

PX CONFERENCE REPORT

DETAILS

Date:	August 16-October 24, 2023	Conference:	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Certificate
Time:	Flexible		
PX:	Joel Swaan	Location:	Virtual, Cornell University

SUMMARY

I respectfully acknowledge that Cornell University in Ithaca, NY is located on the traditional homelands of the Gayogohó:nq? (the Cayuga Nation). They are members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, an alliance of six sovereign nations with a historic and contemporary presence on Ithaca lands. I also acknowledge the painful history of Gayogohó:nq? dispossession, and honour the ongoing connection of the Gayogohó:nq? people, past and present, to the lands and waters there.

Cornell University



This is to acknowledge that

Joel J. Swaan

has completed the certificate program entitled

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

This Twenty-Fifth Day of October, 2023
through eCornell.

Alexander J. Colvin
Alexander J. Colvin, Kenneth F. Kelly '99 Dean
School of Industrial and Labor Relations
Cornell University

This Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Certificate is the sum of four different courses: Counteracting Unconscious Bias; Improving Engagement; Fostering an Inclusive Climate; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Work. All were taught by Dr. Lisa H. Nishii, Associate Professor of Human Resource Studies, School of Industrial Labor Relations at Cornell University. I have already submitted fulsome reports on Counteracting Unconscious Bias and Improving Engagement at previous Provincial Executive meetings. With apologies, I have simply run out of time to write a fulsome report on each of the two remaining courses. I will summarize the course objectives here.

Before I do, I need to state that, while I took these four 10-hour courses on my own time—having used my release time for provincial bargaining this year—they were absolutely worth the time and effort. The work required, not just physically but also psychologically as I worked through my own belief systems and examined the systems in place in education and the Society, has been a positive influence in the way in which I work. I would recommend this work to anyone who is seeking to become more aware of systems thinking, and how it advantages some people and disadvantages others – sometimes intentionally, but often unintentionally through historical practices.

In **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Work** (Sept 27-Oct 10), the focus was on organizational inclusion. The course was broken into 3 parts: *Distinguish Between Diversity and Inclusion*, *Examine Methods of Fostering Inclusion in Work Groups*, and *Assess Sources of Inclusion*.

“Diversity” and “Inclusion” are often bundled together as though they are synonymous however, Diversity is about the hiring practices which bring about a diverse workplace, while Inclusion is about giving voice to those diverse peoples once they are hired. It’s more than organizational-level policies and practices that are designed to promote inclusion. Group climate and inclusive leadership behaviours should also be a part of providing a psychologically safe workplace where people feel that they can be their authentic selves. Inclusion is diversity taken to the next level.

When people feel a sense of belonging within their organization, when they feel like an “insider”, and yet can very much be themselves and know that their uniqueness is highly valued, then there is inclusion. This moves past a “diversity compliance” metric, which has the potential to negatively stereotype people, to a strategic-level effort with a demonstrated positive impact on the organization’s performance.

The course examined strategies that can be by managers/leaders used to promote inclusion, ways to create an inclusive climate, and to consider how themselves and others can bring about more inclusivity in decision-making. The course also provided opportunities to assess whether inclusion is integrated across the company – at the organizational level, the management level, and the work-group level. It also examined what inclusion looks like to individual employees and provided tools to assess inclusion at different levels.

Fostering an Inclusive Climate (Oct 11-24) was taught through three modules: *Examine an “Inclusive Climate”*, *Examine the Dynamics of Inclusive Climates*, and *Take Steps Towards Inclusion*.

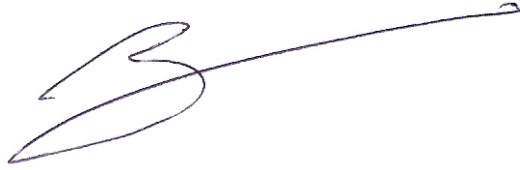
This course began with defining, exploring the critical characteristics of, and determining what it means to have an Inclusive Climate. We examined why they are important – what value an inclusive climate brings to both individuals and the employing company. Environmental influences, including messages and signals received from the broader organization and senior leadership, were examined as well as both the impact of peer influence and of leadership behaviours on a department’s inclusive climate.

The factors that inhibit and facilitate inclusion experiences were taught, so that course participants could help shape clear behavioral norms that value inclusion. Interpersonal dynamics can get in the way of inclusion, the most common of which were examined including micro-aggressions, unconscious bias, and status cues. Some such enablers of inclusion are investing time and space for team members to learn about each other as individuals to open the door to deeper-level cooperation and trust, and creating a supportive environment where people feel safe to express themselves without having to worry about suffering negative consequences. Strategies to dive deeper into success in these areas were explored.

Tools were provided to assess the inclusiveness of one’s own work climate, looking at methods to assess inclusivity and to look at strategies for continually assessing climate – revising inclusive leadership strategies as needed.

Again, these courses were well worth the time and effort. My only regret is that I wasn't able to report more fully on the courses as they were taught.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a long horizontal line.

Joel J. Swaan (he/him)
Provincial Executive