

PRSSA

Diversity Toolkit

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INTRODUCTION

Diversity is the way in which a group of people have different backgrounds and identities. Inclusion is when every person in the group feels they can positively contribute in a space. Equity is the guaranteed access to opportunities for marginalized folks, eliminating the barriers that block access.

Diversity is a marathon, not a sprint. Diversity and inclusion initiatives are constantly changing and evolving. As leaders, it is our responsibility to change and evolve with D&I.

The purpose of this toolkit is to assist you in developing authentic relationships with PRSSA's diverse membership. Every Chapter leader must be on board to help build strong relationships.

The following pages will provide you with a general guideline on how to approach building authentic relationships with diverse membership. The Toolkit is expected to be updated annually to ensure its contents are current and relevant.

Please contact us with your thoughts and needs at vpdiversity@prsa.org. Also, feel free to use the social media tags #PRDiversity and @prsadiversity.

This is the third edition of the Toolkit. The work and the efforts of all those who contributed to the creation of this document have been invaluable and have provided a strong foundation for the 2021 edition.

Thank you for your service,

Rayna van Beuzekom
Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion

ABOUT THE PRSSA VICE PRESIDENT OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Over the years, PRSSA has put in place several programs to support members and their transition into the public relations industry. In 2019, the PRSSA Assembly voted in the inaugural vice president of diversity and inclusion who quickly developed initiatives that bettered the Society such as the PRoud Council and International Ambassadors.

Chapter Connection

The D&I Chapter Connection is a resource for diversity and inclusion Chapter leaders to meet and talk through D&I situations. This resource is used as a way for Chapter leaders from around the country to provide support to one another.

Responsibilities Include:

- Leading diversity and inclusion initiatives on a Chapter level to build strong relationships.
- Working through diversity and inclusion dilemmas with fellow Chapter leaders.
- Supporting fellow Chapter leaders through encouragement and advice
- Being open-minded and respectful towards all points of view
- Promoting the diversity and inclusion initiatives PRSSA National offers to their Chapter
- Being the liaison between PRSSA National and Chapter D&I initiatives

PRoud Council

The PRoud Council is a National subcommittee that assists the vice president of diversity and inclusion and actively facilitates diversity and inclusion initiatives on a local and international level on behalf of PRSSA by acting as a resource for Chapters and individual members. This is an opportunity for committee members to be the change needed in the field of communications and the world.

Responsibilities include:

- Reflecting the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct and performance.
- Being inclusive and respectful of all people and points of view.
- Developing D&I activities for PRSSA Chapters to engage in.
- Assisting in the implementation of D&I workshops, webinars and virtual panels.
- Promoting diverse member attendance at national PRSSA events and participation in initiatives throughout the Society.
- Contributing to the creation of accessibility changes for members with disabilities.
- Communicating with Chapters and Faculty Advisers.
- Assisting the mentorship program with PRSA.
- Furthering digital education and professional development resources.

International Ambassadors

To help bridge the gap between national and international Chapters, PRSSA has developed the role of International Ambassadors. We are determined to create unity and share opportunities among PRSSA members within our international Chapters in Argentina, Colombia, Puerto Rico and Peru. International Ambassadors become more involved with PRSSA nationwide and improve their public relations skills, expand their network and learn what it means as a leader to work on a remote team.

Responsibilities include:

- Working with current Faculty Advisers to develop relationships with potential PRSSA universities (in the country).
- Promoting attendance at national PRSSA events and participation in initiatives throughout the Society.
- Developing and cultivating strategic alliances with the members of the National Committee and the Chapters.
- Assisting the vice president of diversity and inclusion with any matter or specific initiative of the country.
- Supporting its Chapter president in the work of achieving the objectives of the membership.
- Assisting in the planning, promotion and execution of national PRSSA events in the country.
- Serving as ambassador and liaison for the sponsoring Chapter of PRSA.
- Participating in telephone calls/teleconferences of the International Ambassador of PRSSA.

PRSSA recognizes there is more to be done to truly support our members. That is why we are putting new initiatives in place to provide better educational and professional development opportunities that will create more spaces for everyone in our community to learn together, tell their stories and make an impact.

BEING YOU | PRSSA NATIONAL D&I STATEMENT

PRSSA members are creative alone, but together we are visionaries. This means PRSSA members must be their authentic selves, practice inclusivity and be responsible for each other – all with respect and understanding infused within our communication. For PRSSA and the public relations industry to grow and evolve, being creative is not enough. We need visionaries to ensure we will be a more empathetic, dynamic and innovative organization and workforce.

