

Creating an Inclusive Classroom

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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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Mission:

- The Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion provides leadership and expertise to West Chester University to advance its commitment to the principles of inclusivity, civility, service, and academic excellence. Through programmatic and educational initiatives, collaborative partnerships and outreach, we cultivate an environment that welcomes all.

VISION:

- To become a national leader of inclusive excellence in higher education by leveraging internal and external partnerships.

West Chester University



Diversity and Inclusion are institutional priorities, intrinsic in the

- University Mission statement
 - University Values Statement
 - University Vision Statement
 - University Strategic Plan: Pathways to Students Success
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As a community of educators, our goals are to foster WCU graduates that will:

- 1) Collaborate with others to solve problems and address societal needs
- 2) Engage inclusively in a diverse society
- 3) Understand the ethical implications of decisions and the world in which they live

To fulfill its mission, the University must demonstrate:

- 1) Community and cultural engagement
- 2) Continuous improvement
- 3) Critical thinking
- 4) Inclusion
- 5) Scholarly and creative activities

“West Chester University (WCU) affirms that diversity and inclusion are crucial to the intellectual vitality of the campus community.

It is through freedom of exchange over different ideas and viewpoints in supportive environments that individuals develop the critical thinking and citizenship skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Diversity and inclusion engender academic engagement where teaching, working, learning, and living take place in pluralistic communities of mutual respect.”

**~ Executive Summary,
2015 WCUPA Campus Climate Assessment Project**

Want to Reach All of Your Students? Here's How to Make Your Teaching More Inclusive

ADVICE GUIDE



July 22, 2019

2019-2023 University Strategic Plan-

Pathways to Student Success

Diversity & Inclusion Goals

- Learn It!
- Live It!



Building Cultural Competence in Our Graduates

- **Cultural competency** among 21st century graduates has become imperative as the job market globalizes and the workforce continues to diversify.

Four parts
of cultural
competence:

Awareness of
one's own
worldview

Attitude towards
differences

Knowledge of
different practices
and worldviews

Cross cultural skill
building

Cultural Competence

“the ability to function with awareness, knowledge and interpersonal skill when engaging people of different backgrounds, assumptions, beliefs, values , and behaviors.”

Benefits of Diversity for Modern Business Innovation

“Strength lies in differences, not in similarities.” - Stephen Covey

Forbes

- Workforce diversity and inclusion are key drivers of internal innovation and business growth.

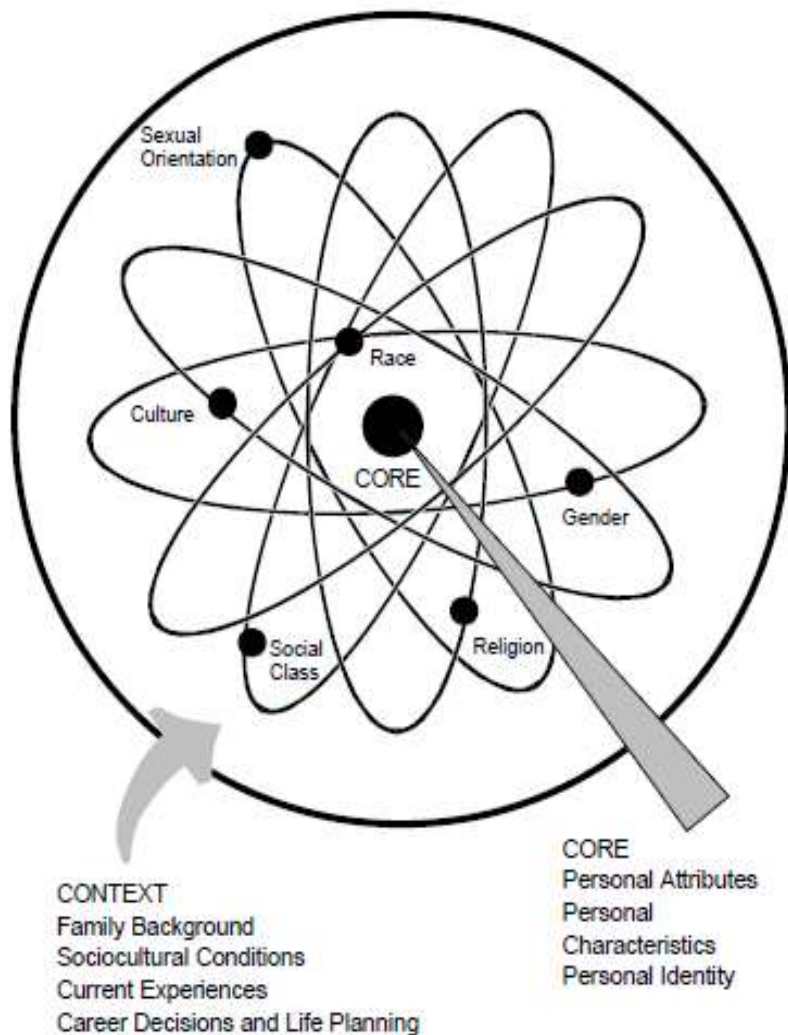


- Multicultural networks promote creativity.

