Hood, et al., 2015; Hopson, 2009). Throughout this paper, representative quotes from various sources are included to add examples to our text. The Yale University IRB classified this work as quality improvement, and as such isn't formally reviewed as it is not research.

As we present our process in the following section, we invite the reader to a) consider whether our questions would resonate in their space with their colleagues, and b) what types of discussion they envision could ensue in their home institutions. In our first meeting, we took individual reflection time to consider our first assessment question: "What do you value most about the culture of the Center?" Responses revealed there were many aspects of our culture we appreciated (see Table 1), and in order to design a living document of value, we needed to incorporate ideas from the entire Center staff (Bachl, et al., 2014). How could our small committee invite input and gather feedback across our Center? Simply designing a center-wide survey would not invite collaboration or understand the roles and responsibilities for how we engage colleagues at work (Townson, 2018), nor would it engage the majority of our staff as response rates to surveys both locally and nationally have been falling due to survey fatigue (Fass-Holmes, 2022).

2.1 Adopting a Model to Invite Feedback

The committee member on the EPA team suggested an approach to designing assessments using the Collaborative Assessment Model (CAM), (Bathgate & Claydon, 2025). This model emphasizes the interpersonal and situational contexts where data are explored and leans on realist evaluation frameworks to ensure assessment meets four guiding principles of aligning to goals, producing actionable data, considering sustainability, and appreciating contextual factors as assessments are designed, implemented, and disseminated (Deci & Ryan, 2020; Patton, 2010; Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Westhorp, 2014).

Developing any document meant to serve a Center requires multiple iterations of creating a product, asking for feedback and then incorporating that data into the next cycle (Banta & Blaich, 2010). Prior research has discussed the importance of utilizing good assessment practices, such as inviting stakeholders to shape evaluation designs and interpretation (Wilson, 2008; Jonson, et al., 2014). Additionally, using a collaborative evaluation process can create shared understanding of purpose evolving from intentional discussions among individuals (Holden, et al., 2022; Mirijamdotter, et al., 2006). We agree that "CTLs have taken up roles that go beyond the field of educational development and into the broader realm of organizational development...it is more important than ever to analyze them through a more holistic lens" (Clark & Saulnier, 2010; Havnes & Stensaker, 2006; Mihai, et al., 2025, p. 4; Schroeder, 2011).

Our committee recognized that during data collection, collaborative assessment techniques through CAM can provide equitable opportunity for engagement by using varied formats, timelines and types of feedback, and we outline our methods throughout the following section. Every member of our committee developed presentations of our ideas across a variety of formats—in Zoom chats during meetings, in Center-wide group chats via Zoom, during weekly check-in meetings, and with in-person all-staff meetings. By utilizing varied presentation styles and avenues to solicit ideas and feedback from our colleagues, we attempted to equitably collect and incorporate stakeholder perspectives. One colleague spontaneously noted in the Zoom chat during a meeting: "I love how everyone in the values committee is sharing. It is a terrific model!"

We implemented CAM by adopting various assessment techniques to ask for feedback and input—often through anonymous collection (e.g., surveys, individual reflections, group work, all staff discussions, rank ordering of ideas, multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions). Shortly after the committee's first meeting, we shared the initial list of our generated values at a monthly all-staff meeting. (see Table 1).

Table 1. The Committee's initial thoughts on Community Values

Initial Thoughts
Colleagues care for our whole selves (not just our work selves)
We value diverse backgrounds and perspectives
We believe our work is impactful
People come before the work
The Center wants to grow with you
We set high standards for ourselves
There is a cooperative spirit
We are encouraged to grow toward challenges that are important to us

Description: Table 1 lists the eight original ideas generated by the first committee meeting about Community Values at the Poorvu Center.

After spending some time in reflection and discussion about our list, we asked colleagues for their feedback using an anonymous form. We opened the form stating “Every Center colleague contributes to the culture that informs our work, therefore we’d like to make the creation of our new Community Values document a collective endeavor.” We then asked colleagues to reflect and share “the values and practices that are critical to your workplace happiness and effectiveness. Submissions are anonymous, and you may submit the form as many times as you'd like.”

This exercise generated many potential elements to include in a community values statement, with over 40 responses (see Appendix D). As noted previously, one committee member regularly analyzes open-ended qualitative data and used open coding data-driven principles to allow themes in the responses to emerge (Naeem, et al., 2023). Once they reviewed the data, they brought their initial impressions of 6 overarching themes/buckets to the committee to review and discuss. There were no feedback items that did not fit into any of the buckets. The 6 buckets were created as a summary of one feedback mechanism that propelled us into the next stages of consolidating the buckets (see Appendix D).

