

Diversity Roundtable, October 2015 Transcript

Thank you all very very much.

This is actually our,

I think our seventh year of doing

a student-faculty roundtables and I'm just so happy to see such a good turnout.

I know the faculty know who I am but for the students,

my name is Elaine Maldonado and I'm the Director of

Faculty Development and also the center for excellence in teaching.

What our mission is to try and be

a resource for all of the faculty to help them with what they're doing in the classroom.

So, in the end it's to benefit you and this

is one of the few chances I get to hear directly from students.

So I always look forward to this event very much every year.

I want to introduce one or two people before we get started.

I have two people who have been very supportive of this program.

One is professor Charlotte Brown [LAUGHTER] [APPLAUSE] ,

she is a teacher of English as a second language,

and also Brian Fallon,

Professor Fallon is the director of our writing studio [APPLAUSE] [LAUGHTER].

So before we get started I'm going to

introduce you to someone that you may not know and that's

our Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Yasmin Jones [APPLAUSE].

So thank you to the CET and our director for faculty development,
Elaine Maldonado for organizing or promises to be another terrific roundtable discussion.
Part of the annual student Roundtable Series that the CET organizes that she mentioned.
Today's topic, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity is one dear to FIT's mission,
that the college be a place where
creativity and career and global perspectives
are cornerstone to the education you our students are promised,
where inclusiveness and community strengthens through interaction with your peers,
faculty and as importantly the curriculum.

Today's round table format allows for the open exchange of
ideas on diversity and a casual setting of conversation,
but as one key for understanding student interests and perspectives.

So to that and for you to begin that conversation in your groups,
I leave you with a thank you for your involvement and
commitment to the promise and practice of diversity,
and how the role of difference
strengthens your current education and your future careers.

So thank you very much for this lecture. [APPLAUSE]

Thank you so much Jasmine.

I am going to just sketch out how the day normally
goes and also you'll see Celia Biers standing at the back.

She's a part of the CET

and trust me, none of this would have been pulled together without her

and also Jeffrey who was up here.

Jeffrey Reimann with a big voice,

I can't start any event without him because no one hears me.

[LAUGHTER]

So I want to give them a big thanks too

because they are really the backbone simply.

[APPLAUSE] So, as I mentioned,

this is one of the few opportunities we get to hear back from students,

and I want to be very frank with you that when you let us know what you think,

it really helps guide our programming in the future.

So, I would like you to think about that in the course of this event and before you leave

there's a little sheet where you could fill

in some topics that you might like to see me address in the future.

Last year we addressed issues of intellectual Property and Plagiarism.

One year we talked about Homework and Finals Week.

This year we're talking about Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in the classroom.

So, I really do want to hear from you because I

love doing these events but I'd like to be doing them on topics that have some meaning.

So before you go you'll see there are some feedback sheets on the page.

So, this is how I would like to see the day go.

There are faculty members at each table,

and I'm assuming that you have all introduced yourselves at this point in time.

There are also a series of questions that are on the table,

and I'd like you to discuss them out.

Now if you want to skip around that's fine,
if you don't get to all of the questions that's okay too,
but I'll leave it at one point we suggest maybe
writing some lists while you're discussing them,
and probably I give you to about one o'clock
to take your time and really explore those questions.

I do ask you to elect one person who is going to be the table reporter right.

That one person will come back,
come up here to the podium and report back on the findings of the table.

Now, what that person is reporting is not
necessarily their own opinions but they're going to be kind
of aggregating what's going on at the table
and I encourage you when it starts to get close to report time,
that for you to help that person put their notes together,
you don't leave them out there hanging all by themselves.

Help them fill in their comments,
so then when they are up here,
when they're speaking for the whole table and they feel secure.

So, I would say one of the first things is to elect a person who is willing to do that,
and we've heard back from each of the tables.

Also, as we're going along if there are questions or comments,
I mean don't be shy about putting up your hand because both Charlotte and
Brian are here to help guide the conversation in that way, okay?

So, any questions so far,

is everybody, okay there's some scrap paper if you need it on the table.

It's definitely a team activity.

So hope everybody's going to contribute to this.

So, you're often writing at the time and all that as we go through.

Thank you very much. I get.

