



# WILLIAM & MARY

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

## Inclusive Leader Insights

### 'Tis the Season to be Inclusive

Fall brings cooler temperatures and vibrant colors. It also brings celebrations that might make some persons feel excluded. We want to send a reminder to have an inclusive mindset as we enter into the upcoming holiday season.

It is obvious through television and social media advertisements that certain holidays appear to be favored over others. However, there are many different holidays and celebrations in the world. The ones that your office/department/division recognize and celebrate should be driven by the faculty and other employees in your respective areas.

You cannot assume the value that a person places on cultural or faith-based holidays and traditions. There are many individuals with very complicated relationships with faith and culture. This is one of many reasons for communicating with your employees. Knowing what holidays and traditions are important is necessary in allowing the faculty and staff to be their full and authentic selves within the W&M Community.

#### Action Items

Send out an optional questionnaire to employees about holiday celebrations and how they celebrate them.

If you plan to decorate your offices, do so with an inclusive mindset. This is even more important with offices that are public facing. Focus on keeping decorations non-denominational. For instance, red, black and green are associated with Kwanzaa, blue and white for Hanukkah, and red and green for Christmas. If you attempt to include all religions, consider having information available to explain the faith-based tradition to others. Offices should also think inclusively about music, door decorations and screen savers in public areas.

Holiday gatherings should also be planned with an inclusive mindset. First and foremost, make it an optional event. There are times when events are considered optional, but the employee's perception is that it is not. It is important to recognize that this time of year may be challenging for persons who may be grieving a loved one, depressed or unsatisfied with their lives. In preparing for the event, provide varied food options that meet kosher, halal, and vegetarian dietary needs. Lastly, if you have a large group, offer the opportunity for anonymous feedback after the gathering.

#### After The Holidays

Although this holiday season is a reminder to celebrate the rich diversity within the W&M community's faith-based and cultural traditions, it is important to acknowledge and celebrate throughout the year. Doing so will go a long way in helping the sense of belonging that faculty and staff have within your units.

For more information, please contact [wmdiversity@wm.edu](mailto:wmdiversity@wm.edu).