Pushing recent DEIA discourse forward, this interactive panel centers equity in higher education. With their lived experiences as individuals with marginalized identities, navigating academia and the broader backlash against creating a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just society is at the center of teaching and learning. Panelists discuss the inertia of the status quo and engage in a deliberative discussion with attendees. Modeling skills of reflexivity and deliberation, panelists will consider how to support students, practitioners and scholars as they grapple with the reality of systems of power and resulting inequalities. In addition, the panelists highlight perceptions of reality - at the local, state, and national levels - whereby discourse has impacted their scholarship, research identity, and overall experiences.