Once we had grouped ideas into buckets, during another all-staff Center-wide meeting, we assigned small groups of 3-4 individuals to a bucket and asked the groups to create a slogan, or summary statement from their bucket. At least two small groups worked on each bucket, and the resulting 12 slogans were similar in many ways, with additional nuances from each group. After the meeting, we invited our colleagues to independently reflect and “Share anything you’re still thinking about. This can include values our lists have left out, slogan ideas you didn’t get to share, or any reflections you’d like us to consider.”

While our committee strove for equitable staff involvement in the process, we needed to make some decisions as a committee. Narrowing down the number of slogans to consider was one such decision. Our committee combed through the results and selected 4 representative finalists to put to a Center-wide vote (see below). Many of the slogans overlapped in language or ideas, and these final four represented the sample well. Again, we designed an anonymous survey, and this time asked colleagues to “Please rank the following items with your favorite at the top of the list (1) and your least favorite at the bottom of the list (4). Then, please provide rationale for why they ranked the way they did.”

Four finalist slogans:

- (1) Personal Growth. Shared Strength.
- (2) Lead with care and grow with others.
- (3) Embracing difference, respecting failure, growing together.
- (4) Growing as a team through the care of each self.

Over 60% of our colleagues (n = 26) chose to vote on the four slogans, with 69% of individuals rating “embracing difference, respecting failure, growing together” as their top slogan. Rationale explanations from our colleagues (n = 21) were varied and many reported feeling positive about the slogans, particularly in the emphasis on togetherness and growth, while others were more critical with some objecting to the phrase “respecting failure.” Please see below for representative quotes:

“I’m struck by each of the four finalist[s] include the word grow or growth - certainly one of our clearly emerging values as a center!”

“Great [slogans]. I like how many of them emphasize togetherness.”

“I do not like the word ‘failure’ nor the phrase ‘respecting failure’...I appreciate the sentiment but failure is harsh...maybe ‘mistakes’ or ‘missteps’ would be better...”

3. Results

3.1 The Product: A Community Values Statement

Over the next 6 months our committee built out the community values document around the highest ranked slogan (see Appendix B). The committee agreed each value should have a summary statement with reflection questions (see Figure 1). Reflection questions were chosen because we wanted to respect the agency of each colleague to engage with slogan as they could, rather than prescribe certain statements we would be expected to adhere to. Given that the values place a strong emphasis on embracing difference, and promoting a culture that allows individuals to be themselves, we noted there is no “one way” to enact the values. Using questions for reflection allows space in the document itself to reflect that ideology. We also wanted to reinforce that adopting these values is an active process and an individual responsibility.



Figure 1. Slogan and summary statements

Additionally, the committee discussed the importance of avoiding overly broad value statements. We wanted sufficient specificity to avoid allowing any and all interpretations to appear valid. For example, we did not want to imply all viewpoints could be championed by embracing difference, i.e., our values would not encompass tolerating racist or sexist conduct.

Our final format included “we” statements making a collective commitment to the value described (see Appendix B). The “we” statements are followed by “I” questions prompting each of us to be intentional about how that value is a part of our practice when we do our work. As the committee chair noted during a presentation to all Center staff, “The [questions] embody the values of trust and respect the agency of our colleagues. They seek to promote deeper, ongoing, personal engagement with the values rather than passive acceptance.” Using questions helped us achieve our goal of creating a living document. For each value, we drafted four questions to spur individual reflection. Please see the below examples:

- (1) Embracing Difference: How do I invite, actively listen to, and incorporate the ideas of others in my conversations and work?
- (2) Respecting Failure: Where in my work do I take time to reflect and receive feedback?
- (3) Growing Together: How do I see my colleagues as people first, and strive to be generous and compassionate in my interactions?

3.2 Community Engagement with the Statement

Now that our committee had achieved the goal of designing a document reflecting our culture as a Center, we shifted our energy to develop community engagement with the values. Our committee sought to use the document as an active addition to our Center's practice, and our committee shared ideas for how we could keep our community values document active at our Center (Mirijamdotter, et al. 2006; Sturm, 2006).