Inclusion is not just about having “a seat at the table.” It’s about ensuring everyone’s voice is heard and fully considered. PRSSA recognizes the importance of listening to all voices and experiences to forge a viable Society that aids the profession and future professionals in serving diverse and increasingly multicultural publics.

The most obvious contexts of diversity include race, ethnicity, religion, age, ability, sexual orientation, political belief, gender, gender identity, country of origin, culture and diversity of thought. However, in a rapidly changing society, diversity continues to evolve and can include class, socioeconomic status, life experiences, learning and working styles, personality types and intellectual traditions and perspectives. These defining attributes impact how we approach our work, connect with others and move through the world.

PRSSA encourages its members to always respect, embrace, celebrate and validate each other’s differences. These diverse and inclusive practices, when done proactively, contribute to the growth of our Chapters, the public relations industry, the communities in which we live and work, and ourselves.

PRSSA members are the future of the industry. It is our responsibility as bright, young leaders to be the change we envision.

D&I CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS

Recognizing that programming efforts by the PRoud Council can be helped through knowledge of national celebrations of diversity and inclusion, this initial calendar of activities is intended to provide insights and information for execution of Chapter-specific and coordinated activities.

Month	Area
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Year/Welcome January 18 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day PRSA Foundation Scholarships Posted
February	Black History Month (in USA and Canada)
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women’s History Month National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month March 8 – International Women’s Day March 31 – International Transgender Day of Visibility
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaf History Month Celebrate Diversity Month
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Mental Health Month May 17 – International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia May 21 – World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development Congrats to PRSSA graduates
June	LGBTQ Pride Month
July	D. Parke Gibson Pioneer Award/D&I Chapter Award
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> August 9 – International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples August 9 – Hijri New Year August 26 – Women’s Equality Day
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hispanic Heritage Month September 24 – National Native American Day
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Disability Employment Awareness Month October 10 – World Mental Health Day October 11 – National Coming Out Day PRSA D&I Month PRSA International Conference D&I Celebration
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native American Heritage Month November 20 – National Transgender Day of Remembrance
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal Human Rights Month December 3 – International Day for People with Disabilities December 10 – International Human Rights Day

DO'S AND DON'TS OF D&I CHAPTER LEADERS

The job of the PRSSA D&I Chapter leader is one that is vitally important to our PRSSA Chapters. There may be a desire to quickly take on the role with gusto, but below are varied “do’s” and “don’ts” to ensure you remain effective while doing your job.

Do's:

- Seek support and advice from fellow D&I student leaders or leaders in the industry.
- Develop a D&I strategic plan for your Chapter that aligns with the PRSSA D&I Strategic Plan and Chapter plans.
- Place D&I at the top of executive board meeting agendas to show priority.
- Brainstorm and seek ideas.
- Ensure the Chapter’s plan fits in with the overall D&I Strategic Plan.
- Develop a yearlong calendar.
- Proactively lay out how others can contribute to the success of your Chapter’s plan.
- Provide guidance on how to leverage personal and PRSSA social media platforms to advance your Chapter’s D&I efforts and initiatives.
- Build guidance on acceptable/unacceptable content.
- Seek opportunities to partner with other affinity groups and civic organizations.
- Use the Toolkit and also develop a list of resources to have readily available to refer to and share with others.
- Remain aware of the passage of prosocial programs and the elevation of trailblazers in your community and determine how to acknowledge (social media platforms, Op-Ed, etc.).
- Tag PRSSA Diversity and Inclusion and PRSA Foundation in addition to your Chapter on significant posts: #prdiversity, @prdiversity, @prsafoundation.
- Conduct monthly/quarterly meetings to discuss Chapter progress.

Don'ts:

- Take on too much or go about it alone.
- Get overwhelmed.
- Be intimidated by the moment. Breathe.
- Allow yourself to be defined as having the answers to how to solve all inequities.
- Be afraid to add your voice to the conversation.

ENGAGING AND RECRUITING WITH STUDENTS AND FACULTY ADVISERS AT HBCU AND HACU INSTITUTIONS

Faculty Advisers at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and institutions recognized by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACUs) have revealed a consistent need for support both in professional development and financial resources for their PRSSA Chapters. There are often opportunities that are not available for students and Faculty Advisers from these institutions. The lack of these resources should never prevent students or their Faculty Advisers from taking advantage of the exceptional assets PRSSA has to offer.

