

SUU Office of Equity & Inclusion

Shared Language

This glossary provides a brief introduction to several key terms that are often a part of discussions around equity and inclusion. It is not comprehensive, but is a living document aimed at providing SUU a central starting place for conceptualization, discussion, and cooperation. This resource is meant to foster understanding and clarity and is best utilized as a way to align communication and collaboration.

Key Terms

Accessibility

The degree to which a person can participate in an activity or use a product, technology, or navigate an environment across various abilities and disabilities.

Antiracism & antiracist

Anti-racism is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.

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"To be anti-racist is to think nothing is behaviorally wrong or right -- inferior or superior -- with any of the racial groups. Whenever the antiracist sees individuals behaving positively or negatively, the antiracist sees exactly that: individuals behaving positively or negatively, not representatives of whole races. To be anti-racist is to deracialize behavior, to remove the tattooed -stereotype from every racialized body. Behavior is something humans do, not races do."

Kendi, Ibram X., How to Be an Antiracist. New York: One World, 2019.

Asset-based Thinking

A strengths-based lens that focuses on individual, group and community resources, talents, capital, opportunities and networks, rather than problems or deficiencies.

Attainment Gaps (see Equity Gaps)

Counter-narrative

Counter-narrative refers to the narratives that arise from the vantage point of those who have been historically marginalized.

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The idea of “counter-” itself implies a space of resistance against traditional domination. A counter-narrative goes beyond the notion that those in relative positions of power can just tell the stories of those in the margins. Instead, these must come from the margins, from the perspectives and voices of those individuals. A counter-narrative thus goes beyond the telling of stories that take place in the margins. The effect of a counter-narrative is to empower and give agency to those communities. By choosing their own words and telling their own stories, members of marginalized communities provide alternative points of view, helping to create complex narratives truly presenting their realities.

Mora, R.A. (2014). Counter-narrative. Key Concepts in Intercultural Dialogue, No.36. Centerforinterculturaldialogue.org.

Cultural Competence & Cultural Humility

Cultural Competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (not only multicultural situations).

Cultural humility is a lifelong process of self-evaluation and critique, promotion of interpersonal sensitivity and openness, addressing power imbalances, and advancement of an appreciation of intracultural variation and individuality to avoid stereotyping. Cultural humility encourages an interpersonal stance that is curious and other-oriented.

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Coined *competemility*, is the synergistic process between cultural humility and cultural competence in which cultural humility (the lifelong process of self-evaluation and openness) permeates each of the five components of cultural competence (the skill of working across cultures), including the ability to:

1. value diversity,
2. conduct self-assessment,
3. manage the dynamics of difference,
4. acquire and institutionalize cultural knowledge and;
5. adapt to diversity and the cultural contexts of the communities one serves.

Cross, T., et al. (1989). Towards a culturally competent system of care: A monograph on effective services for minority children who are severely emotionally disturbed. Washington, DC, Georgetown University Child Development Center. Vol. 1 and Dorothy Stubbs, MD, Practicing Cultural Competence & Cultural Humility in the Care of Diverse Patients <https://focus.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.focus.20190041>

Culturally Responsive

Recognizing the diverse cultural characteristics and knowledge of learners as assets.

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Culturally responsive teaching and advising empower students intellectually, socially, and emotionally by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Deficit-based Thinking

Deficit-based thinking is the focus on a community's needs, deficits, or problems rather than its assets, strengths, or opportunities. Deficit language often highlights individuals rather than systems and structures that have led to marginalization. Examples include referring to students as at-risk or underprepared rather than underserved. See *Asset-based Thinking*.