Using the physical spaces, we hung posters of the values in three areas (see Appendix E). These are prominently featured and serve as reminders to pause in our daily tasks and reflect on how we do our work. Taking the idea a step further, we also created desktop flipbooks for each staff member to place at their workstation. Each page staff can flip to features a different question for reflection, and encourages each of us to consider how we engage our colleagues as we work (see Figure 2). Both the posters and the flipbooks were selected using local knowledge of our Center, as they presented highly visible and tangible ways for our staff to be reminded of the values and to spend time reflecting on the ways we work.

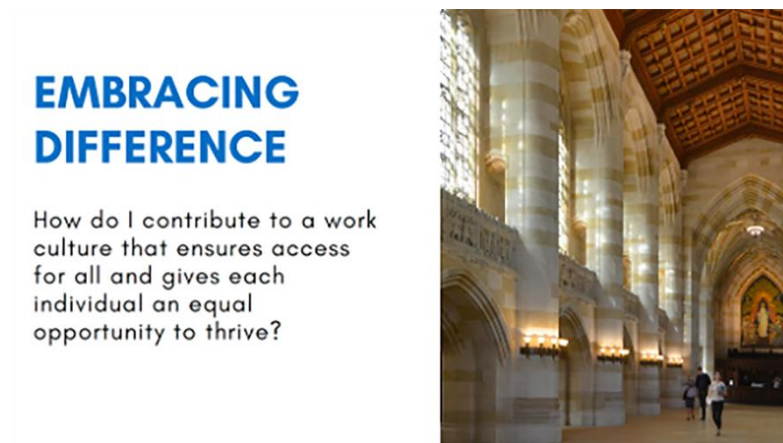


Figure 2. Example page from our desk top flip book

Description. This figure shows an example page from our desk-top flip book.

The Center also engages with the community values statement beginning in the pre-hire stages for staff. We created a summary for job descriptions that is now included in every staff posting (see Appendix C). The statement is discussed in job interviews, and every new hire receives a copy of the values. The Center's leaders regularly refer to our community values when communicating new initiatives or programs.

As a new hire shared with the committee via email:

"During the interview process I found the community values very impactful and shared a larger commitment to a healthy, holistic workplace culture." [New Hire]

Finally, our colleagues have used them to help ground conversations in our shared values (quote collected during a 2024 Center-wide anonymous survey as to how individuals are using the values).

"Having a flip book and the Tuesday check in reminders (also included on the notes document) raised my awareness, kept the values alive. How did this make a difference? I had to have a few difficult conversations recently, grounding them in the community values was a helpful way to start by reminding ourselves that we are in a shared community with shared values. I think that beginning helped us connect and have a productive conversation about reflection/learning with less focus on things like power, embarrassment, hierarchy and judgement. Thank you, CV committee." [Manager]

3.3 Spring 2023 Community Activity Example

Our committee wrapped up the work on the community values statement and the additional materials for the Center in mid-2022. By the end of that year, we were contemplating how we could continue to engage our colleagues in reflection and keep the document alive, sustaining engagement to support community among colleagues. We met as a committee and decided on a community activity that would run one question per week for each value statement, namely January through March 2023. At an all-staff meeting, we presented our idea that everyone was invited to reflect on one question of the values per week, with reminders each week to flip to the next page (in the flipbook) to reflect on the question presented.

