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Office of Equity and Inclusion

Academic Inclusion Priorities to Respond to COVID-19

Josefina Landrieu, Office of Equity and Inclusion

Priyank Shah, Office of Equity and Inclusion

Harold Torrence, Faculty, Dakota County Technical College

Kimberly Johnson, Assoc. VP of Teaching and Learning- South Central College

Leading Through A Crisis

The landscape of higher education has fundamentally shifted.

Campuses across the country are closing and/or transitioning to operating fully online as a **response to slow the spread of the Coronavirus** (COVID-19). Institutions are working to address rapidly changing environments all the while working to meet the needs of the most fragile populations including underserved and underrepresented students.



Statement of Anti-Racism & Discrimination

Minnesota State is committed to maintaining an environment that prioritizes dignity and respect free from discrimination and is supportive of all members of our community affected by this global health crisis. Bias, discrimination, and harassment are against our values and violate Minnesota State policies.

For more information, please go to:

<https://www.minnstate.edu/board/policy/1b01.html>



Common Language & Key Definitions

“First, we shape our language, then our language shapes us.”



Priority Areas & Presentation Overview

- **Important Considerations**
- **Online Course Delivery**
- **Practical Considerations**
- **Academic Support & Policy**
- **Campus Reflections**
- **Semesters to Come**



Important Considerations & Things to Remember



Access & Familiarity

Overarching Considerations

- Learning curve to e-learning technologies
- Students may have limited access to consistent, reliable internet
- Courses may require peripheral technology that is not readily available (e.g. scanners, printers, webcams, etc.)
- Students may not have a dedicated workspace free from distraction

Academic Continuity & Support

- Asynchronous Instruction
- Check-in with students and be prepared to offer services they may need (e.g. students affairs, counseling, etc.)
- CTE Courses, Practicums, & Internships



Student Stressors

Physical & Work-Related Stressors

- Students may become ill or need to attend to others who are ill
- Some working students (e.g. grocery stores, healthcare) may have increased demand from their employers
- Students may be struggling with a loss of income as workplace needs shift (on- & off-campus jobs)

Mental & Emotional Stressors

- Lack of certainty of what happens with their studies
- Students may be exposed to stressors “at home” that are mitigated when on-campus
- Isolation from social networks & support resources can negatively affect well-being



Online Course Delivery Considerations



Online Course Delivery

Reminders:

- All Minnesota State Board Policies Apply to Online Space: 1B1 (non-discrimination) & 1B3 (sexual violence)
- Due dates may need to be changed & should be clearly communicated

Considerations & Practices:

- Online & Recorded Content need: more time, clear communication, & high-quality audio/visual
- Include Captions in Recorded content: Zoom is 80% accurate, transcriptions & captions need editing
- Utilize white board examples to walk through problems & information
- Response Times: Should be clearly communicated to students (e.g. responses should be expected in one day; response is limited after XX:XX pm)
- Discipline Specific Online Pedagogy



Campus Reflection: Dakota County Technical College



DAKOTA COUNTY

TECHNICAL COLLEGE



Practical Considerations & Looking Forward



Practical Considerations

Supporting Learners

- Communication with students is critical
- Flexibility during a highly fluid & unprecedented situation
- Tutoring Resources
- Office hours in alternative formats - virtual access & phone
- Encourage Seeking of Guidance - Advising & Financial Aid
- Students that are not “engaged”
- Anti-Racism & Discrimination Response



Campus Reflection: South Central College



Considerations for Faculty

Short-term Implications & Long-term Challenges

- Differences by campus type & how academic continuity is impacted
- Support faculty to a successful transition to remote learning
 - The pivot is unprecedented in scale and impressive
 - Build on this experience as we look to the future term

Direct Engagement of Students

- Struggling students often face greatest challenge
- Partnering with students & offer guidance
- Share Experiences, Togetherness & Community
- Communicate readily & frequently



Moving & Looking Forward

Term Completion

- Withdrawals & Incompletes: Consult with Advisors, Financial Aid, Faculty, and other resources
- Identifying & Supporting Graduating Students

Academic Policy

- Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) & Appeals
- Grade Policies

Coming Semesters

- Graduation Required Courses
- Scheduling In-person Courses
- Licensure & Certification Examinations



Discussions & Questions

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION DURING COVID-19



10 things to keep in mind for Lake Superior College's diverse student body during this time.

1 ENGAGE

Proactively seek out your students. Do not wait for students to act or ask; they might be waiting for you to do the same. Start the communication. Ask "Is this the first time you've taken a class online? How are you accessing this class? What concerns do you have or is there any other information I should know?"

2 NEW EXPECTATIONS

Starting out this new online period, be sure students know what you expect of them, how class will be run, and what changes the course will undergo as a result of the current situation.



3 TECHNOLOGY

Address unequal access to technology. Ask students about their level of access to technology and use that information to inform the technology choices for your courses. Think about everything in your toolkit: email, text messages, phone calls, video conferencing/calling tools, Facebook, Twitter, or other social media.

4 INTERNET ACCESS

Assess students' internet access. Consider both asynchronous and synchronous options for students for those who have limited access to a computer or internet for a few hours a day.



5 BE INFORMED

Statistically, students of color do significantly worse than their white counterparts in distance learning classes. Be aware of this and actively look to close this gap.

6 NEW EVALUATIONS METHODS.

Students without computers will have a difficult time typing out long essays or other projects on their phone. Consider alternative evaluation methods such as presentations via Zoom, videos that can be sent via cell phone, virtual presentations, etc.



7 CLASS HOURS

Be realistic in maintaining your former class schedules as they may not work now for your students. Be open to students' telling you why they have trouble meeting during regular class hours. Remember, a lot of our non-traditional and students from diverse backgrounds have disproportionate responsibilities in their personal lives.

8 CAPTIONING

When possible, make sure video lectures are captioned. Someone in your class may need captioned videos for accessibility or due to language needs.



9 STUDENT SUPPORT

Encourage your students reach out to each other and create a support network. Use whatever digital means necessary to stay in touch. There are free tools, like Slack, that are good places to "gather" online; you can also create a Facebook group, a hashtag on Twitter or Instagram. Email or group text messages work. Find a way to stay in touch so that no one of you feels stranded or alone.

10 BE FORGIVING

Here's the thing: your students are just as anxious about all of this as you may be. They are nervous, unprepared, worried they will not meet the course requirements now, and how this is all going to work out.



This is our chance to show our students that we care. Be forgiving of yourself, your colleagues and your students. We are all new to this.

Questions on Diversity, Equity or Inclusion?
Contact Sarah Lyons,
Executive Diversity Officer.
sarah.lyons@lsc.edu



Upcoming OEI Webinar

Part 3: Guiding Campus Response to Address Racism and Xenophobia

- April 14th, 2020: 9:00-10:30 am

Building Safe & Inclusive Facilities

- April 30th, 2020: 10:00-11:30 am





MINNESOTA STATE

Office of Equity and Inclusion

Email: oei@minnstate.edu

Twitter: [@MinnStateEquity](https://twitter.com/MinnStateEquity)

30 East 7th Street, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101-7804

651-201-1800
888-667-2848

<https://minnstate.edu/system/equity/index.html>

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