University of Central Florida Faculty Excellence

Diversity

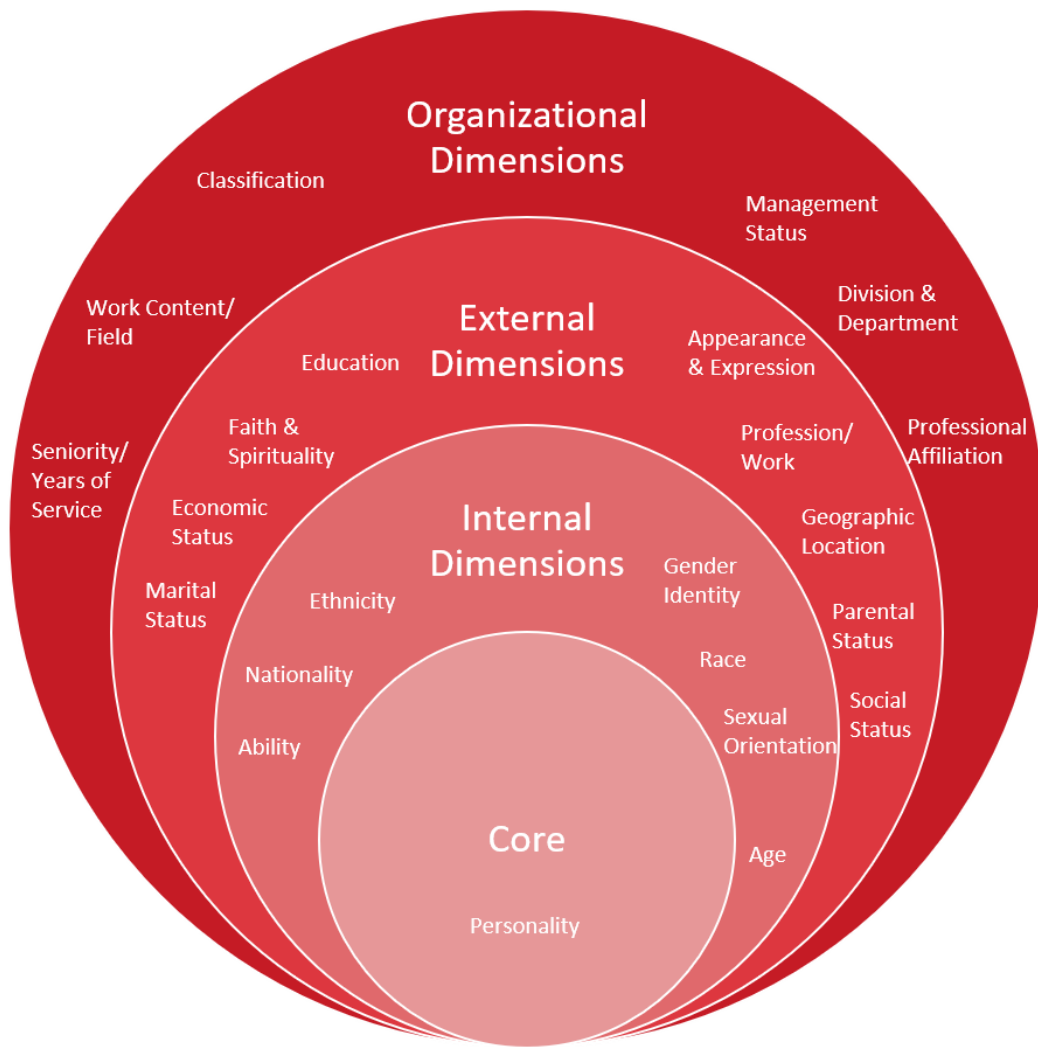
Diversity includes all the ways in which people are different.

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In the context of Equity & Inclusion, diversity means having a variety of identities, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic status, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other positional identities represented in a space, community, institution, or society. Diversity occurs across several dimensions of humanity (see figure below), which determines the lens through which we as individuals see the world, and the filter through which our societies see us.

It is a term that looks at the composition of a group, but should not be applied to individuals. For example, you may have a diverse student body or a faculty that is lacking in diversity, but [*individuals are not diverse*](#) ("This job candidate is diverse.").

Adams, M et al. (2016). Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice. New York: Routledge. P. 1 and Pincus, FL. (2006) Understanding Diversity. Lynne Reiner Publishers.



Adapted from "Diverse Teams and Work: Capitalizing on the Power of Diversity" by Lee Gardenswartz and Anita Rowe

Equity

The provision of customized resources needed for all individuals to reach common goals which requires the recognition and analysis of historic, persistent factors that have created an unequal [higher] education system.

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This includes assessing, identifying, acknowledging, and addressing system policies and initiatives supporting and/or sustaining inequity and disparities. In other words, the goals and expectations are the same for all community members, but the supports needed to achieve those goals depends on the members' needs (Equity Education, 2019)

USHE Equity Lens Framework and Equity Education, 2019 <https://eeducation.org/>

Equity Gaps

Disparities in underserved populations' access to and success in educational and employment opportunities due to systemic barriers.

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Equity gaps are multi-faceted and consist of inequities in resources and opportunities (Opportunity gaps), inequities in participation, and inequities in educational outcomes and benefits (Attainment Gaps).

An equity-minded approach examines how equity gaps that exist in student populations are an outcome of institutional performance gaps related to that student population.