EMBRACING DIFFERENCE

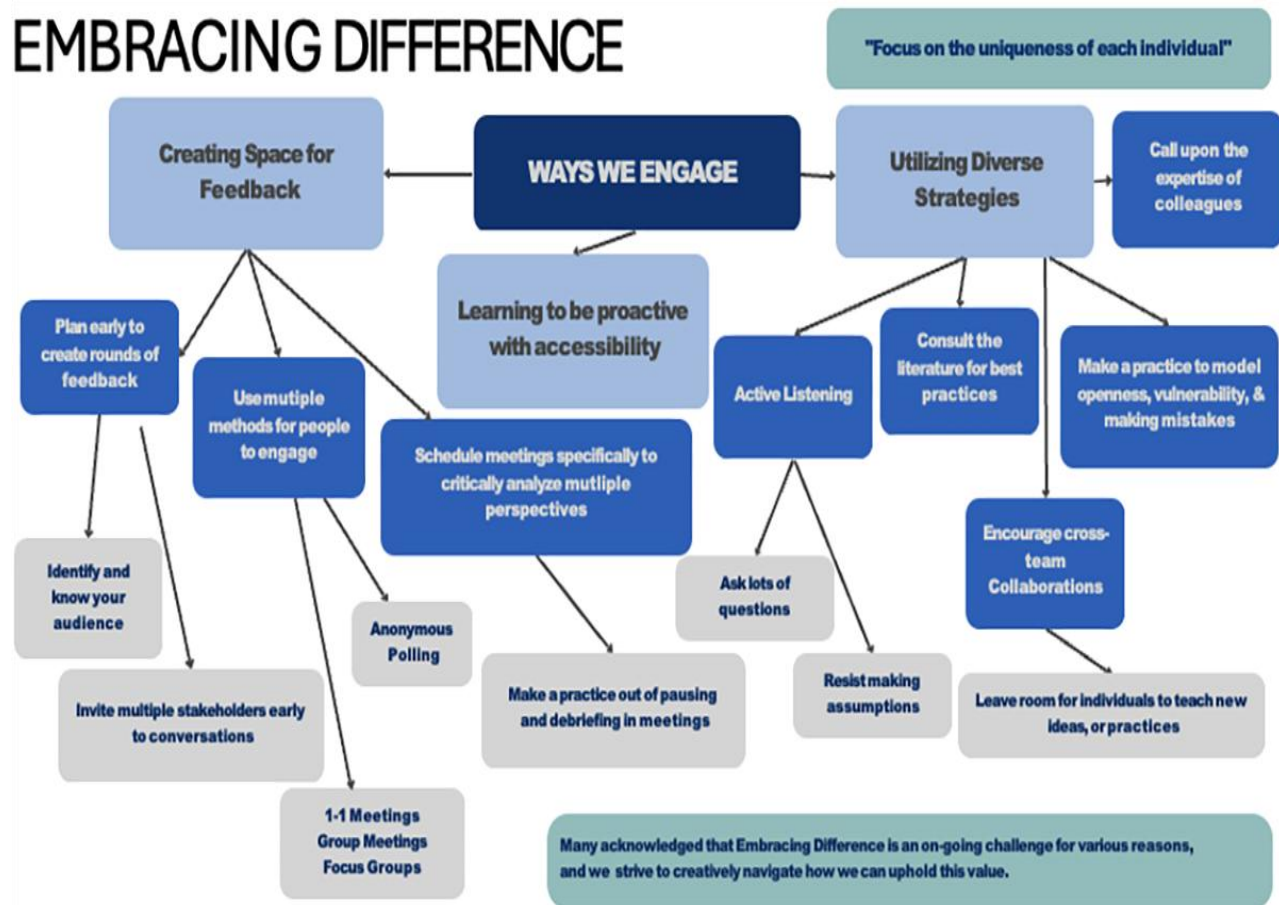


Figure 3. A thematic visual of how colleagues engaged in the 4 questions about Embracing Difference

Description: This figure presents a mind-map of the various ways our colleagues at the Center engaged with the 4 questions on Embracing Difference in our Community Values.

As a center, we referred to our flipbooks and reflected week by week considering how we engage with the question, and posted anonymous sticky notes of our ideas to a community board. Colleagues were encouraged to not only write their own ways of engaging with the question, but also to take time to read through the posted notes on the board. Every Friday, our committee collected the sticky notes, and after each value (4 weeks of questions) was completed, we generated a graphic of the practices our colleagues had shared (see Figures 3-5). Each week response rates varied, with as few as 10 and as many as 35 participants creating sticky notes in a week. Everyone was encouraged to participate, but it was not required for staff to engage if they chose not to.



Figure 4. Practices to engage with Respecting Failure

Description: This figure presents a mind-map of the various ways our colleagues at the Center engaged with the 4 questions on Respecting Failure in our Community Values.

