

Best Practices for Enabling Departmental Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

A Handout Developed by the L&S EDC (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) Committee

Based on reports provided to us by departments in Spring 2019

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We recognize diversity and equity work as an always dynamic, iterative process evolving in response to emerging issues and contexts. In our current moment, many departments are addressing the killing of George Floyd and focusing on critical diversity and equity issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to applauding ongoing efforts to address inequality, we share this list of best practices to support the development of long-term strategic visions for departmental diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Our handout highlights general principles and then lists examples of successful initiatives undertaken across campus. Each idea is followed by the names of a few departments successfully implementing the initiative—but our lists are not exhaustive! There are many other examples of initiatives and many more departments who have taken up each listed initiative: our handout is just a starting point. Within the L&S Administrative Gateway there is a document named “L&S Equity & Diversity Committee (EDC)” that includes a departmental contact list we created. It lists EDC contacts within each department and we hope this list enables you to reach out to each other to learn more about the ideas described here. You can find the departmental contact list here: kb.wisc.edu/lis/28136.

Best Practice 1: State Your Principles and Values

It's critical to clearly state your department's values around diversity and inclusion, and also important to share those values with your community. Stating your values may mean expanding your department's mission statement to describe your philosophy on equity and diversity, creating a standalone diversity statement, or developing other documents like a code of conduct. Once you have agreed upon your values, you can then take steps to affirm that community members are aware of them and that they are effectively impacting departmental policies and activities. Ideas include but are not limited to:

- Create a departmental Diversity and Inclusion Statement and publicize it. Create a plan for using your statement and making sure your statement is upheld (German Nordic and Slavic, Medieval Studies, Biocore)
- Create a departmental Code of Conduct (Astronomy, Center for Limnology)
- Issue departmental responses to campus diversity issues (Communication Arts, Chican@ and Latin@ Studies, Geography)
- Task your department's Diversity and Equity Committee with administering regular (but not *too* frequent) climate surveys to assess your progress on diversity initiatives and learn about emerging issues (La Follette School of Public Affairs, Center for Limnology, Geography)
- Consistently make time to discuss diversity and inclusion issues at departmental meetings to make sure you are proactively making progress, rather than simply reacting

when a problem arises (Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Communication Arts, Honors Program)

- Showcase and support diversity throughout all of your department's promotional materials, signage, graphics, websites, and learning spaces to help those from diverse backgrounds to feel safe and welcomed (Botany, Psychology, Center for Healthy Minds)

Best Practice 2: Create Curricular Interventions

The classroom is a space in which issues of diversity and inclusion must be addressed. This work can be supported by offering multiple classes focusing on diversity at every skill level, by explicitly talking about how diversity has or hasn't been a subject within your academic field, and by helping instructors nurture skills to teach and reach all students.

- Offer introductory/gateway courses to the major or tutoring programs to target and support underrepresented minority students who might otherwise feel intimidated or excluded, or who may not have received appropriate training in high school (Religious Studies, Medieval Studies, La Follette School of Public Affairs)
- Develop multiple Ethnic Studies Requirement courses and guide students toward them early on (Anthropology, Geography, Music)
- Develop small-group educational experiences like First-Year Interest Groups (FIGs) or "welcome week" activities so students can grow their support networks and form a community on campus (Art History, Jewish Studies, Integrative Biology, Computer Science)
- Hold regular trainings for instructors and graduate students on inclusive pedagogy skills, competencies, and best practices (Biocore, Economics, Math)

Best Practice 3: Increase Recruitment

In order to create and maintain a diverse staff, student, and faculty body, departments must dedicate serious time to outreach, recruitment, and retention activities.

- Require attendance at WISELI workshops on hiring for all members of hiring committees, and put forward a proposal to hire diverse faculty through the Target of Opportunity program (English, Asian Languages and Cultures)
- Attend professional conferences that focus on minority communities, enlist the support of diverse alumni, or join minority recruitment programs to help increase the visibility of your department and expand recruitment efforts (Sociology, Economics, Social Work, Journalism and Mass Communication)
- Eliminate or de-emphasize the role of GRE and other standardized tests in graduate admissions (as these standardized tests are biased against minority students), or add a diversity representative to graduate admissions committees (Astronomy, Physics, Political Science)
- Improve hiring practices by requiring diversity statements for job postings, anonymizing the review of research statements, or adding a diversity representative to hiring committees (Communication Arts, Political Science, Honors Program)

Best Practice 4: Develop Outreach Opportunities

In the tradition of the Wisconsin Idea, many departments successfully extend the boundaries of their classroom into our wider communities by developing close relationships with local partners. These partnerships allow departments to diversify their range of activities and impacts, expanding the reach of scholarship and instruction while also benefiting our campus communities through engagement with diverse stakeholders and experts.

- Facilitate partnerships with local non-profits, K-12 schools, tribal councils, and other diverse community partners in Madison (African Cultural Studies, Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, Geoscience, Medieval Studies, Center for Healthy Minds)
- Host public lectures, film screenings, and brown bags that focus on diversity issues or feature diverse speakers (Asian American Studies Program, German Nordic and Slavic, American Indian Studies Program)
- Sponsor an artist or scholar in residence from minority background (Afro American Studies, Institute for Research on Poverty)

In addition to offering you these best practices, we are providing you with a list of nationally available resources for learning about diversity, equity and inclusion work. We hope you find these resources useful:

National Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Resources for Learning

Title	Author/School	Links
How to Respond to Racial Microaggressions When They Occur	by J. Luke Wood & Frank Harris III	https://diverseeducation.com/article/176397/
Diverse Learning Environments: Assessing and Creating Conditions for Student Success. Final Report to The Ford Foundation	Sylvia Hurtado, Ph.D. Chelsea Guillermo-Wann, Ph.D. Higher Education Research Institute University of California, Los Angeles	https://heri.ucla.edu/research-programs/
The COVID-19 DEI Crisis Action Strategy Guide: Recommendations to Drive Inclusive Excellence.	Atlanta, GA: Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership & Social Innovation, Williams, D. (2020)	https://1drv.ms/b/s!At-F5Cb0g0bE7lWQr5ybna6u-D67S <i>Downloadable</i>
Future Faculty Program	Rochester Institute of Technology	https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/facultyrecruitment/future-faculty-programs/future-faculty-career-exploration-program
Basic Needs	UC Berkeley	https://basicneeds.berkeley.edu/
College and Schools Toolkits	UT-Austin	https://equity.utexas.edu/faculty-recruitment-and-retention/recruitment-toolkit/

		<i>Downloadable</i>
Office of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity Training Programs and Office of Faculty Diversity	Case Western	https://case.edu/diversity/programs-0 https://case.edu/diversity/office-faculty-diversity