After numerous insightful conversations between PRSA and Faculty Advisers from HBCUs and HACUs, PRSSA shares some recommendations from PRSA to strengthen our collective commitment to the principles of diversity and inclusion and future practitioners.

To that end, below are recommendations for your engagement in this regard:

- Help to diversify the industry by supporting minority students who aspire to a career in public relations by helping them develop industry familiarity and knowledge, relevant skills and a network of professional contacts.
- Be generous in offering internship and/or mentorship opportunities. Even if your Chapter may not have a formal paid or unpaid internship program, be creative about offering exposure to a professional work environment.
- Take advantage of the opportunities available from PRSSA National.
- Invite local PRSA Chapters to attend your meetings and attend their meetings.
- Collaborate with local PRSA Chapters to host training sessions consistently and regularly.
- Have agency, corporate and other speakers come to campuses to help with LinkedIn profiles, professional social media presence and resume writing and interviewing.
- Work closely with diversity departments at your college/university in addition to HBCU and HACU Chapters.
- If your local PRSA Chapter has a strong relationship with a sponsor, partner with the sponsor in support of diverse students. The advantage of “priming the pipeline” benefits students and your PRSSA Chapter as well as the PRSA Chapter and the sponsor.
- Set aside a fundraising event for the sole purpose of sending a student or students to a District event or the PRSSA International Conference.
- Partner with other student groups to drive diversity and inclusion initiatives locally, or to implement a new program or project for the community.
- Ask PRSA Chapters to offer PRSSA International Conference sponsorship/underwriting for students and Faculty Advisers to attend.

These are just a few suggestions on how your PRSSA Chapter can grow and strengthen its relationship with PRSA Chapters and Faculty Advisers at HBCUs and HACUs. It’s important to note that these suggestions are not all encompassing. We encourage PRSSA Chapters to create opportunities that fit their Chapter personalities and the needs of diverse students within their reach.

Our commitment to providing opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds has never been stronger. Members of the PRoud Council will continue the dialogue with Faculty Advisers – with emphasis on those at HBCUs and HACUs – and will continue to develop strategies and tactics to meet these needs.

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: IDEAS AND EVENTS

George Floyd's death in May 2020, combined with a history of systemic racism and police brutality toward innocent Black people and people of color, advanced the rise in protests and caused the mobilization of people to share educational resources and stories across social media. Due to the uproar on social media, organizations and public relations pros have become much more aware of the need for allies and activists to fight against social injustices. As PRSSA works to improve and bolster its diversity and inclusion initiatives, we encourage Chapters not to resort to what is familiar. Instead, we urge Chapters to think outside the box in order to educate students and create a welcoming, fulfilling environment for our diverse members.

According to Business Insider, organizations tend to turn to “unconscious bias training,” or implicit bias training, as the go-to solution for increasing diversity and inclusion. Unconscious bias training programs are designed to expose people to their unconscious biases, provide tools to adjust automatic patterns of thinking and ultimately eliminate discriminatory behaviors.

Unconscious bias (or implicit bias) is often defined as prejudice or unsupported judgments in favor of or against one thing, person or group as compared to another in a way that is usually considered unfair. As a result of unconscious biases, certain people benefit and other people are penalized.

Despite the popularity of unconscious bias training, there is growing evidence that these training sessions do not work. Below are several issues regarding unconscious bias training:

- Some organizational members are skeptical of the training sessions to begin with.
- The validity and effectiveness of bias training is weak.
- Companies treat these training sessions as the sole ingredient in the corporate diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) recipe.
- There is often a lack of focus placed on structural and systemic issues, which may hamper the success of these training sessions.

This doesn't mean organizations should give up on unconscious bias training. They can improve their training, and they also can look for other opportunities. Below are some strategies recommended by PRSSA for Chapters to address issues of social injustice and ensure that their practices truly lead to long-term changes in the organization

Examine Chapter practices.

Your Chapter may have cracks within its structure. Go through the different practices your Chapter has adopted and evaluate whether fair standards have been utilized. Consider if inequities and imbalances within your organization trickle down from the executive board/senior level members. Be honest about your practices and ask if they have or have not improved your Chapter's culture.

Be accountable.

Open up about your D&I shortfalls. This could include negative interactions with the executive board, toxicity, cliques, a lack of messaging about your Chapter's D&I efforts and more. Once you are accountable for your Chapter's shortfalls, environment, mistakes and/or decisions that may have done more damage than good, you can work with your Chapter to move forward on a more positive note. It's also important to emphasize that D&I is everyone's responsibility, not just the job of the chief diversity officer.