Adapted from the USHE Equity Lens Framework and Northwest Commission of Colleges & Universities Resource Library
<https://nwccu.org/equity-resource-library/>

Equity Lens Framework

An equity lens framework is a tool composed of shared beliefs, common definitions, and critical questions through which an organization commits to continually evaluating any existing or new strategy, policy, or initiative.

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The beliefs and definitions ensure the organization begins from a common understanding and sets the groundwork for clear accountability, allowing all efforts to be focused on closing opportunity gaps for marginalized populations.

USHE Equity Lens Framework

Equity-mindedness

Equity-mindedness refers to the perspective or mode of thinking exhibited by practitioners who call attention to patterns of inequity in student outcomes.

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These practitioners are willing to take personal and institutional responsibility for the success of their students, and critically reassess their own practices. It also requires that practitioners are race [and more widely identity]-conscious and aware of the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in American Higher Education.

AAC&U Making Excellence Inclusive & Northwest Commission of Colleges & Universities Resource Library
<https://nwccu.org/equity-resource-library/>

Gender Definitions (Adopted from transstudent.org)

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Gender

Describes a set of characteristics that traditionally have been associated with binary biological differences associated with men/masculinity and women/femininity. It is a social construct that is connected to cultural and societal norms and now is understood to include a spectrum of gender identities.

Gender Identity

One's internal sense of being male, female, neither of these, both, or another gender(s).

Gender Expression

The physical manifestation of one's gender identity through clothing, hairstyle, voice, body shape, etc.

Sex Assigned at Birth

The assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, chromosomes.

Physically Attracted To:

Sexual orientation. Sexual and romantic/emotional attraction can be from a variety of factors including but not limited to gender identity, gender expression/presentation, and sex assigned at birth.

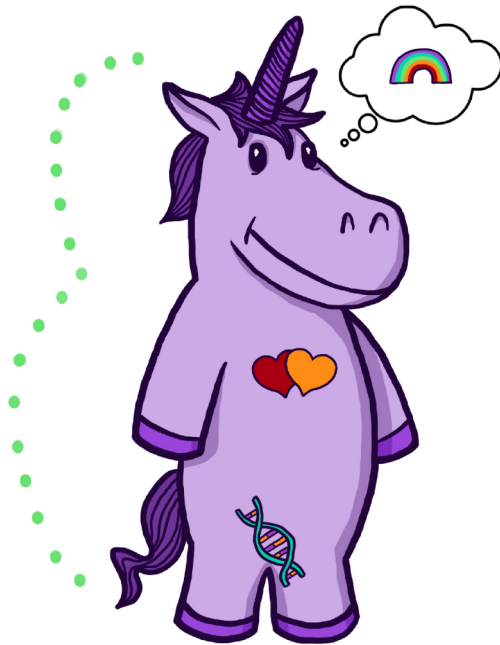
Emotionally Attracted To:

Romantic/emotional orientation..

Please see the Illustration below for a visual representation:

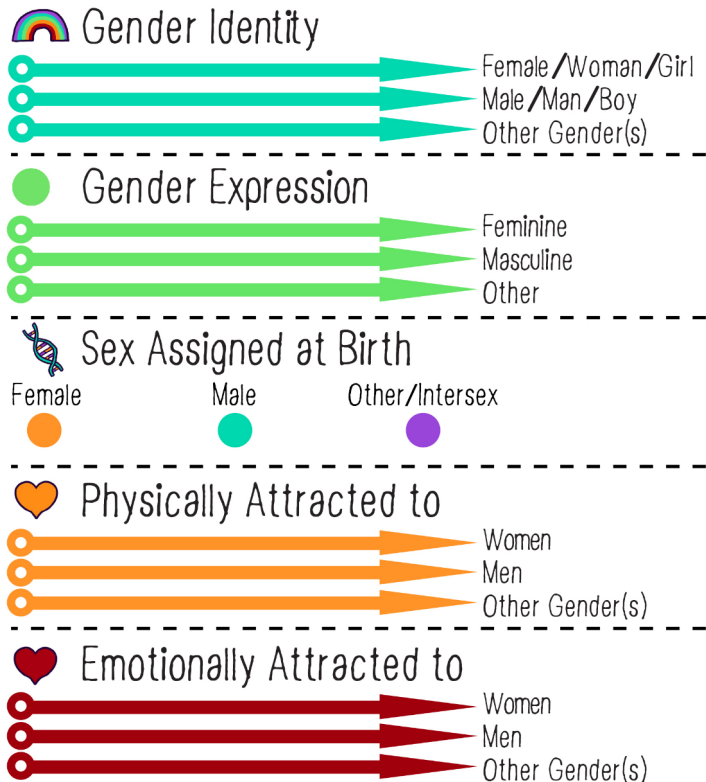
The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan and Anna Moore



Heteronormativity

A term coined by social theorist and literary critic Michael Warner in 1991 to identify the ways in which social institutions and dominant culture are oriented around the assumed normal, natural, and ideal logic of heterosexual attraction and unions.

