

DEI Terms & Concepts

Diversity means the presence of difference, or variety, within our groups. We each have different characteristics, preferences, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, labels, cultures, and beliefs. In the SCA, we do not allow something as organic as variety to hinder the very organization we love and support.

In the context of the SCA, diversity refers to a diversity of identities that have received (and still receive) systematic discriminatory treatment, and create advantages and barriers to opportunity and resources (Bolger, 2018).

Equity means equal access. When people come together in groups, some have advantages while others have disadvantages. In context of this office, equity means a process to ensure that everyone has equal access to the same opportunities in the SCA. It also means being treated with the same courtesy, respect, and dignity as everyone else, no matter how you are different.

Equity recognizes that advantages and barriers exist, and that as a result, we all don't all start from the same place. Equity as a process begins by acknowledging that unequal starting place and continuing to correct and address the imbalance (Bolger, 2018).

Inclusion means being welcomed and truly valued for what you contribute. It means that no matter your race, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or able-ness, you are accepted. Verna Myers explains, "Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance." This office will be using the framework of Inclusive Excellence.

In the wise words of longtime DEI educator Verna Myers: "Diversity is being asked to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance." You can have a diverse organization, but that doesn't mean that everyone feels welcome or is valued, given opportunities to grow, or developed by a mentor (Bolger, 2018).

Focusing on inclusion simply acknowledges that our members are human beings whose varied personal traits influence their needs and behaviors (Gaudio, 2018). By creating an inclusive SCA, we ensure that everyone is given the best opportunity to succeed.

What does Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion mean for members of the SCA?

First, that we are aware of issues going on in the world we live in and we know that our organization is not insulated from the impacts of implicit bias.

Second, that to be successful we must welcome and value new and existing members who are different from 90% of our populace.

Third, that discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying, and hate speech will not be tolerated in our Society.

Lastly, that we take action. We value chivalry and live by those tenets we claim to hold as ideal. When a participant violates the code of conduct we require, we let them know so they can adjust their behavior. The phrase, "if you see something, say something" can be applied here.

Our job as members isn't to judge other members but to be clear on what actions are acceptable. You can simply let a member know that, "we don't treat people that way in the SCA", or "that violates our core values", or "that action/statement isn't acceptable". If you have tried that without result, or feel uncomfortable doing so, you can report any incident to your local Seneschal who will report to your Kingdom Seneschal.

Use the DEI resources to educate yourself on bias, cultural intelligence, and inclusive excellence. Understand that bias exists and it doesn't make one a bad person; it is simply something to be aware of and to challenge so that you don't act on bias, mistreat any member of the SCA, or violate our laws or policies.

If you believe you have been discriminated against, sexually harassed, bullied, or subjected to hate speech, there is help and the first step is to tell us about it. Contact a seneschal, the President of the SCA, or your Kingdom's Board Ombudsman. You also "cc" (equity@sca.org) on your correspondence, if you like.

Inclusive Excellence

Inclusive Excellence (IE) is the recognition that the success of the SCA is dependent on how well it values, engages and includes the rich diversity in membership. It is an approach that requires awareness, education, and commitment.

Inclusive Excellence in the SCA requires the DEI Office to ask Kingdoms whether underrepresented members are also underserved. A goal of IE is to ensure that all members are experiencing an inclusive and equitable SCA (AACU, 2017).

Inclusive Excellence goes beyond accepting differences; our goal is to actively cultivate an organizational environment where members of every background and experience can thrive. At minimum, this means respecting all regardless of race, ethnicity, age, class, gender, sexual orientation, physical abilities/qualities, religion, nationality, or any other difference.

Bias

Bias is a rigid, positive or negative, conscious or unconscious belief about the nature, character, and abilities of an individual based on the group to which the person belongs. We want an inclusive SCA where everyone feels welcome and respected, and where it is obvious that comments, jokes, and behaviors which are disrespectful to any group — represented or underrepresented — cannot be tolerated. And it's everyone's job to do it (Thiederman, 2013).