Include relevant scenarios in unconscious bias training.

If you do decide to implement unconscious bias training into your Chapter, include several job- or internship-relevant scenarios to increase the training effectiveness. According to a Harvard Business Review study, including job-relevant scenarios into unconscious bias training allowed employees to make concrete commitments to activities and behaviors in the workplace. So rather than focusing solely on concepts and terminology (that is important for a baseline understanding), Chapter D&I leaders should make sure their efforts are put into creating training that encompasses workplace practices where bias is more likely to creep in such as in agencies or corporations. Chapter D&I leaders also should be provided with actionable steps to prevent bias from impacting decision-making processes. This is likely to increase members' commitment to goals and objectives set forth in the unconscious bias training, thus increasing the overall effectiveness of the training.

General suggestions

- Learn as much as possible about unconscious bias and ways to combat it.
- Tell your story ... and listen to the stories of others.
- Avoid stereotypes and over generalizations.
- Separate feelings from facts.
- Have a diverse group of people around the decision-making table.
- Engage in self-reflection to uncover personal biases.
- Develop safe and brave spaces to discuss unconscious bias.
- Don't expect a quick fix.
- Practice empathy.

Diversity Recruitment Tips

As COVID-19 has accelerated the digital transformation of education, many PRSSA Chapters must adapt to virtual recruitment. Engaging a diverse pool of students adds to the challenge. Below are recommendations that can be used both in person and virtually, for the recruitment of diverse members:

Publicize your Chapter's diversity and inclusion policy before the school year begins.

Your policy should set formal goals and strategies pertaining to creating an equal opportunity environment. Once your policy is in place it should be made public both internally and externally.

Expand your network. Now.

Word-of-mouth is a great method that isn't going anywhere. Building relationships with more employers or students can encourage them to spread the word to potential members with diverse backgrounds. You can reach out to:

- Diverse affinity groups at your college/university.
- People from conferences, seminars, job fairs and networking events.
- Professionals through online networking sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook.
- Your own diverse friends, neighbors, colleagues.
- Your local PRSA Chapter. Perhaps your Chapter has a connection with your local PRSA Chapter. Inform the PRSA Chapter that your PRSSA Chapter is struggling to obtain diverse memberships and let them know your Chapter needs help.

Highlight member benefits.

These can include:

- Workshops on D&I, ethics, traditional public relations deliverables such as press releases, LinkedIn, different creative platforms used in agencies, etc.
- Access to Student-run Firms associated with the Chapter – This provides hands-on public relations experience allowing students to improve their skills before stepping into their first internship or job.
- Chapter size – If you're a big Chapter, emphasize that. You are able to offer a lot of opportunities to grow and gain leadership experience by joining our executive board or getting involved in meetings and events.
- Extensive alumni network and opportunities to connect you with jobs in the future.
- In-person or virtual agency tours.
- Access to the school's internship center.
- Early bird pricing.

Create a video or animation.

Using social media to share this video or animation, present the job opportunities and internships that can come out of your PRSSA Chapter. This content will help prove that there is value in spending money to be in PRSSA.

Mention past work.

What has the past D&I officer or co-chair done so far regarding your Chapter's D&I initiatives? What has worked?

Reach out to groups you wouldn't have before.

Diversity is more than how people look, so target students whose creative minds may mesh well with those already in your Chapter. This could include students in journalism, media studies and production, business, arts, music, etc.

Leverage the strengths of the diversity you have so far.

Ask yourself: What are the diversity strengths I have so far? How can I and my Chapter build on those strengths? Your Chapter may be diverse in the way you think. It's important for PRSSA Chapters to build a culture where differences in thinking and ways of working are valued and leveraged. So focus on your members' unique strengths or those underlying qualities that energize them, and unlock their full potential for others to witness.

Talk about public relations-related issues you are determined to tackle throughout the year.

For example, having relevant discussions about companies' race-related public relations/advertising issues are important for public relations students and your Chapter. How do companies' public relations/communications/advertising teams end up with an ad in which a Black woman transforms into a white woman after using Dove body wash, or in which a black boy is wearing a sweatshirt reading "cutest monkey in the jungle" as in an H&M ad? These are real examples of advertisements that were racially insensitive. Your Chapter has the opportunity to escape its comfort zone and address these issues now, before heading into the public relations workforce where there is a lack of diversity.

