

Contextual Realities of Diversity and Inclusion

Role of the Chief Diversity Officer

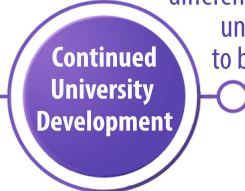
(partnering with campus divisions and operations)

There is an interlocking relationship among and between campus entities supporting innovations linked to recruitment and retention efforts. Likewise, it is vital that there be a robust support system in place responding to the unique needs of selected student groups while simultaneously canvassing the needs of the entire student body.

There is room at the University Table for Social Justice believing in the worth and dignity of humanity.



Universities must promote a welcoming environment. Similarly, each member of the campus community should believe they are valued. Routinely revisiting practices, policies and procedures will make a difference. Introspection vis-à-vis bias, unconscious and conscious, helps to bring about qualitative change.



Universities are learning communities. They are positioned for ongoing growth commensurate with an ever-changing global citizenry. Being culturally responsive and adaptive can both solidify existing unity and accentuate respected differences, all enriched by shared discourse



and proactive dialogue. At their core, culturally responsive learning communities illuminate and invigorate optimal engagement for everyone. The circle of learning (and becoming more culturally competent) is endless.



Cultivating an inclusive campus environment is necessary and strategic. Being genuine in our relations with each other and open to new spaces of learning will make a positive difference in efforts to retain and underscore each person's valued presence. Recognizing that in many situations, faculty and staff of color, for instance, may have added responsibilities linked to service and mentoring given their intrinsic "lead by example" function.



The work of honing an inclusive campus community is mutual. Each of us has a part to play. We are all stewards of the daily and upward labor inclusive excellence requires. Those of us who serve in leadership capacities must be steadfast in keeping diversity and inclusion efforts at the forefront of university life. Moreover, encouragement of new leaders to join the fold must occur at all times. Active utilization and dedicated mobilization of alumni who prominently serve in leadership roles across the world will further bind the inclusive university together. This is particularly true when confronting any challenges in the midst and celebrating all victories that ensue.



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