

## **Council for Equity and Justice: Diversity Assessment Committee**

### **1. Definition of Belonging**

*Goodenow (1993a) defines belonging in educational environments as:*

Students' sense of being accepted, valued, included and encouraged by others (teacher and peers) in the academic classroom setting and of feeling oneself to be an important part of the life and activity of the class. More than simple perceived liking or warmth, it also involves support and respect for personal autonomy and for the student as an individual.

*Diversity Assessment Committee definition of belonging adapted from Goodenow (1993a)*

Students' sense of being accepted, valued, included, supported, and respected by others, and feeling connected to the university community.

### **2. Diversity Assessment Committee Steps for Creating a Sense of Belonging**

#### **a. Curriculum**

- i. Inclusivity in syllabi, course materials, textbooks, media
- ii. Contextualize course materials and explain why certain material may only have limited representation due to historical factors.
- iii. Require departmental trainings in pedagogical developments and advancements towards diverse and inclusive materials.
- iv. Review course content including lectures, videos, textbooks, websites, etc. for stereotypes and bias.

#### **b. Teaching**

- i. Implement various teaching modalities
- ii. Build rapport and establish connections with students
- iii. Remove barriers to communication
- iv. Complete bias training for instructors
- v. Develop strong instructor presence in online and in-person classes
- vi. Establish a sense of community in classrooms by learning and using student preferred names and pronouns

**c. Assessment**

- i. Offer a variety of forms of assessment (papers, exams, presentations, etc.)
- ii. Provide effective feedback and non-graded assignments to build student confidence.
- iii. Involve students in course evaluations beyond the traditional evaluation process.
- iv. Conduct process evaluations throughout the course to determine how students are progressing and make changes if needed.

**d. Creating Brave Spaces**

- i. Improve diversity of images in campus spaces and virtually
- ii. Increase peer mentorship
- iii. Transparency and updates regarding campus bias incidents
- iv. Increase opportunities for students to engage with each other, instructors, and administrators outside of the classroom.
- v. Improve diversity in faculty and staff
- vi. Establish a clear and reliable reporting system for students who may experience bias from instructors or administrators
- vii. Address challenging situations and use them as teachable moments
- viii. Recognize and validate student experiences
- ix. Include diversity and inclusion statement in syllabus
- x. Include students in the decolonizing movement