Equity and Inclusion during COVID-19

This guidance document has been prepared by the College Committee on Inclusive Excellence at Saint Mary's College of California to assist campus decision makers, faculty, administrators, students and staff on providing supportive positive and inclusive campus climates during the COVID-19 crisis.

1. Interrupt oppression when possible, by speaking against racism, sexism, xenophobia and all hateful or intolerant speech, both in person and online. Be an "up-stander," and discourage others from engaging in such behavior. If it cannot be done safely, start a different conversation or provide a distraction if the person being targeted is not safe.

2. Do not use terms such as "Chinese Virus" or other terms which cast either intentional or   unintentional projections of hatred toward Asian communities, and do not allow the use of these terms by others. Refer to the virus as either "COVID-19" or "coronavirus" in both oral and written communications.

3. Advocate for students who have fewer resources. Address unequal access to technology, hardware and software. Ask students, faculty and staff about their level of access to technology. Use that information to inform the technology choices for your courses and work. Think outside the box for solutions, such as offering loaner equipment or assisting with access to internet service.

4. Ensure web accessibility for students with disabilities when using online learning or remote instruction. See this resource from SDS. See this webinar from the Department of Education.

5. Be inclusive and mindful that everyone has different circumstances. Continue to treat everyone with respect and patience both in their presence and in their absence. Do not resort or revert to unkind discussions about people whether they are in your company or not.

6. Be patient with one another during email, text and video conversations. There can be a tendency to want immediate answers, and typically friendly ways of communicating can break down without deliberate effort to maintain kindness. Try to be as clear as possible in online conversations. Don't assume that broad, sweeping statements will be fully understood.

7. Be kind and understanding regarding expectations. Relax requirements that can become impositions, such as demanding business attire for online video meetings or classes, or penalizing participants in online classes for wearing casual attire, or not participating in a quiet place. Remember that people may be operating without resources and access to many material items and services. Keep the focus on what is most important.

8. Build community through checking-in, virtual coffee/tea hours with colleagues, office-mates, students and faculty. It's important to keep connections during this time.

9. Remember those in our SMC community who are on campus continuing to provide food and cleaning services. Support the health care workers who are on the front line of this pandemic. Help ensure that they get the rest they need, can attend to personal and familial needs, and are supported as health care workers and as people.

10. "Flatten the curve" by attending to the health-related guidelines set forth by federal and local governments.

11. Remember to practice self-care! Recognize your own stress, manage yourself before managing others, and make time for your physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

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RESOURCES USED TO DEVELOP ABOVE GUIDANCE-

Coronavirus: University of California Updates and Resources, Office of the President, University of California Rejecting Coronavirus Xenophobia, Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, UC Davis

COVID-19: What's in a Name, Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, UCLA

At Our Best: Embodying the Principles of Community, Newsroom, UC Merced

Inclusivity During Difficult Times, UC Irvine Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, UC Irvine

Online Learning Research Center, School of Education, UC Irvine

Inclusion, Equity, and Access While Teaching Remotely, Center for Teaching Excellence, Rice University Webinar on Online Education and Website Accessibility, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education Completing Ongoing Faculty Searches, Office of Academic Personnel, UC Irvine