Executive Summary

SUSS Research Forum

Examining the effectiveness of diversity education in the university context

The SUSS Research Forum held on 30 April 2026, titled "Examining the Effectiveness of Diversity Education in the University Context", featured a presentation by Dr. Tania Nagpaul and was moderated by Dr. Wang Jiunwen. The session explored the role of diversity education in equipping young adults with competencies to thrive in increasingly diverse social and professional environments.

Dr. Nagpaul's research examined two key questions: (1) how effective a diversity course is in shifting students' attitudes and behaviours, and (2) which pedagogical elements are critical in achieving these outcomes. The course adopted a combination of three approaches: a liberal approach focusing on identity reflection and pluralism; a critical approach addressing power, privilege, and equity; and an experiential learning approach involving interactive activities, speaker engagements, and reflective discussions.

The first study involved a 12-week curriculum delivered across six units to 64 undergraduate students. Outcomes were measured quantitatively across attitudes (Munroe Multicultural Attitude Scale Questionnaire, MASQUE), thinking (Situational Judgement Task; Chang et al., 2019), and behavioural intentions (advocacy). Qualitative data were collected through students' reflections on actions they would start, stop, and continue in relation to diversity and inclusion. Findings indicated statistically significant improvements in multicultural attitudes, greater bias-interrupting decision-making, and increased advocacy for gender inclusiveness. Qualitative responses further suggested greater willingness to engage across differences, challenge assumptions, and address discrimination and microaggressions.

Speaker

Dr. Tania Nagpaul
(Senior Lecturer, Human Resource Management Programme - S R Nathan School of Human Development)

Moderator

Dr. Wang Jiunwen
(Associate Professor, Human Resource Management Programme - S R Nathan School of Human Development)

Reported by

Sim Hui Wen, Vera

Ivy Li Yingying

Date

14th May 2026

Executive Summary

SUSS Research Forum

Examining the effectiveness of diversity education in the university context

The second study compared 48 participants enrolled in a diversity course with 52 participants from a statistics course. Quantitative measures included MASQUE, the Attitudes Toward Homosexuality Scale (AHS), the Gender-Role Egalitarian Attitudes Scale (GREAT), situational judgement tasks, and advocacy intentions. Qualitative data were gathered through open-ended questions on course effectiveness and perceived gaps. Results showed statistically significant improvements in inclusive and gender-egalitarian attitudes among diversity course participants, although no significant differences were observed in situational judgement tasks. Students reported increased awareness of privilege, enhanced empathy, and deeper understanding of diversity-related issues.

Dr. Nagpaul also highlighted the importance of creating safe learning environments to support students' psychological well-being when engaging with sensitive topics. Reflection-based pedagogy was noted to be particularly effective in connecting course content to students' lived experiences and preparing them for diverse workplace contexts.

In concluding, Dr. Nagpaul emphasised that diversity education should be approached as a set of practical skills rather than solely as personal values, given its relevance in navigating multigenerational teams and addressing bias in professional settings.

The forum concluded with an engaging discussion among attendees, who shared experiences and perspectives on facilitating diversity education. There was broad agreement on the importance of creating safe spaces for dialogue, alongside recognition of broader challenges such as balancing moral and business considerations in institutional decision-making. Dr. Nagpaul underscored that "when the intention is right, solutions can be found."

Overall, the discussion reinforced the view that effective diversity education requires intentional design, psychological safety, and scalable approaches for broader institutional impact.

Speaker

Dr. Tania Nagpaul
(Senior Lecturer, Human Resource Management Programme - S R Nathan School of Human Development)

Moderator

Dr. Wang Jiunwen
(Associate Professor, Human Resource Management Programme - S R Nathan School of Human Development)

Reported by

Sim Hui Wen, Vera

Ivy Li Yingying

Date

14th May 2026