Why does bias exist? At any given moment, our brains are receiving 11 million pieces of information. We can only consciously process about 40 of those pieces. To process the remaining 10,999,960 we rely on our subconscious, which helps us filter information by taking mental shortcuts. Unconscious bias refers to the information, attitudes, and stereotypes that inform our subconscious information-processing and dictate the process by which we take these mental shortcuts. While unconscious information processing is a critical part of human functioning, the shortcuts we take, and the bias that informs those shortcuts, often introduce errors into our decision-making (Paradigm, 2018).

Unconscious bias can lead to many types of undesirable outcomes; in organizations, it can lead to differences in the way we attract, hire, develop, and retain people from underrepresented groups. Even when these differences are subtle — and sometimes especially so — they present significant barriers to cultivating a diverse, inclusive organization. Awareness of unconscious bias and active engagement in efforts to reduce bias should be a core component of any company's diversity and inclusion strategy. The SCA is challenging bias by asking that we all become aware of them. As we become aware of our biases, we will be more capable of controlling the misjudgments and sometimes disrespectful behaviors they create (Paradigm, 2018).

Chivalry & DEI

(adapted from a lecture by LaToya Johnson-Holley)

The modern word that best describes the true concept of chivalry is RESPECT. When respect is aligned with chivalry, we can apply this concept to our understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Duty and honor were the characteristics expected of knights during our period of study in Europe. Knights were required to adhere to a code of ethics that valued strong morals, courage in battle, and fealty to their nobles. An example of a Code of Chivalry is seen in the 11th-century chanson "The Song of Roland". This epic

poem describes 8th-century knights and the battles they fought for Emperor Charlemagne. The code has since been described as Charlemagne's Code of Chivalry.

A few tenets of the code are:

- To protect the weak and defenseless
- To refrain from the wanton giving of offence
- To eschew unfairness, meanness and deceit
- To fight for the welfare of all
- To respect the honor of women

The Chivalric movement arose during the Middle Ages to promote ethical behavior. As written, the code of chivalry is a catalyst for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Chivalry precludes its adherents from harming others in word or deed, especially those who are members of marginalized groups. By adopting the principles of chivalry in our interpersonal interactions, we would foster an environment of mutual respect and honor in the SCA. As members of a Society founded on chivalric values we should engage in civility and kindness.

Essentials of DEI for SCA Members

"Respect your fellow human beings, treat them fairly, disagree with them honestly, enjoy their friendship, explore your thoughts about one another candidly, work together for a common goal and help one another achieve it." — Bill Bradley

We cannot get the change we desire without changing. Here are tips for all of us to help achieve the change we desire for the SCA.

1. Remember that an inclusive SCA is key to a successful SCA. We want our organization to be around for the next 50 years.
2. Treat people as individuals, not as members of groups.
3. Demonstrate that diversity and inclusion are about valuing all members regardless of individual differences.
4. Acknowledge and engage members of all backgrounds and groups, engage with them.
5. Examine your biases; don't allow them to influence your behavior or decisions.
6. Emphasize that EVERY group has responsibility for overcoming their biases.
7. Do not tolerate discriminatory or offensive words or behaviors in the SCA.
8. Admit and apologize if you have said or done something hurtful to another person. You don't get to determine if someone else was hurt. It's on your honor to acknowledge the blow.
9. Listen to everyone with respect and engagement. Keep an open mind. Be empathetic.
10. Spend time with people of diverse backgrounds.
11. Identify what you have in common with those who are different than you.
12. Speak honestly about the benefits of diversity, inclusion, and bias reduction.
13. Remember that inclusion in the SCA isn't just inviting people to participate, it's about retaining them as members.
14. Encourage open and respectful dialogue about diversity.
15. Recognize that inclusion is an ongoing process - not a one time initiative.
16. Mentor and encourage those who are committed to inclusion.
17. Embrace the diversity around you and remember that making inclusion an SCA reality is everyone's responsibility.