Maintaining Equity and Inclusion in Virtual Learning Environments

As we strive to keep our students, faculty and staff safe in these unusual times, many faculty are wondering how they can ensure that they continue to serve ALL of their students. This guide provides suggestions and resources to help faculty continue teaching in ways that are equitable and inclusive as they move to teach face-to-face classes remotely. There is a lot of information here, not all of which you should even try to implement immediately; however, having this information in the background as you plan your course will help ensure that what you *do* implement will follow best practices. The outline on ( )2616()4b)-0e)-3tgaatET2reW*nBT/F2f106e)-7)-3tgaatET2reW*ng(n8g6o2-9Tf10985Tm3te

with limited access to computers or stable internet service.

- ‹ *Ensure all files, images, videos and other posted content are accessible (i.e.,* visual content can be clearly translated by a screen-reader and audio content has visual captions)
- ‹ *Provide approved accommodations for students who present accommodation letters from the Student Ability Success Center*
- ‹ *Check whether content is mobile-friendly*
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Be Flexible and Open. A key aspect of equitable and inclusive teaching, in general, is recognizing and working with the diversity of our students, along multiple dimensions.

In the virtual environment, and at this moment, there are several ways that you can incorporate that acknowledgement into your course in meaningful ways.

- *Address microaggressions in discussion boards, chats and other places where students interact*
- *Consider integrating culturally relevant materials*
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- *Be aware of how the current situation is impacting different communities*

Be Proactive and Intrusive. A well-designed virtual course will build in a great deal of structure and accountability. In addition, designing for equity and inclusion means being particularly proactive about supporting students who may need some extra attention.

- *Pay attention to early warning signs that students may be struggling and reach out proactively*
- *Use more formative assessment and make completion mandatory*
- *Know what resources are available for students*
- *Prepare your students for all-digital learning*

Be Relational. While establishing supportive interpersonal relationships with students is one of the most fundamental tenets of effective teaching, it can be particularly important for students from traditionally under-represented backgrounds.

- *Continue to have opportunities for live, synchronous engagement*
- *Talk to your students about what is happening*
- *Build / maintain community among students*
- *Provide students with support and resources*

Be Transparent. Being inclusive means being mindful that not all of our students are well-versed in the hidden curriculum that faculty may take for granted. When we throw in the additional challenges of distance learning, we must work even harder to ensure