

# Planning Based on Our Values: A Student Organization Guide to Inclusion & Respect

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*"The College of William & Mary strives to be a place where people of all backgrounds feel at home, where diversity is actively embraced, and where each individual takes responsibility for upholding the dignity of all members of the community."*

W&M Statement on Diversity

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## Are you upholding your responsibility to our community?

### **IF YOU ARE:**

- Planning an event
- Choosing a party theme
- Encouraging people to wear costumes
- Communicating on behalf of or to members an organization

### **ASK:**

Does this idea, activity, theme, or communication:

- Align with our organizational values and the values of the W&M community?
- Rely on or encourage stereotypes of a group of people?
- Degrade or mock other people? Is it disrespectful to other people?
- Encourage offensive dress, decorations, or language?
- Use language that is disrespectful, offensive, mocking or vulgar?
- Encourage people to take on (appropriate) traditions or experiences of others that are actually outside their own experience?
- Disrespect historical or current events that have involved tragedy or harm to people?
- Make fun of a particular culture or group of people? Even if it does not, will people apply it in a way that does?
- Disguise our language or use euphemisms in order to hide or mask the fact that we are actually doing something that we know violates these guidelines and is disrespectful?

### **CHECK:**

- If we use our organizational purpose or values as a set of criteria – a checklist – would this idea, activity, theme or communication match what we say we are about?
- If you are uncertain or members disagree about whether something is disrespectful or could send mixed messages, check with someone outside your group who can provide a different perspective.

### **COMMUNICATE PRO-ACTIVELY:**

- Let people know in advance that any costumes, actions, or communications that violate these standards aren't welcome.

### **SPEAK UP:**

- When you see something that is disrespectful – or even questionable -- say something.
- When someone raises a concern, listen and reconsider your plan.
- Challenge your peers if they try to dismiss or downplay any concerns.
- If your organization is the host and people attend in offensive costumes, say something.

### **For More Information, Contact:**

- Center for Student Diversity, Campus Center 159, [studentdiversity@email.wm.edu](mailto:studentdiversity@email.wm.edu), 757-221-2300
- Student Leadership Development, Campus Center 203, [leadership@wm.edu](mailto:leadership@wm.edu), 757-221-3300