

Striving for Inclusive Excellence: A Personal Journey

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This work explores the construct of inclusive excellence, as applied to instances of ageism in higher education settings. Impacts of inclusive excellence pertaining to students, faculty, staff, alumni, institutions of higher education, and the community are explored. An analysis of two vignettes is provided to illustrate aspects and impacts of ageism in higher education. Inclusive excellence is discussed as a framework from which to evaluate the equity of treatment. Recommendations for future planning are provided.

Keywords: diversity, inclusion, inclusive excellence, higher education

INTRODUCTION

In today's challenging times, it is of the utmost importance for organizations to operate in a manner that supports equity and inclusion. Further, institutions must prioritize the application of these constructs in their day-to-day operations, thereby facilitating the most effective organizational composition and practices. In the current environment, institutions are being proactive in implementing impactful inclusive operations and devising systematic approaches with varied degrees of success that will benefit all members of the community. This work employs the vignette approach to explore the impacts of ageism within higher education. The framework of inclusive excellence is applied to an evaluation of ageism and future research directions are proposed.

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

McDonald (2015) explains the concept of inclusive excellence as a framework with multiple purposes impacting efforts to improve upon diversity as well as quality. Implementing a diverse environment, has the potential to serve as an integrating factor to all members of the community. Further, the framework of inclusive excellence assists organizations aiming to improve the equity of their functioning, thereby achieving the many benefits of diversity. Additionally, this framework prescribes diversity-inspiring practices for the everyday activities undertaken by organizations, such as training, administrative structure, hiring practices, and recruitment processes. In sum, inclusive excellence, when used to describe an organization, indicates that strategies for the collaborative integration of diversity and inclusion, as well as equity, have been infused into the organization's plan for excellence.

A-Z ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDERS

Inclusive excellence impacts multiple stakeholders within the area of higher education. Further, this framework provides institutions with extensive direction, which allows for the amelioration of discriminatory practices that have the potential to harm individuals and groups. The framework of inclusive excellence supports diversity, equity, equity-mindedness, and inclusion. When effectively applied, this framework allows institutions to flourish and succeed by nurturing diverse voices and empowering change makers to establish impactful operations.

Faculty

Faculty arguably have the most significant impact on students, due to the level of direct interaction between these two groups. As such, the application of practices which are consistent with the framework of inclusive excellence by university faculty has the potential to greatly improve the student experience. Equity-mindedness speaks to personal and collective responsibility with data-guided inquiry and purposeful attention to proactively addressing and moving the needle forward on issues of equity and achieving measurable targets. Equity-mindedness calls attention to patterns of inequity and emphasizes concrete steps to correcting these patterns.

Research demonstrates that students are more easily engaged through equity-minded practice (Prystowsky & Heutsche, 2017). This is likely due to the human tendency to thrive in a community where they perceive acceptance and in which they feel valued. There is strong evidence that retention increases when students are immersed in an environment that provides role models with a shared system of values, beliefs, and traditions (Escallier & Fullerton, 2009). Institutions aim to recruit faculty that address the needs of the diverse student body; however, it is difficult to provide role models that share all the unique values of the student population. This gap could be bridged by providing effective and systematic training in cultural competencies to all members of university communities in order to achieve an environment where the differences and similarities of cultures are learned, accepted, and respected (Salimbene, 1999; Smith, 1998).

Inclusive excellence can be brought into the classroom in many ways (Considine, Mihalick, Mogi-Hein, Penick-Parks, & Auken, 2017). One strategy involves discussing diversity-related issues in a manner which supports equity-mindedness. Another strategy is to embed culturally competent experiences into the curriculum (Escallier & Fullerton, 2009). Strategies to better prepare faculty to foster a culturally competent environment are more challenging to implement. Efforts typically involve a two-pronged approach: elucidating a clear picture of the cultural composition of the student body and raising awareness among faculty regarding potential hidden biases, which may impact their interactions with individual students who represent various groups. Ongoing and meaningful training must be provided to ensure a culture of acceptance and respect within the institution.

Faculty development initiatives which emphasize building awareness can help to reduce the impact of hidden bias. Research supports the impact and effectiveness of inclusive excellence models for teacher education (Brody et al., 2017; Everett & Gibbs-Grey, 2016). Analyses of STEM classrooms, where

gender disparities are often present, further support the notion that training faculty in inclusive practices contributes to overall student success (Killpack & Melón, 2016).