I went around and I know that everybody has addressed

at least a few of question so we're ready to roll.

I think what I'd like to do is I'll start with this table on my left,

and I would say [NOISE] three to five minutes out,

and if there are any questions,

track in wave your hand and let us know so that we can address

some well you know while your comments are still very pregnant.

So who is the reported at this table?

Okay. Come on up.

And [inaudible]

Everybody has to [inaudible] [LAUGHTER]

Hello, I'm Hillary.

I am with the Jewellery Design Department.

We had a good mix at our table of students.

We have fashion design to resign and art history.

Although we're all from the states.

We skipped around a little bit,

we didn't cover all of the topics but we did start with number one.

One of the things that we felt was actually important to mention with

this question was we would prefer to consider disadvantages as challenges, because they're learning opportunities even though they provide difficulties they are still valuable issues for us.

One of those challenges is the confusion over communication between instructors and students and students to students, this results in a lot of students from international cultures who end up grouping together in a clique.

It's not necessarily because they have a problem with our culture but perhaps it's because of language differences, or other social issues that tie into that. There's also the challenge for instructors to encourage the students to branch out because of this.

Advantages are of course the opportunity to learn about other cultures.

I know in our tour redesign apartment it was valuable to see the design aesthetics of students from the Asian culture because they're very different from students in the United States.

We just have different set x.

It can be really important for us to see how other students thought processes can affect their visual design and it's quite useful.

All right. So, we went ahead to number five.

How do you think cultural differences affect the way we learn.

Language differences can definitely leaves students to participate less.

Again with forming a group or a clique in the background probably because it's much easier for you to communicate

between each other and I'm sure that the students can also help each other understand what's being discussed perhaps in a lecture format if they're together then they can share among each other.

If you're ESL it's very challenging because there are many words that you just can't catch.

So these differences can definitely cause issues and make it more difficult for the instructors to even know how effective they're being in teaching.

Going on to number eight.

Oh, actually we did number six as well, we jumped around a lot.

How can teachers and instructors promote greater cultural understanding in their classes?

One of us had actually really a valuable idea about research projects based on international subjects.

If you have a student and do a project on a business, it doesn't have to be an American or United States

business. We are going to learn a lot more about a company that's based overseas.

So it would be useful to incorporate these kind of projects into the curriculum to force students to step into cultures that aren't necessarily in their comfort zone.

Also having students speak about their hometown at the beginning of the year.

To share what their home is like, maybe how they grew up, just that alone can give the other students and the

faculty a much better vision about where

everybody comes from and it also helps students feel more comfortable

among each other and open up discussion throughout the rest of the year.

Another thing that we wanted to mention

is active recruitment for specific majors or even just for the entire school.

Some majors may for whatever reason have many more US based students and to try and target greater diversity in those majors will help

to create a more diverse experience for everybody involved.

Another valuable thing would be to encourage

the acceptance and understanding of alternative views and differences.

This is between instructors and students.

Of course, the instructors will need to lead

the way by moderating and creating a safe space for the students

by setting a positive example and being open to students and presentations who,

they may not necessarily understand why the presenter is speaking in a certain way,

or why their project is so different from others.

Just because it's different doesn't necessarily mean that it has less value to it.

It's important for the instructors to moderate and make sure

that the other students and the rest of the audience is welcoming,

and to help everybody be more proactive in expressing themselves.

Since not all faculty may be as effective as others in this kind of situation,

it depends but it's also important to encourage students

to share their views on this with faculty,

which takes us actually to number eight.

What activities might the college implement to ensure that

students from all backgrounds are supported in their education?

We felt that [NOISE] the school

should make it easier for students to share feedback with faculty.

It's not challenging per se right now,

but a lot of students aren't necessarily comfortable approaching faculty members,
they may be nervous or afraid.

How can the school build their infrastructure to

share feedback while respecting the faculties knowledge and skills,
but also respecting the concerns of students?

How can we make it easier for students even if it's anonymously,

but what ways can we change things so that

students have a greater voice or feel more comfortable sharing their voice?

Because even though they're encouraged to do so now,

there are still quite a few students who just

aren't really comfortable even asking basic things.

So, how can we encourage and make it a safer place emotionally,

for students to approach faculty and share their views?

