NACUBO Presents: The Equity Lens: “Exploring Systems and Processes With Underrepresented Students in Mind”

Facilitated by: Trinice McNally M.S (She/Her)
Trinice McNally (she/her) is a Black Queer Feminist Migrant and Survivor who is nationally recognized transformative leader, student affairs professional, organizer and creative committed to the liberation of oppressed people. She is most passionate about developing strategies, initiatives and curating spaces for historically marginalized populations to transform and thrive through programmatic, advocacy and political education efforts. She hails from London, England— with her lineage traced to St. Mary’s, Jamaica, by way of Miami, FL. Trinice currently serves as the founding director of the Center for Diversity, Inclusion & Multicultural Affairs at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), founding organizer of the Envisioning Safety On Our Campuses DMV Project and founding director/CEO of TJM Forward Culture, Education, and Organizing Group, a creative educational consultant agency committed to developing art, program and organizing initiatives that mobilize societal change and transformation.
Land Acknowledgement:

Land acknowledgments are a powerful way of showing respect and honoring the Indigenous Peoples of the land on which we work and live. Acknowledgment is a simple way of resisting the erasure of Indigenous histories and working towards honoring and inviting the truth. In the Washington DC area, the Piscataway, Pamunkey, the Nentego (Nanichoke), Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Monacan, and the Powhatan tribes have previously thrived. It is also important to name and honor the enslaved Africans who were brought to this land against their will 500 years ago and have stewarded this land and built this city.

Text your city/state to: (907) 312-5085 to find your the tribal history of your location.
Today’s Session goals:

- Explore practical methods to address the needs of diverse students
- Interrogate your campus culture both institutionally and from a student perspective
- Utilize systems and processes to examine the causes of systemic inequity in higher education
3 Grounding Understandings:

1. Institutions are microcosms of society, which should always be a grounding place of understanding and how we must commit to alternative practices that prioritize underrepresented & marginalized students.

2. The postsecondary system is more and more complicit as a passive agent in the systematic reproduction of white racial privilege across generations (Separate & Unequal 2013).

3. Culture shapes beliefs, attitudes and values. In return, it shapes the policies, handbook and that creates experiences.
Before we get to equity & justice...
Getting to the root: Culture

Systems don’t run by themselves. People are the conduit of systems and the heart that infuses them is culture. Culture is what creates policies & laws. The behavior, values and ideas of people who hold power are what shapes the institution, programs and services. But most important the experience of the community (faculty, staff and students).

Culture is not static; it is dynamic. It refers not only to those that we are born into but, ones we choose.
Importance of Cultural Competence

- Cultural competence refers to a set of behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs that allow a professional to be effective in a variety of cross-cultural situations. **It is not an end goal, but a commitment to an ongoing engagement and transformation.**

- Cultural Competency training is a prerequisite before Anti-racist, Gender/Sexuality training etc. Before someone can actively engage in this type of work, capacity and consciousness is needed.

- Every faculty/staff member should participate in ongoing cultural competence trainings & conversations.
For yourself

1. Identities you think about most often
2. Identities you think about least often
3. Your own identities you would like to learn more about
4. Identities that have the strongest effect on how you perceive yourself
5. Identities that have the greatest effect on how others perceive you
Let’s take it back:

In the U.S., right from the start, Black people and people of color have always had limited access to education. From the inception of the U.S., there's been a foundational dehumanization of people with other*/different identities that have always been rooted in a set of religious, legal, economic & educational barriers that systematically excluded them from not just participation in society, but adjustment on campus & served as a key factor in inequity.
Many universities try to approach building this work from an equality framing versus an equity-based framing. This often renders counterproductive results because it tends to focus on one type of identity at a time or we create services/support for some identifiable. Yet, people themselves aren’t one-dimensional and neither are their needs. Hence, Intersectionality:
Cultural Competence
When administrators & personnel have the space to grapple with their identities, behavior and values, they have the bandwidth and consciousness to commit to undergoing training. This is the first step and must be ongoing.

Training & Culture Shifting
Ongoing trainings that pertain to supporting historically marginalized/underrepresented group help shift the culture of the institution. Conversations held departmentally to finance offices, shift the culture where professionals can be whole and creates better conditions for students.

Equitable Policies/Practices
We see this manifest throughout the institution through statements, cross-collaborations, inclusive orientations/services etc. If the people who hold power are competent, they policies & practices will meet the need.
Things to Remember:

Every office, specifically frontliners are the people the most likely to interact with students. Being conscious of your identities, values & beliefs sub-consciously translate into your interactions/decisions.

It is integral for departments and divisions to create ongoing intersectional spaces that foster dialogue and create understanding. This is how equitable practices are created, buy-in is formed and culture is changed and experiences related to their complex identities.

- Institutions are microcosms of society, no matter how many DEI initiatives we create, if we’re not careful we will replicate the world we live in
- Diversity/inclusion centers are in no way solely responsible for all diversity matters. The work is always collaborative and expansive to shift culture
- What you practice is who you are and what you’ll do, the office culture you participate often sets the precedence for students
Practical methods to address the needs of diverse students

**Culture**
- Create spaces to host brave conversations with colleagues
- Create containers that help marginalized students feel supported and seen
- Utilize inclusive & diverse artwork, signage etc. throughout campus & publications

**Training**
- Develop a campus wide cultural competency training continuum
- Create specialized trainings/programs that reinforce DEI values
- Create an incentive system based on meetings needs for those who participate

**Assessment**
- How does the policy, initiative, resource allocation, or strategy, etc. advance opportunities for historically underserved students?
- What does the current data tell us about representation among students, staff, and faculty groups? Check the source of the data for quality and impartiality.
Key Tips to Sustaining an Inclusive Culture

- Appreciating other cultural and diverse perspectives and norms (being open-minded and nonjudgmental; accepting differences).
- Being knowledgeable about the similarities, differences and relations between cultures (research and ask if you're not sure, This knowledge helps people to challenge misinformation and stereotypes about other countries and people, and thus counters intolerance and oversimplified representations of the world.
- Being adaptable in unfamiliar situations
- Having awareness, knowledge and understanding of historically marginalized groups
- Being able to effectively communicate across cultural and linguistic boundaries.
- Ensure that the content of applications, publications and materials are inclusive (visibly and content-wise)
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