What can an organization do to foster cohesion in its diverse membership? How can individuals themselves help build a sense of community in an organization?

The seminar presentation will address these questions from a communication perspective articulated in an interdisciplinary theory (Kim, 2005). The theory highlights the centrality of the everyday communication experience between and among individuals of dissimilar ethnic (including cultural, racial, and national) backgrounds in shaping the nature of a multiethnic organization.

Based on this theory, I will examine various associative and dissociative ways in which ethnically dissimilar individuals communicate, as well as a number of situational and environmental factors that influence, and are influenced by, individual behaviors. Practical insights will be derived emphasizing the significant role that each person and the organization as a whole can play in shaping the quality of an individual’s relationship to the organization and, ultimately, the efficacy of diversity itself.

The presentation will end with a description of an ideal organization, in which diversity is no longer a source of excessive identity claims, persons of all ethnic backgrounds are able to strive in concert for excellence, and individual differences can be, indeed, a source of delight and creativity.