Excellent, and thank you.

[APPLAUSE] Excellent. Thank you.

So, table number two,

that's Wendy and Emmy's table? Yes.

[NOISE] Hello, I'm Sarah.

I have an associate's degree in jewelry design and I'm

working on a bachelor's degree in international trade marketing.

We actually had a really diverse table.

We have two students from Sweden,
we've one student with a culturally,
Hungarian background, and we also have one professor who studied in Scandinavia.

So, that's a fun variations.

My notes are a little bit all over the place,
so I apologized the other time,
but we had some really cool points that we talked about.

Let's see. My favorite point was
probably one of these branches that professor studied in Scandinavia,
talking about how when she was an American student she
was able to communicate the intention of her craft through words.

When she no longer shared the language of the people around her,
the first language was the craft,
her work had to speak for itself and that really helped her grow as an artist.

So, I thought that was a really interesting point.

Let's see, one of the advantages we talk about having students with a diverse background,
is that since it's really an increasingly global market that we're dealing with.

So, it's becoming even more important that we're getting
exposed to all of these different cultures and all of these different ideas,
and it'll be easier as we go forward and as it
becomes an even more global economy for us to adapt.

As far as creative writing because we did have a professor of creative writing,
she talked about how often there are
really beautiful thoughts and metaphors of other languages that get lost in translation,

but the positive side of that is that it makes for a fabulous poetry.

One of the disadvantages we talked about it was that,

international students can sometimes cling to each other in

classrooms and there are good reasons for that because they can help each other.

If they miss something that was said,

they can translate for each other and that does become a positive thing.

But even then, they still feel like sometimes they're missing

important things that were said in

the classroom and that can become very frustrating for them.

So, we talked about how something helpful that an English and American student can

do is sit near them and help explain things in a more simple way when they do get lost.

One of our students talked about how she sometimes gets nervous asking for

clarification because something that was

said is so obviously American and she knows that,

and so she feels embarrassed to ask about it.

We really just need to encourage people to be

open about that because that's part of our culture.

It's just to speak up when you need to and that's sort of a beautiful thing we thought.

Another barrier was, we were talking about how when you're

not a native English speaker or when you're speaking any second-language,

your intelligence level is not perceived to be as

high as it actually is and that can be extremely frustrating.

So, one thing that you can do when you are a native speaker of the language,

is to question your perception of how someone's

speaking and remind yourself this is not their first language,
and they have very valuable ideas they're trying to communicate and it's
important to be patient when you are communicating with them.

This is another interesting point.

When the US is talking about how plagiarism is actually,
as far as design is actually encouraged in China,
it seems like a compliment and obviously in the United States,
it is not encouraged at all.

[LAUGHTER] We take it pretty personally.

[LAUGHTER] Yes.

Even in our jewelry classes,
we've had some issues with that before.

With students feeling like other students have copied them and it doesn't go over well.

So, that's one of those things where,
what can you do with that? I don't know.

If anyone else knows,

[LAUGHTER] but I think that's probably the best stuff that we talked about. There we go.

When thinking about the perception of an ESL student,
and we were talking about how with the intelligence level issue,
even in America there are variations of American English and certain variations are
seen with really negative connotations just because of prejudice
against the culture or prejudice against the race and things like that.
So, it's really a universal problem,
It's not just a problem of interpreting what ESL students are saying.

So, sometimes even a variation of English that has
very clear grammatical rules
and it's a very intelligent form of speaking can be seen in a negative way.

We really just encourage each other to have
an open mind when we are communicating with people who speak differently,
because you never know how valuable their ideas are going to be.

That's perfect.

True. [APPLAUSE].

Thank you.

I just want to interject something.

On December third, we're going to have a very large event
with a guest speaker from a group called Creative Commons,
which is an organization through which you can copyright your work free of charge,
and there are different levels of that copyright.

So, I just say keep your eye open for my email about that, it might be of interest.

On table number three back,
let's see, yes. Catherine your table.

This Catherine?

Yes, we have two Catherines. [LAUGHTER].

Hi Catherine.

[OVERLAPPING]

Hi, everyone. I'm Ellie Madetti.

I'm actually an international student from Italy.