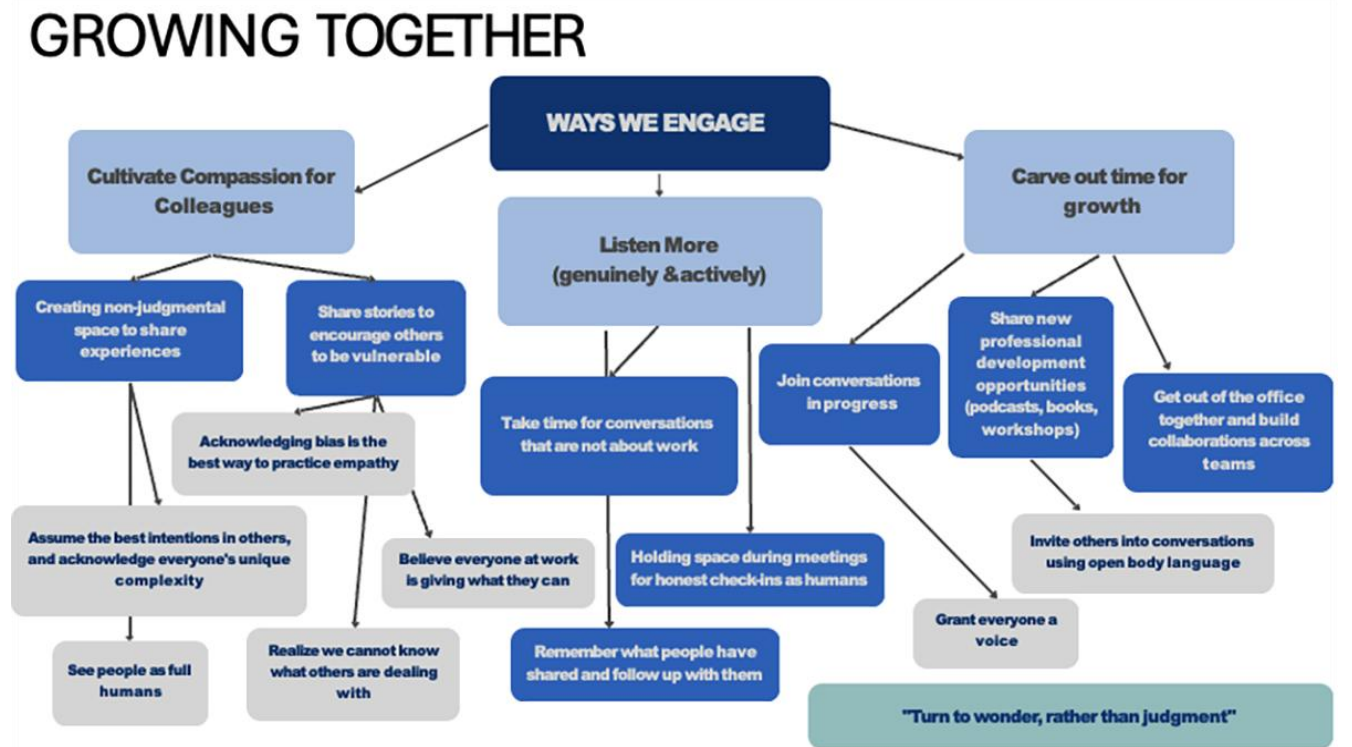


Figure 5. Practices to engage with Growing Together

Description: This figure presents a mind-map of the various ways our colleagues at the Center engaged with the 4 questions on Growing Together in our Community Values.

These visuals were shared across our Center to engage us in the ideas and practices that our colleagues use when they consider how the values are active in our daily work. It was a lively 12-week experience at the Center, and colleagues noted their appreciation for the time to pause with their ‘to-do lists’ and really reflect on how we do our work.

3.4 Spring 2024 Community Activity

As 2023 continued, Center staff continued to shift: new colleagues joined as others moved to new positions. Our committee noted how we wanted to energize the values statement and repeat a community activity. We met and discussed that simply repeating the activity from 2023 may not have the desired effect of engaging in reflection on the values. In 2024 we asked, why don’t we shift the focus from reflecting on our own practices, to looking outside of ourselves to how our colleagues engage with the value or question of the week? This question was not generated by exploring the literature on engagement practices but created through group discussion on our local knowledge of our colleagues and centering their experiences at work as expertise (Frierson et al., 2002; Hood, et al., 2015; Hopson, 2009).

We wanted engagement to be fun, with a bit of whimsy as we reminded ourselves of our community values and reflected on how we do our work together. During spring 2024, we asked colleagues at weekly check-in meetings to vote on which question they wanted to focus for the week ahead (12 weeks of voting with the available questions until all questions were completed). Colleagues were invited to observe their co-workers in action and nominate a colleague who engaged with the question of the week. An anonymous form was set up so that nominations could include only the colleague’s name, or optionally a space to write why a colleague was nominated. Those who were nominated as having enacted the value of the week received a stuffed bunny on their desk for that week (bunnies were chosen randomly for cuteness and cost). In this way, the values were visible, public, and humorous as colleagues posed and got creative with their bunnies (see Figure 6). In one of our busiest weeks, over 28 bunnies were distributed to desks.