In higher education, student engagement is effectively supported through the preparation of faculty to facilitate their classes in an inclusive manner. Additionally, student achievement is effectively improved through inclusive excellence-based faculty development (Schmid, Gillian-Daniel, Kraemer, Kueppers, 2016). Further, the overall success of institutional initiatives pertaining to inclusive excellence has been shown to be impacted by faculty development (Moriña & Carballo, 2017). Perhaps more importantly, institutions are increasingly embedding diversity, equity and inclusion themes into their strategic planning and accreditation reporting goals. The implementation of these practices varies in scope and effectiveness.

Institutions and the Greater Community

Although the impact of faculty is substantial, institutions themselves play a far more integral role in impacting inclusive excellence. Most institutions of higher education realize the importance of inclusion, and this awareness is reflected in diversity statements posted on institutional websites and organizational mission and vision statements that espouse a dedication to inclusive practices. The effective systematic implementation of such practices is challenging due to the complex environments of academic institutions, and requires sustained attention and engagement of people and resources (Malcom-Piqueux, 2017). Oftentimes, strategies are implemented in some sectors (e.g., faculty recruitment, student recruitment) with well-defined resources and evaluation plans, yet other areas are overlooked, and the scope may be limited to compliance reports (e.g., sexism, ageism).

The role of the institution is to build and maintain an environment which drives inclusivity of all sectors of the institutions and all aspects of diversity. This includes addressing transgressions against students and faculty, which have impacted their experience of belonging within the University community (Fuentes, Shannon, Ahluwalia, & Collier, 2018). In recent years, institutional attempts to understand and apply the concept of inclusion have involved the selection of campus diversity officers (Suarez, Anderson, & Young, 2018) and the appointment of chief diversity officers (Gravley-Stack, Ray, & Peterson, 2016), who are tasked with increasing inclusive practices within the institution. These positions range broadly in terms of expected contributions to the daily operations of institutions. Many of these are focused on institutional compliance (e.g., Title IX officer) while few become trailblazers in implementing systematic and effective practices in inclusive excellence that results in genuine systemic and cultural transformation within the organization.

Inclusive excellence can also be supported through the recruitment of diverse faculty (Fradella, 2018), and through initiatives which address racially motivated workplace bullying (Cox-Dzurec, Kennison, & Gillen, 2017) and aim to improve race-relations on campus (Allen & Custer, 2018). Institutional commitment to inclusive excellence is the cornerstone of organizational success as it pertains to inclusion (Esters, 2017). High impact educational practices (Springer, & Hatcher, 2017; Springer, Hatcher, & Powell, 2018) and principles and practices which foster inclusive excellence (DiBartolo et al., 2016) must be funded, visible, implemented, supported, and assessed by institutions of higher education if inclusion is to be realized and ultimately perceived and genuinely felt by the campus and the community as a whole.

Staff

Staff provide continuity to programs and are instrumental in realizing organizational practices and cultures. Their impact on inclusive excellence can often be overlooked. While many institutions simply utilize terms such as diversity and inclusivity in their marketing materials, others dedicate significant resources to the development of approaches which foster inclusive practices (Doscher, & Landorf, 2018). Higher education has long overlooked staff diversity and inclusion programs in the allocation of resources and efforts. The degree to which an institution of higher education is invested in inclusive excellence is often quite clear to the staff, as they observe on a daily basis what is and is not occurring in a meaningful way. Institutional trends regarding leadership recruitment, training, resources allocated to different sectors, and assessment metrics collected (Asumah, Nagel, & Rosengarten, 2016) represent a clear

indication of the institution's commitment to nurture inclusive excellence on campus. Leadership of institutions of higher education must provide an inclusive environment, resources, and support in which all members of the community perceive support and respect. Oftentimes, staff experience higher standards of accountability for their role in the organizational climate (McNair, & Veras, 2017) while having less resources in place to achieve goals in relevant areas. Staff are often excluded from decision making paradigms and not empowered to voice the needs of their constituents. This phenomena influences decision making regarding daily practices which impact inclusion (Valente, Battle, & Clay, 2017), and how all stakeholders are supported.

Students and Alumni

Many institutions of higher education employ data-driven action plans for inclusive excellence initiatives pertaining to students and alumni (Alao, Rollins, Brown, & Wright, 2017). Most college students embrace inclusive excellence (Kim, Canfield, Desrosiers, Harley, & Hunn, 2019) and are fully invested in improving equity within the institutions they attend. Despite demonstrated interest among students and alumni, significant disparities exist in participation. These disparities may be understood through an analysis of strategies which aim to nurture inclusive excellence as it pertains to students and alumni.