I'm quite fluent so you won't guess that,

but I'm from the FMN department and our whole table is in the FBM department,
but we have students from Korea,
from Native American students,
not Native Americans, [LAUGHTER] and Korea, and China.

So we got a nice cultural difference among our table.

The first question that we really focused on was question number one: What are the advantages and disadvantages of having students from diverse backgrounds.

We found that, as other groups mentioned,

some advantages are really making

all the students in the class knowledgeable about different cultures,

and understanding cultural differences and things happening around the world.

We feel that that's really important in our global industry,

and it prepares students for working in

a global field and just being more knowledgeable in general.

We found quite a few disadvantages though.

Other cultures can sometimes be perceived negatively just

due to some cultural differences that people are unaware of.

So for example, in some cultures,

students don't raise their hands,

they just get called on by professors to answer questions.

So these students are not used to raising

their hands and having active class participation.

They may be viewed in classrooms as being quiet and not participating,

but this is just a difference that professors are unaware of.

So this can actually set them back in the classroom.

So that was the main disadvantages that we found for that.

The next question that we really focused on was question number

5: How do cultural differences affect the way that we learn.

There are definitely different standards in different cultures about learning, especially in terms of work ethic.

Some of the members in our table said that when working in groups and having students of different cultures, they have different ways of doing things, they have different angles.

Some students just like to get the work done, some students like to go above and beyond, and this can vary person by person.

But especially culturally, we felt that this was a difference, so it can be challenging to work in groups and that's sometimes why we see students of the same culture forming groups together and spending more time together.

We also said that in some countries, it's a huge privilege to go to college.

Among other countries such as the United States, it's more of a natural progression to education.

So that can definitely change the way students approach their college education and the way that they're driving their passion maybe different.

Again, that varies student by student, but culturally, we found that that could be a big difference as well.

Next, we spoke about question number 6: How can teachers promote greater cultural understanding in their classrooms.

One thing that we mentioned that I spoke to a little bit is having international students and just students with different backgrounds, whether it be religious or anything else, try to work in groups outside of their cultural norm just to have different opinions and to get them to branch out of their shell, and have the American students learn from them, and then have them immerse into the American culture.

Also, it allows the classroom to get a different perspective and different results out of projects and things like that.

Another thing that we thought was encouraging teachers to set the example for the classroom and be knowledgeable of the different cultures.

Having teachers have some background knowledge about what it's like to be a student in other countries.

For example, a student that may be from Asian descent to call on them rather than have them raise their hand in the classroom.

So just having the teachers prepared with this knowledge can increase the opportunities for learning and make the environment just more open to different cultures.

Lastly, we focus on question number 8:

What activities might the college implement to ensure that students from all backgrounds

are supported in their education?

One main point that we brought up was having the specific college departments partner with ESL.

They don't have [inaudible]

They don't have a strong connection right now, and if the teachers can rely on an ESL program as a resource, that can definitely be beneficial and they can suggest different programs to the students, or develop another program with ESL to help these students along the way.

In addition to that, partnering with the tutoring department, we know that there are a lot of tutors for different subjects, and some of these tutors are international students; they're bilingual.

So maybe they can partner with a student who is having difficulty and be their mentor throughout the process.

Since it's already a set-up tutoring opportunity, it should be pretty simple to implement.

Another thing is, if possible, assign a class buddy.

If there's another student in the classroom that's from the same country and has less of a language barrier, they can partner with the student having issues and assist them throughout whether it be translating or just explaining things. If possible, if someone in the classroom is willing to do that, that could be a great resource as well.

Lastly, we thought it would be beneficial to create a small cultural immersion program maybe for students who are just coming to the United States, are coming into this college from another country, a short course where the students can learn about the culture and the way of life in America, just to help the transition be more fluid and to have them feel like they belong more here and they don't have some of the awkward cultural barriers as well.

[APPLAUSE]

Captain number 2 table.

So my name is Alex.

I'm a Communications Design major.

At first, I guess I'd just like to thank everybody who was responsible for making this event and everybody who's actually here.

So that being said,

let's start with number 1: What are the advantages and disadvantages of having students from diverse backgrounds in the same class.

So there are actually a lot of advantages.

So we'll start with the first one; it offers different perspectives.

