



Definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

DEI Working Group

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December 2, 2024

Overview

- We have not found a universal definition of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).
- Few states have defined DEI as a concept.
- More common to define the terms individually.

DEI Defined In Idaho

- To date, DEI has not been officially defined in Idaho through legislation or executive action.
 - HB440 (2020) prohibited state entities from discriminating against or providing preferential treatment to an individual or group based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public employment, education, or contracting.
 - HB377 (2021) prohibited the teaching of subjects often found in critical race theory.

Terms as Used By Idaho Universities

- **Diversity:** The multiple layers of people's identity that make individuals unique including race, ethnicity, gender expression or identity, socio-economic status, age, country of origin, veteran status, abilities, health characteristics, accents, religious beliefs, and political beliefs.
- **Equity:** Promoting access, inclusion, and resource development for our university community.
- **Inclusivity:** Creating an accepting and nurturing campus climate where similarities and differences are respected, supported, and valued.

Diversity Defined

- Federal Government – Executive Order 14035 (2021):
 - Practice of including many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of the American people, including underserved communities.
- Kentucky Department of Education:
 - Individual traits and differences which directly impact the engagement, inclusivity and experiences of students such as: race, socioeconomic status, regional differences, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, country of origin, religion, and military status.
- Oregon DEI Action Plan:
 - Honoring and including people of different backgrounds, identities, and experiences collectively and as individuals.

Equity Defined

- Kentucky Department of Education:
 - Promotion of access, opportunity and advancement of all individuals, including those in underserved communities, to identify and eliminate conditions that prevent the ability of all students to reach their full potential.
- Oregon DEI Action Plan:
 - Effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs to achieve fairness in outcomes.
- University of Montana:
 - Evaluating systems and institutions to identify and remove biases in the distribution of opportunities and resources.

Inclusion Defined

- Federal Government Executive Order 14035:
 - Recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of employees of all backgrounds.
- University of Washington:
 - Culture that is welcoming to all people regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, age, abilities, and relation, and everyone is valued, respected and able to reach their full potential.
- University of Montana:
 - Ensuring differences are not discouraged, different perspectives are respectfully heard, and every individual feels a sense of belonging.

DEI Defined as a Concept

- Florida Department of Education Regulation 9.016:
 - Any program, campus activity, or policy that classifies individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, gender identity, or sexual orientation and promotes differential or preferential treatment of individuals on the basis of such classification.
- Iowa Senate File 2435 (2024) and Texas Education Code 51.3525:
 - Any effort to manipulate or otherwise influence the composition of the faculty or student body with reference to race, color, or ethnicity, apart from ensuring colorblind and sex-neutral admissions and hiring.
 - Any effort to promote differential treatment of or provide special benefits to individuals on the basis of race, color, or ethnicity.
 - Effort to promote trainings implemented in reference to race, color, or ethnicity.

Considerations

- States looking to strengthen DEI, typically define it in terms of correcting past actions and are seeking to provide opportunities to underserved communities.
- States looking to limit DEI, typically define it in terms of “divisive concepts” or teaching that one group is superior or inferior to others.
 - Will often be framed in terms of free speech and open discussion of all thoughts.

Questions

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