One strategy is to consider inclusive practices during the admissions process (Posselt, 2014). This may involve recruiting underrepresented groups (Katz et al., 2017) or employing evaluation practices which maximize inclusivity (Murray, 2017). Many parameters which have historically been utilized in admissions decisions have been shown to place some groups at a significant disadvantage. Another strategy involves analyzing institutional structures and processes which unintentionally create obstacles to access and successes by some groups (Bensimon et al., 2012; Dowd & Bensimon, 2015).

A significant barrier which impacts access to higher education is funding. Due to racial disparities in economic resources, access to education is not fully inclusive. Efforts to decrease the impact of this barrier include grants and scholarship opportunities which aim to support individuals who represent marginalized groups. This can be an effective strategy in situations where adequate resources exist to fund these initiatives but needs often exceed resources. An additional barrier involves discrimination.

Discrimination may be seen in every facet of higher education, and its impacts are widespread and multifaceted. One instance of discrimination involves microaggressions, which are actions, statements, or incidents which represent direct or indirect, intentional, or unintentional discrimination against a member of a marginalized group (Hughey, Rees, Goss, Rosino, & Lesser, 2017). Microaggressions may serve to create barriers to inclusive participation in institutional initiatives and they may create discomfort that is so significant that it leads the impacted person to disengage completely from the University. Barriers are also seen in curricula.

Programmatic curricula should be infused with content that is relevant to diversity and inclusion (e.g., social inequities, civic engagement, multicultural knowledge acquisition). In cases where this is not done, the student experience suffers, and social justice is not effectively nurtured. Curriculum audits are often conducted in an effort to identify opportunities for the addition of diversity-content, but these audits often uncover few opportunities, though many may exist. This is due, in part, to the scope of these audits, which is typically limited in nature. Another barrier involves accessibility.

Inclusivity pertains to the active engagement of all students (Brownholland et al., 2017). Accessibility must be intentionally considered to ensure that all groups have the opportunity to participate. For instance, physical structures, such as stairs and doors must be made accessible in order to ensure inclusivity. Further, content must be presented to students in a manner in which it may be understood. If a student has a hearing impairment, and content is presented only in the spoken language, then accessibility has not been achieved.

As outlined above, inclusive excellence has the potential to significantly impact the major groups of stakeholders within institutions of higher education. For the purpose of this analysis, ageism was selected as an area of opportunity which could be addressed through policies and practices which are consistent with the framework of inclusive excellence.

Ageism

Ageism is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO, n.d.) as “Stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of age.” Ageism has multiple impacts on individuals, irrespective of their chronological age and its reduction has been the focus of several recent investigations (e.g., Nelson, 2016; Raynor, 2015). Although progress has been made with respect to increasing societal understanding of and appreciation for this deeply impactful process, additional work must be done (Levy & Macdonald, 2016). Efforts to identify and address ageism based on a multitude of interventions has had moderate impacts (Nelson, 2019). This analysis attempts to raise awareness regarding the potential for ageism within the field of higher education through the presentation of two vignettes, which were crafted to delineate the issues faced by various stakeholders within the realm of higher education.

METHODOLOGY

The vignette approach involves crafting cases to illustrate points and delivering a real-world story on which an analysis may be based (Kelly-Irving, Soulier, Mabile, Bartley, Raynaud, Panico, & Blane, 2017). Vignettes may be purely fictional in nature or they may be based on real events or experiences. Vignettes have been used extensively in teaching and have demonstrated effectiveness with subjects such as ethics and clinical analysis (Carpenter, Pincus, Conklin, Wyszynski, Chu, & Comer, 2016; Dingle, DeJong, Madaan, & Ascherman, 2016; Piryani, & Piryani, 2019). Vignette-based training also appears to lend itself well to topics which may involve heightened emotion, such as microaggressions (Hughey, Rees, Goss, Rosino, & Lesser, 2017). This study utilizes the vignette approach to illustrate the impact of ageism within the main identified constituencies in higher education. The use of vignettes is intended to bring life to issues and to facilitate a deeper analysis of applications of the model of inclusive excellence.

VIGNETTE ANALYSIS: ADDRESSING AGEISM FROM AN INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

The first vignette focuses on impacts of ageism from the perspective of an institution of higher education, an alumna, and the community as a whole.