So everybody, if they are in one group, they always have one perspective.

Once you have people from different groups,
you'll see the way they think and it's always a little bit different from you.

It could also get rid of certain stereotypes that
you may have because they can make certain things clear,
plus it really opens up your mind about different cultures.

The disadvantages are that they might not know
certain words from your language and you're going to have to really explain that to them.

They might not even tell you,
you can tell by their face,
so it's always helpful to explain it.

Plus if you're in a group with somebody from
a different culture and there's certain things that they don't understand,
that's also sometimes difficult,
but you can always work around that.

Number 2: If you are a native English speaker,
have you ever been in a situation where everyone
else spoke a language other than English.

So yeah, a few people did,
especially if you're in your dorm or something,
then you have some people who speak Chinese,
for example, you might think that they're saying something about you.

Probably, you guys have had that experience.

Me and my twin brother,
we actually do that sometimes, so it is true.

[LAUGHTER] Yeah, but maybe they are also just comfortable talking to each other that way, because you are from a different country so it's hard for you to speak English, or how to relate to anybody else in that culture.

Number 3: What are the biggest challenges if you're in an American classroom.

Actually, I'm going to skip that for a second.

Let's go to number 4: As an English speaker, how do you support another student whose first language is not English.

So first one, use correct terms.

It's a little difficult if you're in a class and you're saying a slang, and then you can't really explain it.

So in a class, you want to stay away from that, but then once you're in a social environment, then you really want to explain those slangs, the shortened words, and all that. All right.

So number 5: How do you think cultural differences affect the way you learn.

So once again, it creates different learning opportunities, and it's an opportunity for people to be interested in new cultures and languages.

So you might hear about a certain culture and you might be like, "Oh, wow. I really want to learn about this," then you could go to visit that country, so it creates that opportunity.

Number 6: How can teachers promote a greater cultural understanding in their classes.

So the first thing, you could ask everybody to introduce themselves, and then they could really have this opportunity to

talk about their culture and how it's different from the American culture.

Also, you could be a little bit more direct.

You could actually have a discussion about certain stereotypes.

I really like clear [inaudible] and everything.

Number 7: How can teachers prepare for
cultural and linguistic diversity in their classrooms?

Well, so I feel like teachers,

they should really study about the majority of the different cultures in their class.

There's a lot of people who are from China,

you really want to know about their culture so you could really relate to them.

Some other things, this is a good one,

[LAUGHTER] we want to give them

alternative media to watch so in case you didn't get something in class,

maybe there's something online that's in a different language,

you might really want to tell them about that.

So the last one,

number 8: What activities might the college implement to ensure that
students from all backgrounds are supported in their education.

One, you want to stress academic tutoring.

So a lot of people,

they might actually be too shy to go there,

they might not know exactly where it is,

so you always want to stress about that.

You want to make sure everybody knows that there is academic tutoring for English.

In addition, there was an international workshop,

I think it was for orientation.

So during that, everybody could really get to know each other and they could get their Facebooks, numbers.

After that, you could go to

certain groups where you could really connect with certain people.

Once you have a lot of people that you connect with, your confidence just goes up and you could talk to everybody else that way.

It was during the freshman orientation?

Yeah, I think it was.

Yeah, so that's it. Thank you.

Excellent. [APPLAUSE]

Thank you.

Sure. What about your table?

Yep. Come on, have it.

My name is [inaudible].

I'm an FBI major and I'm from Long Island so basically as native as it could be [LAUGHTER].

So, FIT. I don't know. I don't really know.

I mean like I know some about elsewhere but this is first time experience being in FIT.

So, I haven't really met many foreigners prior to coming here.

It's awesome. Our table as well had foreigners, people from all over just international so it

was great talking to them about what is like because it really opened my mind.

I didn't know a lot of these things to be honest.

[NOISE] So, for number one we came up with

advantages of bringing international students into the classroom.

We saw grouping people of

the same culture as an advantage and a disadvantage

because an advantage would be you can learn from them,

you can bounce ideas off each other and be like say you don't understand

something maybe they understand it more and it's same language.

So, it's an easy to understand for them but at the same time it's a disadvantage

because you're too much in

like your own the home place and now you're like going into a new country.

