Creating an Inclusive Campus Environment

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“YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE COME TO COLLEGE FROM WIDELY DIVERGENT BACKGROUNDS AND WITH VERY DIFFERENT LIFE HISTORIES . . . [AND] BRING TO THEIR HIGHER EDUCATION A GREAT DEAL OF BAGGAGE FROM THEIR SHORT PASTS.”

HELEN LEFKOWITZ HOROWITZ
Inclusion: What Is It?

- Organizational strategies and practices that promote meaningful social and academic interactions among persons and groups who differ in their experiences, their views, and their traits.

- Inclusion practices entail *continuously creating a community involved in coproducing processes, policies, and programs for defining and addressing public issues.*
Participation:

- Participation practices entail *efforts to increase public input oriented primarily to the content of programs and policies*
DIVERSITY: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

• Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ

• A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender — the groups that most often come to mind when the term “diversity” is used.

• It encompasses age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.
Understanding Diversity In Higher Education (HE)

- Students’ pre-college experiences MATTER
- Students’ readiness to engage with DIVERSITY in college
- High school-college transition
- Social identities (sense of self, other, greater society)
- High school curriculum (Governmental Vs International)
- Emotional intelligence diversity (EID)
- No such thing as blank slate
Creating “Communities Of Participation”

- Organizing highly participatory processes encompass inviting many people to participate
- Making the process broadly accessible to and representative of the public at large
- Collecting community input and using it to influence policy decisions
- Enhancing *participatory* practices enriches the input received
- Enhancing *inclusive* practices builds the capacity of the community to implement the decisions and tackle related issues
Public Engagement: Inclusion, Diversity and Participation

- The distinction between participation and inclusion as a way of focusing attention differently on diversity.
- Diversity is enhanced by the expansion from a “discrimination-and-fairness” to an “integration-and-learning” paradigm.
- Participation and inclusion are different and complementary ways of engaging diverse populations.
Students, Diversity And Transition To College

• Adjustment to a new academic environment
• Adjustment to a new social and cultural context.
• Sense of belonging
  • Part of the campus community
  • Member of the campus community
  • Perceived peer support
• Academic success
Precollege Experience And Student Success On Campus

- Precollege background and interaction with diversity (homogeneous or diverse)
- Quality of interactions and intergroup anxiety
- Accentuation theory
- Intergroup relations programs and development of common goals
Higher Education And Students With Disabilities

• Internationally, the number of students with disabilities joining higher education is increasing

• Research shows that about 8-10% of he students have disabilities with learning difficulties as the most common

• According to the national center for education statistics (2002), 9% of USA Undergraduates surveyed in 1999-2000 reported having a disability.

• So, what does that mean for Higher Education, students and faculty?!
Examples Of Disabilities

• Physical (affecting the body)
• Psychiatric (affecting the mind)
• Sensory (affecting seeing or hearing)
• Cognitive (affecting learning and understanding)
Catering For Students With Disabilities

- Higher Education institutions should be prepared, ready and equipped to receive these students within its facilities.
- Existence of a disability statement, modification of application/registration procedures are necessary.
- Re-conceptualizing teaching and learning in the context of differentiation.
- Having students services center and disability officers to meet the needs of students.
Teaching Students With Disabilities: The Universal Design

- The concept of universal design was first introduced in the architecture field by Ronald Mace in the 1980s.
- It aimed at removing architectural barriers for individuals with disabilities.
- Scholars modified the concept for education to introduce accessible instruction and more inclusive learning environment for diverse learners including students with learning disabilities.
- This design requires the instructor to be tolerant of differences among students and create an appropriate physical space and support for learning.
The Universal Design For Instruction (UDI): inclusive Teaching Strategies

- Multiple means of representation
  - Incorporate lecturing, discussion, technology, videos, powerpoint presentations
  - Provide students with a course website where they can have access to graphical, audio, text and visual formats of the course content at anytime

- Study aids
  - Availability of assistive technology labs where text readers, voice recognition software and braille system are offered
  - Giving students study guides, chapter outline, and graphic organizers are very helpful

- Writing assistance
  - Providing clear assignment instructions and explanation of required formats
  - Breaking larger assignments into smaller tasks
  - Referring LD students to the writing center at your university for proofreading
Inclusive Assessment Methods

• Offering various methods for assessing learning outcomes

• Using paper and pencil testing as the main tool for assessment does not consider students with cognitive, sensory, physical or emotional challenges

• Mixture of writing speaking and drawing, journal writings, videotaped presentation and faculty-student conferences are different ways that could cater for different learning disabilities and styles
The Professor Is The Main Study Aid For LD Students

• The first step is the instructor’s genuine “acceptance” of students with LD

• Providing LD students with needed accommodations (extra time for assignments or exams, essay substitutions, choice of oral or written assessment) should be considered as an integral element of the classroom life

• Instructors should be trained to identify students with LD

• Instructors should introduce themselves to different screening criteria for LD students

• LD should be factored in curriculum designing

• Empathize, do not treat LD students less favorably than other students
Inclusive Practices

- Expansive and ongoing
- Enable participants to define the problem and develop the process iteratively and interactively
- Builds connections not only among individuals’ and groups’ points of view but connections across issues, sectors, and engagement efforts.
- Involve creating community through sharing practices
- Inclusion builds community
Inclusive Excellence

• The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) defines it as:
  
  • A focus on student intellectual and social development
  • A purposeful development and utilization of organizational resources directed at student learning
  • Attention to the cultural differences that learners bring to the educational experience that enhance the educational enterprise
  • A welcoming community that engages all of its diversity in the service of student and organizational learning
How To Create “Safe Spaces” For Our Students

• Ensuring that students of underrepresented populations have the support they need to be academically successful.

• Building relationships and developing multicultural skills with members from diverse backgrounds.

• Enhancing students’ ability to participate in a pluralistic, interdependent global community.

• Increasing the participation of students of color in campus life.
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THANK YOU