McKinsey&Company

- Companies with diverse executive boards enjoy significantly higher earnings and returns on equity.

Model of Multiple Dimensions of Identity



Abes, Jones & McEwen, 2007

Scenarios-Agenda

Introductions

Is there an issue?

Scenarios

Strategies for promoting inclusion

Strategies for Promoting Inclusion

Approaches

On the Front End

- Set expectations - ground rules/operating guidelines
- Build pride in diversity into course content, syllabus, lab culture
- Develop your own awareness and empathy
- Be sensitive to the impact of discussions on marginalized students. For example, a class discussion on sexual assault, homophobia or racism can cause a student to revisit trauma associated with a personal experience.
- Group work: assigning teams and roles, provide instruction on team functioning, credit/contributions
 - Make it clear you value all students
 - Emphasize mastery and learning

Approaches

Setting Expectations

Include any of the following within your course syllabus:

- Diversity and Inclusivity Statement
- Class Diversity Statement
- Statement on Diversity
- Diversity Statement on Civil Dialogue
- Diversity Statement on Respect
- Discussion Guidelines

Multiple examples from various universities can be found here:

https://www.clemson.edu/otei/documents/Teaching%20Review%20Resources/Diversity_InclusionSyllabiSamples.pdf

Required DEI Syllabus Statement

Inclusive Learning Environment and Anti-Racist Statement

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to West Chester University's mission as reflected in our Mission Statement, Values Statement, Vision Statement and Strategic Plan: Pathways to Student Success. We disavow racism and all actions that silence, threaten, or degrade historically marginalized groups in the U.S. We acknowledge that all members of this learning community may experience harm stemming from forms of oppression including but not limited to classism, ableism, heterosexism, sexism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia, and recognize that these forms of oppression are compounded by racism.

Our core commitment as an institution of higher education shapes our expectation for behavior within this learning community, which represents diverse individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. Courteous and respectful behavior, interactions, and responses are expected from all members of the University. We must work together to make this a safe and productive learning environment for everyone. Part of this work is recognizing how race and other aspects of who we are shape our beliefs and our experiences as individuals. It is not enough to condemn acts of racism. For real, sustainable change, we must stand together as a diverse coalition against racism and oppression of any form, anywhere, at any time.

Resources for education and action are available through WCU's Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI), DEI committees within departments or colleges, the student ombudsperson, and centers on campus committed to doing this work (e.g., Dowdy Multicultural Center, Center for Women and Gender Equity, and the Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy).

Guidance on how to report incidents of discrimination and harassment is available at the University's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Ground Rules

Goals and Benefits of Ground Rules

Examples

Ground Rules for Class Discussions/ Active Participation

RESPECT!

Activity

- Come to class prepared
- Be Respectful
- There are no “stupid questions!” Always feel free to ask questions and engage with any question that arises in the class.
- All members of the class are expected to participate in the various aspects of the class and classroom experiences.
- Discuss undiscussable issues
- Maintain confidentiality through information shared within and outside of the class
- Keep the discussions focused/ Relay information with context
- Disagree openly with any member of the class
- Share all relative information when sharing information
- Test your assumptions and inferences
- Avoid using generalizations
- Avoid offensive language
- Openness to ideas, thoughts and opinions that may differ from your own/ Seek to understand, then to be understood (Active listening)
- Save space for someone that hasn't spoken or engaged in dialogue
- Don't interrupt others

Approaches

Throughout the Year

- Assess the climate - mid semester feedback
- De-escalate rather than be Defensive (listen first, speak softly)
- Practice interrupting microaggressions, recognize teachable moments
- Become familiar with resources available at university
- Support the rights of students (religious holidays, pregnancy, accommodations for disabilities, etc..)
- Start with an assumption of honesty—don't believe the worst in students
- Get to know students to head off angry confrontations

Approaches

Course Adjustments

In any course, instructors may need to change their plans. As students respond to information that is presented, express frustrations, assert themselves or as incidents occur in class, more time or different ways to follow-up, process and respond may be needed. Consider online forums, discussions, quizzes or activities for students that help them process a topic further. Inclusive adjustments are sensitive to students' diverse learning needs and matched to course goals. Adjustments made despite student needs (e.g., to cover a predetermined amount of material) are typically deemed non-inclusive. (Laird 2014)

Practices, Structure to Promote Participation by All

- Active learning techniques
- Group work: assigning teams and roles, provide instruction on team functioning, credit/contributions
- Proactively present information in an accessible way
- Be an ally for their learning (not grade)

Policies

Disruptive Classroom Behavior Policy

- This policy includes harassment & discrimination as unacceptable forms of behavior
- A third party can be asked/invited in to observe your course upon request

Reporting Harassment or Discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or veteran status.

Preferred Name Policy allows a preferred first name to appear in select University systems and records, even if individuals have not changed their legal name. While anyone is welcome to use a preferred name, this policy was developed to respond to the needs of transgender and non-binary communities, international communities, and anyone who prefers the use of a name other than their legal name.