So you want to branch out and meet other people from other cultures.

[NOISE] Sorry.

Another advantage of that would be the term I

thought it was an advantage would be like in my country people start off,

"Oh in my country we do this."

I mean all the things that are different about your country and America.

So, I really like that idea of oh in my country we do this

and it really opened your mind because there's so many things that you just want to know.

How much you talk to a person who had actually

lived in that country you just want to know,

it's how I look at it.

Our group sharing experiences from

their own countries regarding classroom environment which

I found probably the most interesting would be

like Prof. [inaudible] shared when she came to America.

People were prejudice in kind of meeting foreigners sometimes,

felt like your accent or spelling things wrong and the differences.

Yeah, all those kind of things.

You've got to teach people instead of them they're like, "Oh why you doing that?"

And you got to teach them this is why I do this.

I thought that was interesting that people really

prejudice and also how it's different in Germany,

in the Ukraine that teachers are more strict and

they are more like work, work, work, work.

It's like you don't get that relationship with your teachers.

So, I just thought that was interesting because here

I just was you can be more comfortable with your teachers,

you know them as people not as just superior head.

For number four as a native English speaker,

how could you support another student whose first language is not English?

We talked about how you first the sub would be asked about their background,

introduce yourself and ask them about, where are you from?

What's it like in your country? What are your hobbies?

What are your values? Because values are very

important and they're very different country to country

even places close together or countries and states, even towns.

Values are so different and it's just important to ask and find out what offends

you or what makes your family happy and what's important.

So, I think it's important to find that out first and

then have the conversation go from there.

Then you can just study with them and explain terms to them like explain,
slang and all that.

Overall we just talked about being kind and patient is

the most important thing with people who are American or people who are foreign.

All you have to do is just be kind and be patient and it's not hard to do.

It's should be your first instinct just to understand other people.

What other people feel. In regards to teachers what should they do
to promote cultural awareness is research beforehand.

Maybe if you find out the different nationalities of the students in your classroom.

What you said beforehand,

what offends them or what's going on in

their country because maybe you can say something

wrong like we talked about a Syrian student,

there's a Syrian crisis going on and all that.

The teacher said something offensive and then that offends a student right away,
they get a bad impression of the teacher,

they don't like the class anymore and it's just politically

incorrect and you don't want to jump that line ever because it's just not.

Some things you just can't really say.

You have to remember to make the conversation very correct. Just very.

Sensitive.

Yeah. Sensitive and understanding and just
more broad not very opinionated, more factual based.

So, I think it's important for every teacher to do
just in case you have a foreign student who doesn't understand
and [inaudible] be offended.

Is just important because you never want to do that in classroom in my feel.

Just like in lessons,
lessons you can show movies from other countries.

When I always- When I saw like a foreign film,
I think those are great because they're focused on subjects.

So, we learned about the subject
but at the same time, they'll have their culture in the film.

So, it's like we learn about the culture and learn about the subject.

Yeah. That's [inaudible].

Thank you. [APPLAUSE] So, I think we have one more table correct?

Up front here. So come on up.

Hi, I'm Sue. I'm in FEM.

I'm also like Ellie from Italy and you wouldn't hear it.

So there were a couple of common threads in
all of our discussions and they were basically based
on being open to learning about new people and being willing to communicate,
being open to learning new things and adapting.

For what are the advantages and disadvantages.

It's you get to learn about so much more than what you're exposed

to whether it's about different architecture,
any culture or the design or the different ways of thinking because of
philosophy that also connects to when you're
teaching or learning you have to know the context to
[NOISE] the subject and we discussed our history and how a lot of Renaissance art
is based on the local stories
and whether someone's American
or someone from a different culture where they didn't really
learn you have to know the context to it to understand why people
would paint that or put a certain face of a leader in that or a patron.
As far as disadvantages,
the students with language barriers may be discouraged from
participating that's definitely cultural.
I also know that just not because of how the culture is,
that the professor sorry [NOISE] might be
seen as a figure on a pedestal
that you can't interact with and that's not necessarily the case at FIT.
There are some professors that want to be called by their first name and
the students should be told that and made to understand that,
not just told that. On the other hand.
That's okay. [LAUGHTER].
[NOISE] And on the other hand,
there should also be something done on the professor side.
Several students that are International had said

that they often get since the tutoring center.