While we did not complete a systematic review, the unsolicited use of stuffed bunnies in the day-to-day conversations of the staff was clearly evident. Bunnies left notes for each other and once to the person who delivered them to colleagues’ desks each Monday morning (“Please let me stay on this desk for another week! I love it here!”)

We noted that some weeks more than 60% of our staff were recognized by their peers as having engaged in that community value, and this felt meaningful to our committee. Additionally, the photos of the bunnies that appear in figure 6 were taken from 37 total pictures that were shared in the all-staff Zoom chat (these were selected specifically because they do not show people). The reactions and comments to bunny shared photos were laugh-out-loud moments for many members of our community.



Figure 6. Bunnies around the Center, spring 2024

Description. This figure highlights 4 photos that colleagues at the Center took of their bunnies around the Center. In the bottom left corner, the bunny is shown next to a desktop flipbook.

4. Discussion

Our Center actively strives to generate and maintain a culture of excellence, equity, and accessibility as it evolves with changes in teaching and learning in higher education. The deep commitment that leadership has shown towards supporting its staff members shines through in the process and the product of our community values. Through both anecdotal and intentionally collected feedback, staff have seen evidence that the values are informing decision making and having positive influences on relational dynamics within the Center. For example, hiring managers have shared that during the interview process, various candidates' feedback highlighted our reflection on creating and maintaining an intentional culture. Additionally, staff members have felt empowered to use the shared language of our values to resolve misunderstandings or interpersonal issues.

Defining the heart of a community can be an individualized experience, however this process draws on universal themes of what it means to be human at work, how we engage our colleagues, how we grow and aspire to define our work and what we collectively stand for. We hope that the reader can draw parallels to their work environments and see instances where our questions could be applied to their settings to make space for discussions surrounding culture at work. Please see the following representative quote demonstrating the CAM in action, from an anonymous survey asking staff to reflect on the process of the spring 2023 activity:

"I really appreciated how egalitarian the experience was. Everyone could contribute and there was no sense of the responses mapping onto an institutional hierarchy. It really felt like everyone should participate because everyone's thoughts were valuable. Just having the structured time/opportunity to engage in this reflection was important to me. I often have days that are jammed with meetings and deadlines, it felt like something that was good for me was being supported by the [C]enter in a tangible way not just in rhetoric." [Staff member]

Importantly, we did not achieve 100% engagement with the process or the product from all members of our Center, which is expected as "participation is a complex and iterative process, which can change, grow or diminish" (Wallerstein & Duran, 2003). One possibility is that not all individuals felt they could share their opinions or engage in the formats we provided (Chouinard & Cousins, 2009). Other individuals seemed skeptical of the process, sharing that they did not see the need, with one colleague asking, "what problem are we trying to solve?" Engaging over 50 people in this process, we accept the inevitability of diverse viewpoints when we consider what it means to be ourselves with our work (both in doing the work itself and in the physical spaces where that work is done). We agree that "managing staff with different backgrounds, particularly balancing academic and non-academic positions to create an inclusive environment, can be a challenge" (Mihai, et al., 2025, p. 9). Utilizing practices from different ways of knowing, our Center continues to invite colleagues to share their experiences interacting with our work environment and the individuals in it via an anonymous online form that is always open for feedback (Mercurieff & Roderick, 2013; Wilson, 2008). The committee tried to keep the process transparent, and were gratified that those who engaged expressed a deep appreciation for having values and the space and time to reflect upon them.

4.1 Conclusion

As higher education continues to experience various challenges, our Center sought to create a community values document to ground how we engage with our work and with one another. Utilizing the CAM allowed for an iterative process of reflection, drafting, and revising based on feedback from most of our staff. Now that we have a community values statement, we continue to explore ways to keep the document alive through additional community activities. This process includes revisiting the values periodically to assess whether they should be amended, and to explore how they are being used across teams at the Center (O'Brien, et al., 2022).

Our Center's experience with developing a set of community values can serve as a case study for other institutional offices to explore, if they choose to articulate their shared values and define how they engage working together. Community capacity is made up of both shared knowledge and skills of the people within a Center, and can be used to identify shared goals for the work (Monroe, et al., 2022). Smaller CTLs could follow the process we used in making space for intentional discussions about culture, values and how individuals work together. They could examine what they appreciate about their colleagues and establish ways for staff to submit ideas or feedback about different initiatives or processes at their Centers. CAM can be used for reflection and consideration on how to collect feedback from individuals, and how to articulate meaning and values around assessment to the broader community. Future work for our committee involves continuing to create spring community-building activities for our colleagues and to generate additional ways our values can inform the work that we do.

