RESOURCE GUIDE: PRACTICING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS DURING & AFTER COVID-19

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Maintaining a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) during times of crisis means not letting it get lost in the chaos crises bring to institutions. In the wake of a global pandemic (COVID-19) practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion means thinking critically and taking action as postsecondary leaders to ensure they are turning DEI statements into DEI action plans and adding DEI to their crisis management please. These plans should encompass not only race and gender but all aspects of identity (e.g., disability and sexuality).

The information provided here focuses on emerging themes from current events literature surrounding COVID-19. This resource is meant to guide leaders through actions that can be taken to practice diversity, equity and inclusion during times of crisis. These are not prescriptive and every institution is encouraged to develop their own DEI action plans.

Statements of Solidarity. Institutions must make statements of solidarity to their international students and broader campus communities proclaiming their support through a time where students—particularly Asian and Asian American students—are being targeted more by [xenophobic](#) and [anti-Asian harassment](#) related to COVID-19. These statements should include information regarding campus mental health resources associated with trauma or community trauma and literature-informed information regarding the virus. There should be a zero tolerance policy for racism or xenophobia in all spaces.

These statements of solidarity must also extend to addressing the current political targeting of international students studying in the United States. The most recent example of this were the restrictions placed on international students. There was significant institutional push back and eventually these policies were rescinded. During this, institutions signaled to students through emails and town halls their solidarity and support for international students and finding ways to ensure they can continue to study at their current institutions.

"Pandemics aren't just physical. They bring with them an almost shadow pandemic of psychological and societal injuries as well"
- Monica Schoch-Spana, Medical Anthropologist

These statements must be made with clear policies and practices on how institutions will work to make change and address racial discrimination.

Examine increases in faculty racial and gender inequity created or exacerbated by the crisis.

COVID-19 has brought challenges with it to higher education and it has exacerbated racial and gender inequities in higher education. Women faculty are often assigned more advisees and are responsible for more service based work than their male colleagues. Women faculty of color see an increased bias with regard to their teaching, service, and research responsibilities and pay. It is important for institutions to analyze, during times of budget cuts, the inequity with regard to load and pay to determine whether the actions departments, units, and institutions are taking are disproportionately impacting women and women faculty of color.

Analyze the potential impact of new policies and practices on employees and community members.

Similar to how institutions should be cognizant of the impact budget cuts have on women and women of color, it is important to analyze the impact of new policies and practices on employees and community members (e.g., returning to campus policies), particularly community members with disabilities and those who are caregivers, typically women and women of color. This may mean implementing flexible work policies and additional support for those taking care of children or ill family members, for example. Once policies have been developed these should be communicated to all members of the community along with any existing benefits that may be available to them.

It is imperative campus policymakers include community members from marginalized communities (e.g., faculty and staff with disabilities and women of color) to assist in the brainstorming and development of new policies and procedures moving forward to understand the disproportionate impact on these communities.

Now is also the time to start discussing more ways units can accommodate faculty and staff with disabilities or caregivers through work from home days or flexible scheduling outside of COVID-19.

Utilize this time to develop more inclusive hiring practices. With institutions across the United States instituting hiring freezes, now is the time to review hiring policies and implement equitable and inclusive practices. Aligning hiring practices with the institutions mission and vision for increasing DEI on campus is a way to address non-diverse hiring committees, start implicit bias trainings, and include unit members in the development of more inclusive hiring practices as well. This should become part of a continued dialogue between units and hiring committees ensuring updates to hiring practices, procedures, and committees.

"... Without erasing differences of class, gender, religion, nationality or ability, we need to obliterate the compartmentalization of racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination and see them as a network of behavioral practices that have no place in an institution of higher education."

- B. Venkat Mani - Inside Higher Ed

Maintain investments in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Budget cuts are an inevitable consequence of this global pandemic; however, the answer is not to divest in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Similar to the spread of the virus, it is imperative all members of the community are informed and educated—"Everyone will have to be together, physically or in the virtual space, to resist and fight the shadow pandemic."¹ Continued harassment and xenophobia impacts the daily activities of students and is a direct hindrance to their learning.

¹ Mani, V.B. (2020, May 14). *Fighting the Shadow Pandemic*. Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/05/14/inclusive-teaching-needed-help-combat-xenophobia-racism-and-discrimination-brought>