When it's a question of just not understanding the words but not the concept.

Whereas, their level of intelligence is

questioned and that's not right on the professor's

especially those that come from industry and don't have

a pedagogic background to teach them a little bit more about that.

For the international students,

the biggest challenges in the American classroom

is their different ways of thinking, their different expectations.

Their comprehensions can be barriers and they do have a lot of misunderstandings.

One of the ways to mitigate that is to create force,

mixing of groups so that students from

different countries mix with people from Long Island and the greater metro area.

[LAUGHTER] [NOISE] Mix people

from different background be open and teach different contexts.

As far as ideas for the school could be a language exchange which I heard is happening.

Foreign language film night where you can have

like there's a large group of students from Korea,

there's a large group of students from China and

those group could vote on a film like their favorite cultural identity film.

A film that expresses their cultural identity and had it projected once a month

in the cafeteria and have them explain it.

Another thing would be a big little program if someone comes from

your culture not necessarily your same country

but if you have someone from Finland and you have someone from Sweden,
they're going to have a lot more in common.

Set them up with an upper classroom with someone who's new to help them
adapt or partner with someone from New York to have them acclimate to the social life.

One thing for this be someone who comes back from
a study abroad program so they can practice the language,
keep practicing the language and they can show the person who has just arrived.

This is how to get around FIT better,
this is what you can do in New York,
this is what's available to you.

This just continues onto strengthening the study of
foreign languages and cultures throughout the school.

Wonderful. [APPLAUSE]. It's very
interesting because I kept hearing a thread going through a lot of
the presentations about the idea of having a partner, a buddy system.

I really like that idea a lot.

I'm not in the classroom all the time.

So I don't know if we have that program but I found that very appealing.

So any comments, questions,
any guiding remarks from anyone here?

Yes, Robert.

I am- It spins off the buddy system that's why I'm bringing it up.

So, I just thought it would be awesome,
someday we could develop somehow with this group of people starting maybe.

I always feel bad for students who are here internationally,
and we run off to our holidays on Thanksgiving and Christmas and Easter,
and they don't travel home.

When you think about buddy system,
I think it'd be awesome if we create some kind of mechanism by which
students could share a holiday here in the States,
and it would be just fantastic.

Yes.

Because we have, again,
three big holidays typically.

Then also inside the buddy system,
about a block party.

Every year we have a block party on 27th Street.

I think it would be awesome if the block party change its theme a bit,
and did an international block party.

It's really a great event,
it usually takes place in early May,
but before finals, I guess [LAUGHTER].

Bless her up, but it'd be if it was internationally.

Yes, fine you wanted a sale.

I'll let you know.

Okay, got ahead.

A lot of great ideas draft from around and [inaudible].

I do have a lot of contact with the international students,

a few different programs going on.

So, if you do want to find out what we have let me know.

But I think a lot of new ideas here,

I think Bob and I had you suggest

that idea before about having

a buddy system for holidays and I think that would be wonderful.

We are starting with a language exchange.

If it's okay with Elaine and Celia,

I will get the email addresses of everybody here,

where we're inviting people who want to

practice their foreign language with a native speaker.

So, if you're learning French,

you can practice with somebody who speaks French

fluently and then you will be able to speak with somebody.

The idea is to have our partner speak

one language for half an hour and then you switch to the other language,

and so Japanese, Chinese.

Great idea. I need some American studying Korean,

but certainly Korean speaking students are

titled by- and will be paired with an American.

So, I will send you an email. We are going to do our next one on

November 19th and I hope this is something that's going to grow.

I think when I did it came up a lot with mixing of groups,

and I think the responsibility is on everybody.