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Appendix A

Poorvu Center Team Descriptions

AI in the Humanities

The Director of AI in the Humanities supports the integration of AI in teaching and research across the humanities. A joint leadership position between the Poorvu Center and Yale Library, the Director leads the development of university-wide strategies to explore the incorporation of AI into teaching and research while helping to shape policies and practices for its ethical use.

Business Operations

The engine of the Poorvu Center, the Business Operations team provides administrative and financial support to all Poorvu Center teams, ensuring they have the resources to support teaching and learning at Yale.

Communications

The Director of Communications collaborates with all teams to highlight the many ways their work contributes to a better world through teaching and learning. Working closely with departments across Yale, the Director creates opportunities to increase the Poorvu Center's visibility within the Yale community and beyond.

Digital Education

Working closely with Yale faculty, the Digital Education team shares Yale's teaching with the world by supporting the creation of online courses. Managing a comprehensive course catalog spanning diverse subjects, the team connects global learners with degree and non-degree offerings across multiple platforms, including Coursera, YouTube, and Canvas.

Educational and Engagement Technology

The Educational and Engagement Technology team helps faculty, students, and administrators use technology effectively in their teaching, learning, and living at Yale. The team manages and supports Canvas, Yale's learning management system; external applications that integrate with Canvas; and Yale Connect, the university's campus engagement platform.

Educational Program Assessment

The Educational Program Assessment team provides expertise in the design, implementation, analysis, and reporting of assessments that explore the impact of teaching and learning programs at Yale and beyond. The team helps faculty, students, and staff use data to help their programs shine.

Educational Technology and Media

The Educational Technology and Media team supports instructors in finding creative technology solutions for the classroom by providing access to various teaching tools. The team also manages all technology operations at the Poorvu Center.

Graduate Writing Lab

The Graduate Writing Lab supports Yale's graduate and professional school students with all aspects of writing and communication through a variety of programming, including individual writing consultations, workshops and panel discussions, peer-review groups, writing retreats, and public communication programs.

Office of Educational Opportunity

The Office of Educational Opportunity supports students' academic and personal growth, empowering them to thrive at Yale. The team addresses the needs of diverse student populations, including first-generation, low-income students, and collaborates with offices and programs across Yale to support student success.

Undergraduate Writing & Tutoring

The Undergraduate Writing & Tutoring team hires, trains, and supports over two hundred peer mentors who provide students with exceptional resources for writing, learning, and thriving at Yale. The team offers writing support, STEM tutoring, and a wide range of programming designed to inspire academic exploration and community building.

Teaching Development & Initiatives

Collaborating with faculty, postdoctoral scholars, and graduate students from all backgrounds, the Teaching Development and Initiatives team develops practices that promote equitable and engaged teaching. Through consultations, classroom observations, workshops, learning communities, and departmental partnerships, the team helps instructors navigate pedagogical and career goals, institutional expectations, and students' needs.

Teaching Studios

In collaboration with faculty and the Digital Education team, the Teaching Studios team develops media for teaching in online and residential courses and programs. The team also provides production leadership for signature University events, including Commencement.

Appendix B

Poorvu Center Community Values

Embracing Difference, Respecting Failure, Growing Together

The Center's mission to promote teaching and learning is rooted in a culture that prioritizes equity and the growth of each team member. Our three-part slogan, which is both a pledge and a motivator, prioritizes individuals over their work and reminds us how our interactions shape our culture.

Embracing Difference

We seek contributions from people with diverse backgrounds, experiences, identities, and expertise, embracing difference to advance equity, accessibility, and the Poorvu Center's mission.

- (1) How do I invite, actively listen to, and incorporate the ideas of others in my conversations and work?
- (2) How do I contribute to the balance between moving toward consensus and considering alternative viewpoints?
- (3) How do I anticipate difference as the norm and work accordingly?
- (4) How do I contribute to a work culture that ensures access for all and gives each individual an equal opportunity to thrive?

Respecting Failure

We acknowledge that we cannot do our best work without taking risks, including the risk of failure, and we support one another in learning from our failures as much as successes.

- (1) Where in my work do I make time to reflect and receive feedback?
- (2) When have I experienced failure in my work, how have I responded, and how have those challenges shaped my subsequent work?
- (3) How do I invite colleagues in, to reflect on and learn from unexpected or disappointing outcomes, rather than calling them out for errors?
- (4) How do I contribute to a work environment conducive to taking risks?