Heterosexuality itself is premised upon the idea that there are two distinct sexes (male and female) and associated genders (masculine and feminine) that are inherently opposite and complementary for the purpose of reproduction and the organizing of life's activities. (See Sexism)

Lyon, K. and Dhillon, M. (2015). "Heteronormativity." Encyclopedia of Diversity and Social Justice. Vol. 1. (Ed. S. Thompson). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. P. 383.

Implicit bias

The unconscious associations we hold about groups of people or individuals from a particular identity. This often leads to cognitive shortcuts like relying on stereotypes or taken for granted assumptions.

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Inclusion

The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

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In Higher Education, this engagement must happen in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect.

Adapted from [AAC&U Making Excellence Inclusive](#)

Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; a theoretical approach based on such a premise.

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The theory was conceptualized in the 1980s by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw on the premise that markers of identity do not act independently of one another, but exist simultaneously, creating a complex web of privilege and oppression and “negating the possibility of a universal experience of any one manifestation of oppression” (i.e. a gay Latino man experiences male privilege differently than a gay white man AND homophobia differently than a gay white man).

Examining the experiences of people who live at the intersections of two (or more) subordinated identities becomes a useful way to diagnose oppression within a system.

USHE Equity Lens Framework and Adams, M et al. (2016). Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice. New York: Routledge. P. 42. Crenshaw, K. (1991). “Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color.” Stanford Law Review 43(6): 1241-1299.

Latinx

An [emerging](#) (and sometimes contested) gender neutral term sometimes used in place of Latino (which is often used interchangeably with Hispanic) to describe a group of people of Latin American descent.

LGBTQIA

An umbrella acronym meant to be inclusive of many identities including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (often shortened to LGBTQ or LGBTQ+)

Marginalization

The process through which persons are peripheralized based on their identities, associations, experiences, and environment.

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LGBTQIA+, veterans, students with disabilities, previously incarcerated, and students facing food, housing, or technology insecurity are all examples of marginalized student groups. These students or student groups may be treated or feel as insignificant or unseen on a college campus

USHE Equity Lens Framework

Microaggression

Brief and commonplace slights experienced by marginalized groups in day-to-day interactions which usually occur outside the conscious awareness of well-meaning people.

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Microaggressions communicate negative, derogatory or even hostile viewpoints, targeting persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership and perpetuate dominant group viewpoints and social hierarchy.

Wing Sue, D. (2010). Microaggressions: more than just race. Psychology Today. (Retr. Nov 17, 2010) and Pierce. C. (1970). Offensive mechanisms: The vehicle for micro-aggression. In F. Barbour, The Black 70s. Boston: Porter Sargent, p. 265-82 and dictionary.com.

Minoritized

A word that is generally preferred in place of minority. While the word minority may literally mean less than half of a group, or a smaller part of a larger group, the connotation is related to being "lesser than." *Minoritized* reflects the systemic and structural realities in place that push people and communities to the margins

"A term used in place of minority (noun) to highlight the social oppression that minoritizes individuals" (Vaccaro 2020). The use of the term minoritized is increasingly favored over the term minority, which can be experienced as demeaning given that individuals likely do not incorporate this status in their identity. Rather, their status as a minority is a systemic function within a racialized hierarchy that advantages and disadvantages groups differently. Thus, the term minoritized uses active voice to reveal the system of social oppression that is often rendered unseen through the use of passive voice within the term minority.

Neurodiversity

Is an asset-based viewpoint that ascertains that certain developmental disorders are normal variations in the brain and people who have these features also have certain strengths.

People (person) of Color or POC

An umbrella term primarily used to describe people who are not considered White. The term emphasizes common experiences of systemic racism which some communities have faced and can be used with other collective categories of people such as "communities of color", "men of color" (MOC), "women of color" (WOC), etc.

