**Ethics Case Study**

**Instructions:** Read the case study and share responses to the discussion questions.

**Pursuit of the Office**

**Note:** *The names of people, organization and states have been either omitted or changed to conceal the identity of the parties involved in the actual event on which this case study is based*.

"I never imagined that reaching my goal would lead to such an unfair situation. I have worked so hard for several years to get here, only to find out what people *really* think of me," said Juan Manuel Jiminez.

Juan had finally reached his goal to become an officer in a national youth organization. He had been preparing to compete for national office since he set the goal four years earlier. His preparations included studying 12 hours each week, giving speeches to youth, participating in mock interviews with business people, and moving from his home in Puerto Rico to Missouri to learn English. He left his mother and siblings behind in Puerto Rico and lived with a family he had met through the organization. He spent his first year out of high school in Missouri. He intensified his studies for national officer interviews and met several challenges in America as he put Spanish aside to learn the new language.

At the end of the year with his new family in Missouri, the time for national officer interviews arrived. He traveled to Chicago and met the 38 other candidates competing for officer positions. Only five could be selected. The selection process consisted of several interviews, speeches, and other social functions at which a committee of student peers would be evaluating the candidates. The candidates were all from different states in America.

Juan had faced prejudice several times while living in the States. He heard people make snide remarks about his color while he was shopping in stores. Even after facing these situations, he never imagined he would be treated with disrespect within the very organization in which he felt like he belonged. After he was chosen as one of the five national officers, ten state staff people from different states were standing together talking about the new officers. One of the state staff people made the remark, "He just got elected because he is almost black, and the organization will chose diversity over quality right now anyway. What a loss."

Juan did not hear the comment, but a national staff person did overhear it. The national staff person could not believe what the state staff person said, and as much as he wanted to ignore the statement, he knew that Juan would be visiting that state and working with that state staff person.

The national staff person now had to deal with the situation. He worked with Juan on a daily basis helping him train to be the best national officer possible. He knew that something must be done, but he could not even sleep at night because he was so worried about how to do the right thing in this situation. Juan had heard about the comment from another person, but the national staff person had not yet mentioned it to him.

**Discussion Questions:**

* What should the national staff person do?
* If Juan considers speaking to the state staff person, what advice would you give him?
* How might this situation effect how Juan is received when he travels to the state staff person’s state and works with state staff there?
* If you were Juan, and the national staff person told you what he had heard, what would you do?
* What action might the organization take to keep situations like this from occurring in the future?
* What can Juan do to prepare for the possibility that this could happen again in the future?
* How can state and national staff work to develop an understanding and appreciation for diversity in the organization?
* Have you ever faced a similar situation where someone said something that was unfair or prejudiced? If so, what was that situation, and what did you do?