Growing Together

We care for each other as professionals and human beings, and we believe our Center is strongest and our culture healthiest when we support both individual and team growth.

- (1) How do I create opportunities for my colleagues to grow? How do I advocate for my own professional growth?
- (2) How do I see my colleagues as people first, and strive to be generous and compassionate in my interactions?
- (3) What obstacles to growing together have I encountered in the workplace, and how have I responded to them?
- (4) How do I contribute to a trusting workplace where each colleague feels welcome to bring their backgrounds, interests, and passions to work?

We recognize that, as individuals and as a Center, we will not always live up to our values. We affirm that striving to live out these values in our work means acknowledging when we fall short, and supporting one another in the process.

Appendix C

Culture Statement for Job Searches

The Poorvu Center's mission to promote teaching and learning is rooted in a culture that prioritizes equity, accessibility, and the growth of each team member. We care for one another as professionals and human beings. We value the perspectives of individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences, identities, and expertise. And we support one another in learning from our failures as much as our successes.

Appendix D

Middle-stage of Community Values Planning: Buckets

Focus on shared humanity

- (1) Care for our whole selves (not just our work selves)
- (2) People come before the work
- (3) Support for cultivating our well-being
- (4) We value knowledge and are driven to learn, highly self-motivated
- (5) Encouragement to grow toward challenges that are important to us
- (6) Opportunity for self-reflection
- (7) We are professional and mature
- (8) We strive to provide and accept open and honest feedback to help us grow and learn together
- (9) Professional development is encouraged (and space is made for it)

Approaching others

- (1) Cooperative spirit
- (2) Value one another as human beings
- (3) Respect personal lives, hobbies and creative corners of colleagues' experiences
- (4) We celebrate one another's accomplishments
- (5) Assume good intentions from colleagues
- (6) Private appreciation matters as much as public recognition
- (7) Recognize the limits of our own knowledge and seek to learn from each other
- (8) Everyone practices empathy and kindness
- (9) We apologize promptly and directly when we mess up

Team Driven

- (1) Strive for fluid collaboration among teams
- (2) We value the expertise of our internal colleagues

- (3) Ensemble mentality—everyone plays a significant role
- (4) Meet people where they are
- (5) Culture of sharing
- (6) Excited to support one another
- (7) Motivated by our close collegial relationships
- (8) Plan projects collaboratively—with many voices in the discussion
- (9) Empowering others with new knowledge/ideas to help them on their path to achieving their goals

DEIB

- (1) We value diverse backgrounds and perspectives
- (2) Proactive approach to DEIB
- (3) Trusting colleagues to do their work responsibly and ethically
- (4) Make space for experimentation and productive failure, navigating how to demonstrate what doesn't work
- (5) Mistakes are valuable opportunities for growth, and learn from productive failure in our own work and the work of others
- (6) Create space to bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives into our work
- (7) Welcome ideological differences and the difficult conversations they can foster
- (8) Acknowledge there is work we can all do to improve diversity in hiring, retention and sense of belonging for all staff
- (9) Aren't afraid to recommend changes in policy or to pursue shifts in attitudes

Office related

- (1) Non-hierarchical way manner of interacting
- (2) Opportunities to communicate with and provide feedback on leadership
- (3) More of a family atmosphere, instead of a business
- (4) Center supports your growth and learning from mistakes
- (5) Center always wants to do better—isn't satisfied w just the status quo, and wants to grow with you
- (6) Opportunity to take ownership of our work
- (7) We measure success through rigorous assessments and evaluation
- (8) Non-competitive environment with emphasis on fairness in practice and process
- (9) We value and protect our work culture
- (10) Value collaboration with offices outside the Center
- (11) One area of the Poorvu Center's work is not valued more than any other

Mission/work related

- (1) We believe in the value of our work and its positive impact
- (2) We are mission-driven in our programs
- (3) Dedicated to the mission of Yale as an institution
- (4) We act as drivers of cultural change at the institutional, departmental, and individual level

Appendix E

Posters Created of Our Community Values Hanging around Our Center

Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning

COMMUNITY VALUES

The Poorvu Center’s mission to promote teaching and learning is rooted in a culture that prioritizes equity and the growth of each team member. Our three-part mantra, which is both a pledge and a motivator, prioritizes individuals over their work and reminds us how our interactions shape our culture.



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