

## Best Practices for Diversity, Equity & Inclusive Excellence for Faculty<sup>1</sup>

### **CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY**

1. Work to understand your own personal story and how your identities have influenced your worldview, your assumptions, and decisions about your curriculum and classroom management styles.
2. Be cognizant of the diversity of identities reflected in your classroom materials and invited panels and lectures. Assess whether you have scholars of Color, women and gender non-binary researchers and scientists, and research/perspectives that impact underrepresented communities in your curriculum.
3. Allow your students to bring their identities into the classroom. Allow them to explore the relationship they have to the topics and the curriculum you select. Consider allowing students to bring in additional materials that reflect their relationship to and experience with your field to make course materials relevant.
4. Work to understand that media and technology are cultural forms that contain and convey values, ideologies, agendas, and bias. Consider how their use shapes curriculum and pedagogy and student learning.
5. Don't assume students in upper level classes have been at Appalachian from the beginning. Many students (transfers, first-years, early college) start in the spring and some bring in significant amounts of credit. Take time to explain your expectations and resources you use regardless of course level or semester taught.

### **SITUATIONAL FACTORS IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

6. Get to know your students to make them feel valued. A brief questionnaire on the first day of class may ask, "Is there anything you would like me to know about you?" or "Are there any circumstances that would make our learning environment difficult for you and/or better for you?"
7. Don't simply claim to treat all people the same. The same as what/whom? Not acknowledging a person's identities negates their lived experiences even when your intention is to treat everyone fairly. Aim for equity over equality.
8. Do use inclusive language! Names and gender pronouns matter (which means you have to ask, we suggest at the beginning of the semester and on index cards, rather than through roll call using Banner or AsULearn). Make every effort to focus on the correct pronunciation of your students' self-selected names (don't assign students' nicknames!) and their pronouns of reference (e.g. them/they/theirs; she/her/hers; he/him/his, etc.). Encourage all the students in your classroom to do so as well. When inadvertent slip-ups happen, apologize, correct yourself and move on.
9. Don't call on students or colleagues from underrepresented groups to speak for their group's experience. This creates hypervisibility and tokenizes people. None of us can speak for an entire group of people.
10. Try to be aware of your assumptions and subtle biases (we all have them!) to avoid microaggressions against students and colleagues. Microaggressions are subtle and often unintentional but degrading comments or actions directed at a member of a minoritized group that reinforces stereotypes or deficit thinking about the group (i.e., assuming that a Black student or colleague is an athlete/coach/affirmative action case; referencing a student or colleague's "good English"; using only gender binary terms such as man and woman; sharing examples and asking questions that presume that everyone is heterosexual). Microaggressions have a cumulative and negative effect.
11. When significant national or campus-specific events or incidents occur, beginning or ending your class with a mention of the incident and acknowledging the feelings inherent can do a lot to create an environment where all students feel valued, particularly students from minoritized groups who might be affected by the event in a more acute way.
12. Don't use underrepresented students (i.e., students of Color, international students, LGBTQIA students, students with disabilities, etc.) as "props" during lessons.

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<sup>1</sup> This list was compiled by Dr. Brandy Bryson, Director of Inclusive Excellence and designed to support faculty. These recommendations result from our campus climate data, the literature on educational equity and inclusion, and from insights made by ASU faculty, staff, and students.

13. Do make space for students and colleagues from underrepresented groups to share their lived experiences if they initiate that sharing. Most importantly, Listen! And try to avoid countering someone's story of lived experience (i.e., playing devil's advocate).
14. Recognize that some Veteran students may feel hesitant and fearful about sharing their identities due to perceived assumptions that students and faculty may make about them (i.e., they have PTSD and may "go off" or they may be judged due to others' political stances on war, etc.).
15. Avoid referencing a projected graduation date. Using terminology such as "new students" or "new Mountaineers" is more inclusive, particularly for non-traditional, transfer, military, etc. students.

### **COURSE DESIGN**

16. Do add a statement to your syllabus with a commitment to equity and inclusion. See the Center for Academic Excellence Inclusive Excellence website for examples and questions to consider when crafting a statement.
17. In designing courses, develop learning goals that get at preparing students to apply the knowledge developed in your class to solving societal problems in an increasingly diverse and changing world.
18. Even if your course content does not easily allow for discussions about social issues, consider the way you present test items, problems, case studies, projects, and major issues in your field. Consider using case studies that reflect issues impacting underrepresented individuals and communities. Consider including materials (such as test items) that represent diverse names and culturally relevant scenarios.
19. Continue to learn about diversity, equity, and Inclusive Excellence. There are a number of Resources on the Center for Academic Excellence's website.

### **ACCESSIBILITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS**

20. Recognize the growing number of low-income students. Keep a few copies of the textbook to give or loan to students who may not be able to easily afford the book. Or work with the library to order several copies of your text to keep on reserve.
21. If you have videos, work with a professional in the Center for Academic Excellence to proactively get them captioned. This serves the need of hearing impaired students, as well as non-native English speakers and students with particular sensory challenges.
22. Be sensitive to the experiences of international students. Sometimes the language of faculty in the classroom is too fast for non-native English speakers and lack of clarity or misunderstanding can negatively impact students' self-esteem and beliefs about their ability.
23. Recognize that the university may be the first instance in which students with disabilities have to advocate for themselves, as they are responsible for requesting accommodations. The process requires students to negotiate what may feel like the burden of gaining access and inclusion. State openly about your willingness to work with students who are registered with ODS as well as students who may benefit from accommodations but aren't registered with ODS.

### **ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

24. Vary your assessment strategies to give students with differing learning and performing styles an equitable opportunity to perform well.
25. Empower students to do well in your classes. Don't draw a bell curve and tell them "this many of you will fail my class." For some students from underrepresented groups and/or those with anxiety about particular subjects, fear tactics can perpetuate stereotype threat and create underperformance.
26. In your feedback on students' work, be sure to name what students are doing well and what they got right rather than just what they missed. Consider using positive points for correct items rather than negative point deductions. This can contribute to greater self-efficacy for underrepresented students.