Sample Programming Ideas and Events

The PRSA Diversity & Inclusion Committee is a great resource for developing diverse programming and event ideas. The following are samples of programming ideas and topics provided by PRSA Chapters and Districts and the PRSSA National Committee.

Diversity and Inclusion Managers

Many of today's businesses hire experts to serve as directors, vice presidents and managers of diversity to lead companies in recruiting and retaining diverse candidates. Reach out to some of these individuals to see if they can offer your Chapter's executive board insights for recruiting and retaining diverse members. In addition, invite one of these managers to speak to your campus' human resources and public relations students.

Visits to Non-Public Relations Classes

To recruit PRSSA members outside the public relations major, visit classes in majors such as marketing, advertising, graphic design and journalism. During the visit, discuss what public relations is and how the specific major you are speaking with can benefit from learning more about the public relations profession. At the end of the discussion, invite the students to your next meeting.

Diversity and Human Resources

Work with your campuses' office of human resources to create a program that discusses employee communications and communicating with diverse employees on campus. Also, partner with a local HR organization (e.g., Society for Human Resource Management) in your area and invite them to speak about their experiences with employee relations and diversity in local companies.

Communicating Across Cultures

Our language is filled with interesting colloquialisms and metaphors. But some of these words and phrases can be hurtful to people of certain ethnicities and religions, or other groups. Co-sponsor a writing and language workshop with journalism students or the press/broadcast news club on your campus to learn some of the ways people inadvertently use offensive language – and suggest more appropriate ways to get your message across.

Public Relations Chairs/Directors

Various organizations on your campus may have public relations officers or chairs. A good way to recruit and retain new members is to reach out to those organizations and communicate the benefit of the public relations chairs being part of PRSSA to learn how to better serve in their roles. Also consider hosting a workshop for this audience.

School Spirit

Co-sponsor a workshop with student athletes and the athletics department media relations office on your campus. At the workshop, discuss how your university's sports teams are being promoted and how student athletes feel about their image and the image of university athletics. The results could lead to a campaign led by your Student-run Firm. Promote PRSSA membership to any athletes interested in combining their passion for sports with a communications career.

Greek Life: Image Is Everything

Host a workshop with fraternity and sorority communications chairs and committee members to identify topics such as reputation management, crisis communication and publicity/public relations. Most Greek organizations have public relations officers or programming chairs. Your PRSSA Chapter could offer suggestions on how to best communicate their organization's message to the student body.

Students With Disabilities

Co-sponsor an event with the Center for Students with Disabilities on your campus. The event could be a partnership with an existing organization in your area such as the Special Olympics. Your Chapter could also generate awareness about the Center for Students with Disabilities by offering public relations services such as news releases.

Lifestyle Magazines and Publications

Lifestyle magazines are a burgeoning market, particularly in the LGBTQ+ community. Host a roundtable discussion between communications professionals from gay/lesbian-oriented lifestyle magazines, your PRSSA Chapter and LGBTQ+ campus organizations.

Empowering Women

Invite faculty from your campus' women's studies department and local businesswomen to discuss the promotion of women in today's organizations, and how females in leadership positions affect diversity in the workplace.

Language and Communication

Do Latino audiences prefer Spanish to English? What is the preferred language by Chinese Americans? How many dialects do Chinese Americans speak, and which is politically correct to use in public relations? Host a guest speaker series co-sponsored by a campus organization for international students that addresses questions about language and communication, both on and off campus.

Crisis Case Study

Host a workshop or competition where professionals describe a crisis or challenge they faced within an ethnic market (e.g., Nike racial discrimination suit). Have participants offer solutions for the crisis before the real-life solution is presented.

Challenges of Diversity

Partner with your area's largest public and private employers to discuss the different diversity challenges they have faced, especially those related to communications.

Working With Ethnic Public Relations

Ask corporate/governmental practitioners to be guest speakers on your campus and discuss how they work with ethnic public relations agencies, ethnic initiatives and ethnic campaigns.

Emerging Markets

Host a discussion with your local PRSA Chapter that addresses emerging business markets. Discuss the different opportunities the emerging markets can provide for public relations professionals.

Ethnic Radio

This is a powerful and often overlooked medium. Try to identify ethnic radio markets in your area and invite members of the station to speak to your Chapter regarding ethnic radio and how public relations professionals can use it to reach diverse audiences.