Vignette A: The Community Member, Alumnus, and Lifetime Learner

Mr. McKeon is a recently retired social studies supervisor from one of the state’s largest and most highly rated school districts. After nearly fifty years in the profession, he decided to transition into the next phase of his life, one where he will have more time to spend with family as well as pursue learning opportunities of his own in areas of interest, which range from history to nutrition to current events, like climate change, war and immigration, and populism in international politics. On top of that, he planned to continue his relationship with the school district as a volunteer social studies tutor to middle and high school students.

Mr. McKeon assumed that the logical place to turn to for his learning interests was the local university, a public four-year institution of higher education, originally founded as a teacher’s training college and strongly rooted in the area and school districts of the surrounding counties. He was thrilled at the opportunity to be returning to the university he graduated from a half-century ago and researched the academic options for seniors, retirees, and alumni. Upon inquiring at the Office of Admissions, he was told that members of the 60+ aging community and alumni have the option to freely ‘audit’ many classes at no-charge should spaces be available, but that students can also participate in the institution’s non-credit lifelong learning enrichment program for the 60+ aging community. Mr. McKeon registered for four non-credit enrichment courses at the University in the spring of 2020.

One week into the semester, the CDC issued revised guidelines around the aging population and courses shifted to remote instruction, offered via video conferencing using the WebEx platform. The institution had 2,000 members of the aging population participating in face to face enrichment programs before a state-wide shelter in place order was issued, shifting all programs to remote instruction. Mr.

McKeon realized he did not have a computer at home, or broadband internet capable of handling remote learning courses via WebEx, he also had a basic phone without broadband internet connectivity.

Mr. McKeon reached out to the program director and shared his concerns and inability to participate in the distance learning format under the stay at home order due to lack of resources and training. The director indicated that they did not have the instructional and technological resources to support Mr. McKeon's participation in the program and they advised him to seek outside support. As an alternative, they offered a credit to retake his classes when the institution was safely able to offer in person instruction.

Analysis of Vignette A

The content of this vignette may present a familiar scenario that might occur on a regular basis. Two key themes may be addressed effectively through the application of the framework of inclusive excellence:

A. Inclusive Academic offerings for diverse stakeholders (Educational Access)

B. Strategic planning for implementing innovative programs

Institutional policy is formed through discussion and decision making. The individuals who are involved in discussions regarding institutional policy are tasked with weighing the various impacts of their decisions and, as such, including a diverse group which is representative of the needs of a wide variety of individuals is key to developing policy which does not exclude community members. Offering continuing education courses is an important way for institutions of higher education to stay connected to their alumni and to other members of the community. These courses offer students the ability to fully participate, by engaging with their peers, the instructor, and the course resources. The institution described in the vignette above could impact the community in important ways by applying the framework of inclusive excellence to their policy making processes, thereby ensuring that they consider all stakeholders when making determinations regarding course offerings.

The limited academic offerings tend to have a disproportionate impact on the 60+ population, who are often looking for courses, rather than formal degree programs. These programs provide real added value to the institution and could enhance the university's appeal among audiences of all ages. These courses also allow faculty members the opportunity to stay sharp and to deliver courses they might not be able to within the standard traditional academic curriculum. In addition, continuing education presents the university with potential new revenue streams as well as promotional advertising and marketing opportunities by connecting them with additional, non-degree seeking, audiences in the community. As such, age equity could also be addressed by a careful evaluation of the impact of institutional policy on diverse groups.

The staff member described in the vignette above indicates that during the shift to remote instruction, institutional resources to support members of the aging community in need of access via technology were not available. The comments described have multiple potential ramifications. During the modern pandemic era, members of the 60+ aging population have in many ways been marginalized by their lack of access to technologies and technological competencies critical to engaging in remote instruction and access to higher education programs. This leaves us with an aging population that is marginalized and left out of the academic journey. These issues could impact the decisions of members of the aging population to continue their educational journey and could lead this population to face more severe isolation. Further, these comments could contribute to a loss of hope, on the part of the individual, who may feel that there is no place in which to feel accepted and ultimately thrive. This situation can be easily translated to individuals who face similar challenges due to a lack of economic resources and/or technological / computer literacy.

