Equity and Education Committee Meeting Norms

## General Meeting Norms

Some norms refer to processes, preparation and communication practices which can apply to any meeting.

### Process Norms:

* We will respect everyone’s time by starting and ending on time.
* Only one conversation at one time. Refrain from side-talk.
* Capture off topic items in a ‘parking lot’ and agree to discuss them later at a designated time.
* Be mindfully present with the people you are meeting with.
* Everyone is responsible for helping to stay on topic. Speak up if you feel like we’re getting off track and need to move an issue to the “parking lot.”
* Identify and challenge past assumptions and sacred cows.
* Develop respect and an ability to listen and consider outlying opinions or ideas
* Address conflict head on.
* Look ahead to positive action, not back on shoulda, woulda, coulda.
* Aim for GETGO – good enough to go, not perfection.
* Everyone is responsible for upholding the norms. Acknowledge if you notice we are not doing so.

### Preparation Norms:

* Be prepared and come ready to engage. Read the agenda and do any [prework](http://www.meeteor.com/blog/pre-work/) ahead of time.
* Come empowered to make commitments for your area or function.
* Put aside other topics and work so you are ready to focus on the discussion at hand.
* Meeting material and agenda should be sent 72 hours before a meeting.

### Communication Norms:

* Ask questions for clarification to help avoid making assumptions.
* Make sure everyone’s voice is heard.
* Balance your participation – speak and listen.
* Listen actively to teammates without interrupting.
* Clarify when you are advocating vs offering an idea.
* Say it now, in the room. Avoid waiting till later to raise an issue.
* All voices count. All opinions are valid, but offer reasoning behind your thinking.
* Be honest – speak your truth as you see it. Use “I” phrases, and avoid assuming to speak on behalf of others
* It’s OK to reflect and change your mind

**Norms for Specific Types of Meeting Conversation**

There are many types of conversations that happen during a meeting. Every conversation will benefit from selecting norms that specifically relate to that type of discussion.

**Brainstorming Norms**

* All ideas are good ideas.
* Build on the ideas of others. Use “Yes, and…”; avoid “No, but…”
* [Defer judgment](https://openideo.com/blog/seven-tips-on-better-brainstorming) of ideas during brainstorming.

**Staff Meeting / Check-in Norms**

* Be concise and to the point.
* Be open to feedback.
* Share only new information, not a repeat of old information.
* Be sure your information is accurate.
* Acknowledge when you don’t have an answer but will provide it after the meeting.
* Share celebrations and challenges alike.

**Decision-making Norms**

* We will use majority rule as our decision-making process.
* Each person is responsible for ensuring they understand the options and arguments before making the decision.
* Be willing to support a team consensus even if you initially do not agree with it.
* Do not push your ideas on the team after a decision has been made.
* Acknowledge when you are playing “devil’s advocate” to help test a decision or idea.
* Separate your own personal feelings from what’s best for the team / organization.

**Norms for Virtual Meetings**

Virtual teams have additional layers of complexity because everyone is not in the same room. Consider using norms that address the common behavioral challenges with virtual meetings.

* [Turn on your video](https://hbr.org/2015/03/how-to-run-a-great-virtual-meeting) unless impossible. Body language is important for effective communication.
* Do not multi-task (do other work) during the meeting.
* Use the mute button at your site to prevent the transmission of background noise.