



EP.6: ANNA TSOY

We hear from Anna Tsoy, a biology student from Kazakhstan, about what it's like to be from a country that people know little about. She shares insights into why international students hesitate to ask questions and how experiences of racism have sometimes made her feel powerless. Anna encourages us all to keep pursuing inclusion with humility.

FAST FACTS

- Kazakhstan has a population of 19 million, is the size of Western Europe, and gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Their education system promotes Kazakh-Russian bilingualism.
- Mental wellness is a taboo topic for many international students. They may disclose to peers rather than faculty. See this [resource guide](#) that provides empathetic and practical strategies for peers responding to disclosures.

ANNA'S ADVICE TO FACULTY

Encourage students to ask questions multiple times in multiple ways

It took Anna two semesters to internalize the idea that questions signalled engagement and interest instead of deficit or disrespect. Students may need many reminders as well as explicit guidance for how and when to ask questions appropriately. [This guide](#), which could be used as a discussion tool in class, addresses some fears, hows, and whys of asking questions.

Recognize and interrupt bias in discussions and meetings

Anna experienced "idea stealing" in meetings where a member of the White majority was credited for her ideas. Visit [Bias Interrupters](#) to explore a list of ways that bias can surface in meetings and download mitigation tools that could be used in teams, group work, or class discussions.

What is Ekta?

Ekta, pronounced "ay-k-ta," is a Sanskrit word meaning **unity, togetherness, and solidarity**. The Ekta podcast features student stories that highlight what is needed to foster ekta at UFV.

Spotlight on

Russian
Victoria said this to Anna for her job hunt.

Удачи

Pronounced "udachi"

Meaning "Good luck"

Acknowledgments

A special thank you to Sundeep Hans for her support. UFV is situated on the territory of the Halq'eméylem speaking Stó:lō peoples.

Music by Saint Soldier.

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