The second theme of this vignette addresses the need to engage in strategic planning when implementing innovative programs. Institutions during the COVID19 pandemic demonstrated resilience in quickly transforming traditional classroom settings into remote learning environments. At the same time, it became evident that additional resources were needed in order to effectively address the needs of instructors and learners in the virtual classroom. For example, non-credit program instructors in aging

populations may need additional training resources to make the shift to remote instruction and deliver meaningful educational programs to the aging population. The one size fits all shift to remote instruction failed to meet the unique instructional needs of this population and was unable to address unique accessibility issues in the 60+ student population. Assuming universal accessibility is a misconception that institutions quickly learn not to be true. Strategic planning could also allow institutions to identify sources of support (e.g., stimulus money). Strategic partnerships with companies like Comcast bridged the accessibility gap by providing devices and broadband internet to facilitate connectivity of the aging community. Another challenge that remote classrooms faced was ADA compliance, a topic for another publication. The inclusive excellence framework could be applied to this interaction in terms of training. In order to achieve inclusive excellence, institutions must provide training in inclusive practices to their staff. Training [of what or to whom - we need some specific recommendations here] would help to raise awareness regarding the ways in which word choice may impact the perceptions of others.

The second vignette focuses on the impacts of ageism from the perspective of a faculty member.

Vignette B: The Young Professor

Dr. Christman obtained her Ph.D. at the age of 24. She completed high school early and started college at the age of 16. She earned her bachelor's degree in 3 years and her master's degree in one year. Dr. Christman started teaching at the college level for the institution where she had earned her undergraduate degree while working to earn her Ph.D. She was treated very well by the administration, who knew her well and appreciated her contributions. She received very different treatment from faculty and students. In the classroom, she was often mistaken for a student and faculty from other departments gave less credence to her views. She was frequently excluded from departmental initiatives and was not often invited to join committees.

In an effort to provide more visibility to Dr. Christman's expertise, the department chair appointed her to a committee dedicated to study the needs of non-traditional students and make recommendations for future academic offerings. The committee was chaired by a senior faculty member. During the planning meeting, she provided a compelling, data-driven argument to expand the focus of the study to a younger population to include highly gifted students, students who completed school through remote delivery, and home-schooled students, as studies showed an increase in intake of this population in the near future. The committee decided to focus only on non-traditional students defined as returning professionals. After the initial meeting she was named the communication liaison, which involved taking notes, sending e-mail communications to faculty members, and organizing files. After the meeting, she met with the department chair and discussed her perception that there was no room for her to contribute to the committee, stating the facts described previously. He explained that he was doing her a favor in selecting her for this committee. He advised her to hang in there and be patient as this was a rite of passage and in time, people would come around.

Analysis of Vignette B

The framework of inclusive excellence may be applied to the second vignette based on two main themes:

- A. Leadership and Faculty training in inclusive practices
- B. Mentorship programs for young faculty

The experiences and perceptions of the professor described in the vignette above have many possible outcomes. First, the young faculty member might accept the treatment received from other faculty within the institution and continue to share opinions and attempt to contribute to the growth of the institution. Second, the faculty member might withdraw and stop sharing thoughts during faculty meetings. This would impact the institution, as it would not benefit from the additional perspective. Third, the pressure to participate in committee work that does not make use of the young faculty member's skills may represent wasted time and effort. This would hinder the faculty member's ability to produce meaningful work focused on career advancement. Fourth, the lack of proper mentorship to guide young faculty members as they work to maneuver the complex academic landscape has many potential ramifications.

This situation is all too common when young faculty, especially those from non-traditional backgrounds, are tasked with peripheral work that ultimately interferes with their promotion and career advancement. This is exacerbated by the age of the faculty member. In addition, this young faculty member is asked to do grunt work due to the perception of lack of expertise. In addition, the lack of standardized evaluation criteria for career advancement may have a negative effect on the development of young professionals.

This situation has the potential to escalate, resulting in the faculty member seeking employment elsewhere. This has a detrimental effect, draining institutional resources and resulting in the loss of a quality perspective within the department. Applying an inclusive excellence framework would involve providing training to junior faculty within the institution and implementing a structured mentorship program during the first one to three years of teaching.

Discriminatory behavior such as that described in the vignette often occurs due to a lack of awareness rather than due to malicious intent. As such, the provision of training could help to raise awareness among faculty regarding any unconscious biases they may hold regarding age. There are well documented cases of discriminatory behavior towards an ageing professional, but the phenomenon is less obvious when this behavior is directed towards individuals in their early careers. For example, biased behavior can be masked as an evaluation phenomenon in the tenure process. Further, having the opportunity to discuss fears and reactions regarding difference in a safe space could help faculty with conscious prejudice based on age to adopt a more inclusive stance.