BIPOC - An acronym standing for "Black, Indigenous, and People of Color." The term has become increasingly popular as a way to highlight the divergent or shared needs and concerns of these distinct communities.

Personal pronouns

Pronouns an individual uses to refer to their gender identity or expression. (e.g. she/her, he/him, they/their). The use of pronouns in spaces like email signatures, zoom names, and business cards normalizes the practice of learning how to refer to folks based on their self-identification.

Privilege

A right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed by a particular person or a restricted group of people beyond the advantages of most.

These special rights, advantages, or immunities may be granted by a state, system, or another authority to a restricted group, either by birth or on a conditional basis.

Adapted from USHE Equity Lens Framework

Race

A social construct and fabrication, created to classify people on the arbitrary basis of skin color and other physical features. Although race has no genetic or scientific basis, the concept of race is important and consequential. Societies use race to establish and justify systems of power, privilege, disenfranchisement, and oppression.

USHE Equity Lens Framework

Racism

The combination of individual prejudice (attitudes) and individual discrimination (actions), on one hand, and structural and systemic conditions and practices that reproduce inequalities along racial lines for groups that have experienced a history of discrimination. Prejudice, discrimination, and racism do not require intention.

Pine, G. and Hilliard, A. (1990, April). Rx for racism: Imperatives for America's schools. Phi Delta Kappan, p. 2-3.

Safe & Brave Spaces

Safe spaces are judgment-free zones, based on identity or experience where people are affirmed for their lived experiences. The goal of these spaces is support.

Brave spaces are stretching zones, which encourage dialogue around differences and hold participants accountable for sharing experiences and coming to new understandings. The goal of these spaces is learning and improvement.

Most conversations require a balance of both.

Sexism

Any act, gesture, visual representation, spoken or written words, practice, or behavior based upon the idea that a person or group of persons is inferior because of their sex, which occurs in the public or private sphere, whether online or offline.
(See Heteronormativity)

Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism. Committee of Ministers, Council of Europe. (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers) 3/27/2019).
https://search.coe.int/cm/pages/result_details.aspx?objectid=090000168093b26a

Socialization

Socialization is the process through which we become accustomed to societal norms (rules) about appropriate or acceptable social identities, beliefs and behaviors.

We are bombarded by these messages even before we are born. These messages are offered by a widening social network (interpersonal, institutional, structural). Through socialization, we learn about social identity categories, such as socioeconomic status, race, assigned sex, gender, religion, health status, sexual orientation, many other social identity categories, as well as the boundaries of human worth and value.

Harro, B. (2013). The cycle of socialization. In M. Adams, W.J. Blumenfeld, C. Castañeda,, H.W. Hackman, M.L. Petrs, & X. Zúñiga. (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice* (pp. 45-52). New York: Routledge. Sensoy, O. & DiAngelo, R. (2012). Socialization. In O.Sensoy & R. DiAngelo, *Is everyone really equal?* (pp. 14-25). New York: Teachers College Press.

Social Justice

Both a process and a goal, social justice is a broad term that connotes the practice of allyship and coalition work in order to promote equality, equity, respect, and the assurance of rights within and between communities and social groups.

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Social justice utilizes an analysis of how power, privilege, and oppression impact our experience of our social identities. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole.

Working toward a full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs, social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable” and all members of a space, community, or institution, or society are “physically and psychologically safe and secure.”

Adams, M et al. (2016). *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*. New York: Routledge. p. 1.

Bell, L. (2013). Theoretical foundations. In M. Adams, W.J. Blumenfeld, C. Castañeda,, H.W. Hackman, M.L. Petrs, & X. Zúñiga. (Eds.), *Readings for diversity and social justice*. New York: Routledge.

Underrepresented and Underserved

For the purposes of this framework, an underrepresented group is any student or employee group that has traditionally held a smaller percentage of the total higher education population. Underrepresented groups are disproportionately represented in a quantitative comparison to an equivalent counterpart.

Underserved refers to any group or individual that has been denied access and/or whom systems have marginalized due to operationalized deficit-based thinking (see Deficit-based Thinking). Underserved groups are not necessarily numerical minorities.

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Underrepresented students include but are not limited to students facing economic barriers, students of color, and English Language Learner students are all examples of student groups who historically and presently continue to be disproportionately underrepresented in their higher education pursuits. Both underrepresented and marginalized groups are underserved students who face unique challenges in accessing and completing college certificates and/or degrees due to the systemic barriers that exist.

Faculty and staff groups may also be underrepresented in relation to overall employee population and leadership roles.