

An update on our commitment to the Black Community and anti-racism >> (

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National Association of Colleges and Employers

QUESTIONS STUDENTS MAY ASK TO ASSESS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S COMMITMENT TO DEI

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[Spotlight for Recruiting Professionals \(/tag/spotlight/\)](#)

Students engaged in racial justice and social impact may ask URR professionals specific questions about their organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and the actions it has taken that support this commitment.

This focus on DEI ties into "conscious job seeking," whereby students change their mindset from just getting a job to actually seeking an opportunity that aligns with their "big picture," according to Chelsea C. Williams, founder and CEO of College Code (<http://www.mycollegecode.com/>).

"Conscious job seeking is searching for employment or contractor opportunities that align with your vision, mission, values, and goals," Williams explains.

Although DEI is not an important value for every student, for those who believe it matters, it is important to ensure that they are working within a company whose values match theirs. Williams says that a company that truly values DEI:

- Has made commitments to foster a safe and healthy work environment;
- Is taking actionable steps to improve representation across all levels and titles; <https://www.nacweb.org/about-us/update-on-naces-commitments-to-the-black-community-and-anti-racism/>;
- Holds leaders, managers, and employees accountable for actions and behaviors, and
- Has sought to center equity through all aspects of the employee process —recruitment, training and development, promotions, pay, benefits, and more.

Students can assess an organization's commitment to DEI, in part, by asking URR professionals questions that can help students to differentiate between organizations that have taken performative steps in this area and others that are truly committed to advancing DEI and have made progress.

"Asking questions will often provide students with an understanding of where the company is in their DEI journey," Williams notes.

"If URR professionals are not prepared to answer DEI and broader culture questions, they are missing a huge opportunity. Just this year alone, my team and I have provided career coaching and strategy to more than 100 students and professionals across the United States. In a vast majority of the coaching sessions, DEI and/or social impact has come up as an important assessment point for job seekers. As a best practice, URR professionals should be integrating DEI into their employer branding strategy."

Williams offers a list of thoughtful questions that students might ask recruiters during interviews or other interactions to assess their organizations' DEI priority and commitment:

- How does your organization define diversity? What lenses of diversity has your organization made a direct commitment toward?
- Does your organization have a chief diversity officer (CDO) or a designated leader to drive DEI and engage internal and external stakeholders?
- What social causes does your organization support?
- Does your organization actively support diverse suppliers, contractors, and small businesses?
- Has your organization made any formal commitments in support of racial equity?
- How does your organization center diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging?
- Does your organization offer any formal employee training around biases, anti-racism, or general DEI?
- How has your organization prioritized executive accountability toward DEI advancement?
- Does your organization have any affinity groups or committees to support diverse

populations? If so, how do these groups contribute to the culture of the organization?

- **Does your organization complete annual compensation equity analysis?** [An update on our commitment to the Black Community and anti-racism >> \(https://www.nacweb.org/about-us/commitment-to-the-black-community-and-anti-racism/ \)](https://www.nacweb.org/about-us/commitment-to-the-black-community-and-anti-racism)
- **What resources has your organization provided to its employees in support of COVID-19 and racial injustices?**

The answers students receive could help them make a decision about which employers to pursue employment with and those with which, perhaps, to end the recruiting process because their values do not align.

“Students are looking for authenticity and progress from employers,” Williams explains.

“An organization may not check off all their boxes around DEI, but maybe it has made the commitment to do and be better. That's wonderful!”

However, there are missteps for URR professionals to avoid when asked questions around DEI efforts and achievements.

“The major pitfalls are making excuses or not answering the question at all,” Williams says.

“Even if [the URR professional] is unsure of how to respond, they should get the student's contact details and follow up. I can't stress how vitally important this is.”