In order to achieve inclusive excellence, institutions must provide training in inclusive practices to their leadership, faculty, and staff. Training on implicit bias, effective peer evaluation, providing constructive criticism, teamwork, and effective communication tools are a few examples that could be implemented. The challenge is to provide meaningful, effective, and ongoing training to all stakeholders that counts towards career advancement and promotions. This training would help to raise awareness regarding the ways in which actions, non-verbal gestures, responses, and word choices may impact the perceptions of others.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

In sum, the framework of inclusive excellence may be applied to reduce all manner of discriminatory behavior on college campuses and within the community at large. Within institutions of higher education, institutional dedication to the values and priorities espoused within the framework of inclusive excellence impacts the experience of students, alumni, faculty, staff, the institution, and the community in important ways. The provision of recommendations regarding applications of the framework of inclusive excellence to real-world instances of ageism found on college campuses inspires multiple directions for institutional planning regarding inclusive excellence, which is particularly important in challenging times (Tuitt, 2016).

The first recommendation involves the incorporation of multiple voices that represent all stakeholders into the strategic planning process engaged within institutions of higher education (Barnes, Humphreys, Oyler, Pane, & Novicevic, 2013). Individuals who represent diverse, institutional interests, cultural backgrounds, and age groups should have an active voice in the institutional planning process. Further, individuals occupying a wide variety of roles within the institution should be actively recruited to serve on committees that are tasked with strategic planning. The composition of groups with decision making power directly impacts the ease with which inclusive decisions may be determined and implemented. Institutions may perceive that the incorporation of additional individuals into the decision-making process could pose challenges, but these added perspectives can provide significant value. Models for shared decision-making help to address practical concerns regarding the implementation of effective processes (Jong-Myon, 2017). In higher education the inclusive excellence framework requires that we go beyond shared decision-making to shared governance and genuine engagement of all institutional stakeholders, a model where voices from across the organization have fair representation in shaping its future.

A second recommendation pertains to the entrenchment of meaning into training offerings (Barrette, 2017). Delivering a training which focuses on self-awareness or diversity can be accomplished in multiple ways. In situations where the value of a training session is not socialized with the organization, the session may be perceived as a regular requirement, to be completed and quickly discarded. Further, training which does not involve interaction, the exploration of concepts, the evaluation of impacts, and a shared sense of accountability does little to impact the mindset of an individual or the daily operations of an institution. Training must be infused with meaning to achieve results. Training must be strategically planned and implemented to be meaningful, effective, ongoing, accessible, and relevant to all stakeholders.

The design and delivery of meaningful training experiences involves several steps (Siko & Hess, 2014). First, the objectives of the training should be relevant and clear, both to the organizers and the learners. Further, the approach to the development and delivery of the session should emphasize the learners. This can be accomplished by encouraging attendees to share personal experience and inform the course of the training, at least to some degree. Planning should encompass strategies for addressing the emotional responses of the attendees in an effective manner. Additionally, meaningful training experiences involve interaction among learners, between individual learners and training content, and between individual learners and the facilitator. An emphasis on practical applications of the content also helps to demonstrate meaning. Finally, a robust assessment plan to measure the impact on participants is key in the development and delivery of meaningful training programs.

A final recommendation relates to ongoing assessment by the collection of data and feedback from all stakeholders within institutions. Although it is important to solicit feedback from training participants, as outlined above, it is imperative to collect data regarding the degree to which an institution has effectively embraced the principles and practices of the inclusive excellence framework (Mendoza-Denton, 2018). This involves several key actions on the part of institutional administration and the establishment of a culture of collaboration, which involves the development and nurturance of an organizational atmosphere in which leaders are transparent and the feedback of all members is assigned significant value. Implementing a robust assessment plan that measures institutional inclusion is instrumental in placing inclusion excellent high in the value system of the organization. Establishing a culture of collaboration is not easily done and must be prioritized on a daily basis. Identifying champions and advocates that can lead ongoing assessment can help establish a culture of data collection and sharing. It will facilitate actions such as the establishment of regular feedback sessions, shared updates, and the demonstration of institutional dedication to responding to feedback can help to ensure that members of the organization continue to share their perspectives. Future research may investigate factors which impact the effectiveness of the aforementioned recommendations in the amelioration of discriminatory behavior on college campuses. The successful implementation of the inclusive excellence framework values an environment of transparency and behooves institutions to proactively involve all constituents in ongoing progress and success monitoring.

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