Additional Information

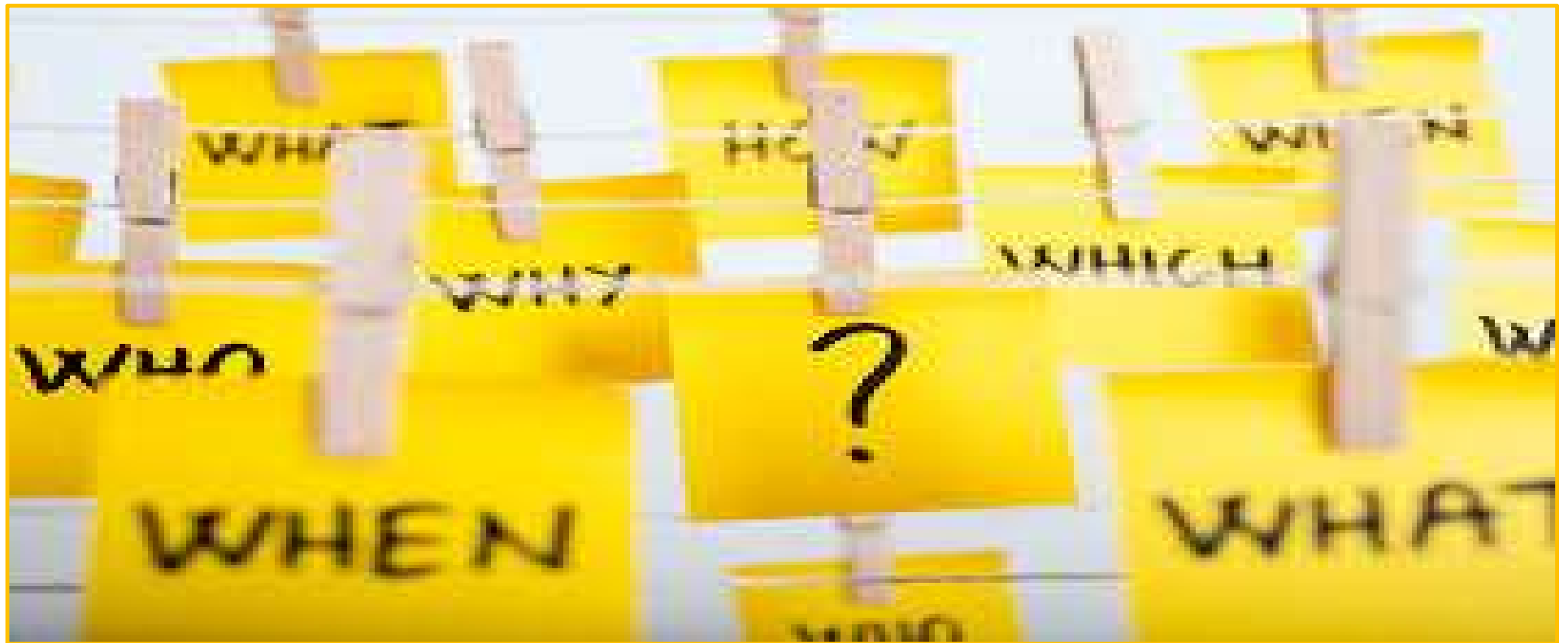
2019 Racial Climate Survey Results. The survey provided recommendations in six content areas, including student experiences with faculty. Areas were assigned a value from 1 to 4 ribbons based on each institution's performance within the national cohort. Content areas included:

- **Mattering and Affirmation** is defined as others noticing and caring about what students think, want and have to say
- **Cross-Racial Engagement** is defined as whether students feel calm, empowered, open and encouraged when engaging in conversations about race.
- **Racial Learning and Literacy** is defined as the extent to which there is racial diversity reflected in classes, where students learn about race, who on campus helps them to learn about race and preparing to live in a racially diverse society.
- **Encounters with Racial Stress** is defined as specific harmful acts, behaviors, or attitudes directed at students based on their race.
- **Appraisals of Institutional Commitment** explores the extent to which students believe that the campus leadership deals with racism/racist incidents effectively, in the open, and in a timely manner.

Examples from National News

- [Too Taboo for Class?](#) (February 1, 2019), Insidehighered.com
- [Ban on Banning Words](#) (September 1, 2015), Insidehighered.com
- [New Advice on Navigating Politics in the Classroom](#) (January 19, 2017), Insidehighered.com
- American Association of University Professors (AAUP), (2017) [Frequently Asked Questions for Faculty in the Wake of the 2016 Election](#)

QUESTIONS



Resources:

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Garihy, Juan Carlos. 2016. *Creating A Positive Classroom Climate For Diversity*. Retrieved from UCLA Diversity & Faculty Development, <https://equity.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CreatingAPositiveClassroomClimateWeb-2.pdf>

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The Academy for Teaching and Learning Excellence. (n.d.). *Classroom Management Best Practices*. Retrieved from <http://www.usf.edu/atle/documents/handout-classroom-management.pdf>