I think it's not just the second language learners,
but I think the American and the native speakers tend to stay grouped and not be
so open to necessarily having a conversation with the non-native speakers of English.
I think some of the Americans get very
impatient and I think it's just in this global world.
I think people need to become good in
active listening because for the rest of your lives you are going to be
dealing with English that are different than your own English in any industry you enter.
It's really important to just be open to that and accept that just practice with it,
because I think sometimes when people hear an accent,
they stop listening or they start making assumptions.
So, we all have to train yourself to be more patient and less judgmental.
I think the Americans who spent time being the linguistic minority know that,
anybody who's lived abroad or studied a foreign language seriously.
American, in our case,
and she's among people who speak a different language.
She's always concerned they are talking about her [LAUGHTER].
I think that came out for the [inaudible].
So, I think if you have that kind of empathy,
try to take it to the next step to get towards being open to those who
are around you who [inaudible].
Thank you. [LAUGHTER] [APPLAUSE].
Is any one else- yes.
I forgot to talk about this before.

I went to a school before I went to this one and they had
a really fabulous multicultural club.

Fran saying we do a diversity club but it's
not very focused on what kind of diversity it is.

What was really wonderful about their multicultural club at my old school was that it
was a really nice place for people to go and not be stuck in their little place.

While there are maybe a large amount of Korean students who are talking to each other,
we may not have the Pakistani student per the regular- one Pakistani student,
or even just very small groups of students.

They can all come together and talk and say,
you know, this is what I find amusing about your culture.

So, it would be a huge group of people,
we have Middle-Eastern people,
we have Asian people,
Hispanic, Latino, of course,
the people who were living in America.

What was really cool about it was aside from getting
together and having a small group where they can hang out,
it was often the performance of the inner circumference.

Wow.

So, they're also helping to outreach to the rest of the community,
of the school by putting up performances like that.

A group of students that were

Chinese dancers and so they came and they said this is why we do it,

this is how we do it. Here's our show.

Yes. [LAUGHTER]

We had African dancers.

A lot of it was dance because it dance is such a big part of culture,
but we had other stuff too.

It was really enlightening to see stuff

like that and I would love to see MIT have something similar.

Well, as you were talking,

I was thinking that MIT has a diversity council that funds really innovative projects,
and some of the initiatives come from students.

Might be something you want to think about with that.

Yes. Ryan.

Well, actually I was just going to add to that really quick.

I'm part of a group that's working on a project right now.

It's called the Cultural Fellows Program.

It's in its beginning stages so we are

just sort laying in and thinking about the mission.

We're thinking about the purpose.

But, essentially what it's going to be is a program for international students.

They have on-campus jobs where they can be a cultural developer,
where part of this will be at a mentoring capacity.

But also not just for incoming international students,

but students returning home from study

abroad and they want to be reconnected to the culture,

or linguistic pairings for students who want to work on language together.

Also, though eventually we're hoping that these students will be able to even assist in classrooms.

So, if you want to bring a student in to talk about cultural experiences from their country or from traditional customs, they can do that.

So, we'll be working with a lot of different people and guests to accomplish this.

Of course, the language has changed and if a multicultural group gets developed, it would definitely be a place that we go to you because one of the things we've considered is actually forming it into a club as well.

So, you'd have a group of veteran officials sort of working as a cultural fellow.

But then also a group of students involved in a club.

That's all great, and I think that it's wonderful that we're talking about all of these issues, these topics.

It's something that we would be wanting to do a lot, spent a lot of time thinking carefully about cultural diversity, linguistic diversity and what that means, and how do we support students across the board.

Sarah brought it up before.

It's not just thinking about it in terms of the international scope of brains.

Also, here in America thinking about the different language practices that people bring to the Italians.

So, if you come from a different part of the country, then there's a different accent and how do we perceive accent in the spectrum.

So, it's wonderful that you have come up with

so many smart and thoughtful comments

on all of these things, very wise.

Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE].

So, any final comments?

Anyone. Yes. Here we go.

[LAUGHTER]

Mine is very simple so it can be final if you like [LAUGHTER].

I found that food, as we all know,

is a very good tool for cultural exchange.

That's why we're here at lunch

and thank you for serving this wonderful American lunch.

[LAUGHTER].

But we've been discussing with Celia some other food possibilities.

We've been discussing cultural lunch or Halau lunch

or some other possibilities we could ingest the difference.

[APPLAUSE]

I feel like maybe Gena Moto,

didn't she have a project that was-

Well, Charlotte and I were part of it.

The Food- the Heritage Food Project.

I do remember that. [OVERLAPPING] Yes.

That was really an interesting project.

It was. It was great.

And I thank you all very much for coming today.

Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]