Perceptions

What are the changes experienced by today's ethnic communities? Hold a discussion regarding issues of perceptions of certain ethnic groups and how to communicate when differences exist, both in person and in public relations campaigns. Invite diversity officers from businesses in the area to be guest speakers.

International Chapter Connections

PRSSA currently has five international Chapters in Argentina, Colombia, Peru and Puerto Rico. If you have members with connections or an interest in these countries, encourage them to reach out to those Chapters to learn how public relations differs in South American countries — or ask one of the Chapters' members to Skype into a meeting.

These are just a few topics you can cover to bring the value of diversity to your members. Reach out to your local PRSA Chapter or PRSSA Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion at vpdiversity@prsa.org for more ideas and to discuss how to make these programs work for your Chapter.

APPENDIX

PRSSA D&I Strategic Plan 2020-2022

In businesses and organizations large and small, the importance, relevance and impact of strategic diversity and inclusion (D&I) efforts, and most importantly the “business case” for D&I, is becoming better understood. Earlier this year, PRSSA launched its 2020–2022 D&I Strategic Plan (click to download) that will guide the organization over the course of the next year to help achieve targeted milestones. This strategic plan was drafted by the vice president of D&I with input from the National President, Immediate Past President, PRSSA Headquarters staff and PRSA Board of Directors.

The overarching goal of PRSSA’s trailblazing plan is to “position PRSSA as a model for PRSSA Chapters, reflecting exemplary leadership in diversity and inclusion (D&I) and increasing understanding of PRSSA as a diverse, inclusive and adaptable organization among its members and staff.” The plan details tactics and strategies supporting three core objectives:

The plan details tactics and strategies supporting three core objectives:

1. Use analytics and data to guide diversity and inclusion decision making.
2. Provide support to diversity and inclusion student leaders through authentic relationships.
3. Continue to increase the representation of underrepresented communities and encourage the celebration of identities.

Media Style Guides for Race, Ethnicity and Religion: Writing tips for engaging with diverse audiences

Inclusive language Guides

- [National Association of Black Journalists Style Guide](#)
- [Asian American Journalists Association Handbook](#)
- [Native American Journalists Association Reporter’s Indigenous Terminology Guide](#)
- [Religion Newswriters Association’s Religion Stylebook](#)

RACE, ETHNICITY AND NATIONAL ORIGIN

Identity	Explanation	Example(s)
African American/Black	<p>Black and African American are not always interchangeable. Some individuals prefer the term Black because they do not identify as African and/or American.</p> <p>Individuals may identify as African, Afro Caribbean, Afro Latino or other.</p>	<p>Refer to groups as Black students, Black faculty members etc., not Blacks.</p> <p>Consider the necessity of using race within your text. Ask yourself: “Would I mention ‘white student’ or ‘white faculty member’ when discussing others?”</p>
Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander	<p>Asian Refers to people who are citizens of countries in the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent, or to describe people of Asian Descent.</p> <p>Asian Americans trace their origins to these regions.</p> <p>Pacific Islander includes Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Guamanian, Fijian and other peoples of the Pacific Island nations.</p> <p>Use Asian/Pacific Islander when referring to the relevant population in its entirety. Otherwise, use the preferred term of the individual or group.</p>	<p>Refer to groups as Asian students, Asian Faculty members, etc., not Asians.</p> <p>Consider the necessity of using race within your text. Ask yourself: “Would I mention ‘white student’ or ‘white faculty member’ when discussing others?”</p>
Hispanic, Latino(a/o) and Latinx	<p>Hispanic refers to people from Spanish-speaking countries.</p> <p>Latino, Latina or Latinx is a person of Latin American descent who can be of any background or language. If the individual or group does not identify as either Latino or Latina, the gender-neutral term Latinx can be used. When referring to a group, generally use Latinx as it is gender inclusive.</p>	<p>People from Mexico, Cuba and Guatemala who speak Spanish are both Hispanic and Latin(o/a)/Latinx.</p> <p>Brazilians who speak Portuguese and Latin(o/a)/Latinx but not Hispanic.</p> <p>Spanish-speaking people in Spain and outside Latin America are Hispanic but not Latin (o/a)/Latinx.</p>
Native American	<p>Native American is preferred unless the individual or group specifies otherwise.</p> <p>Occasionally some prefer American Indian, however, this is not universal.</p>	<p>The term “Indian” is used only when referring to people from India, not for Native Americans.</p>
People of Color	<p>Sometimes, we don’t use the term people of color because not all minorities have the same experience. Instead, refer to groups with their name.</p>	<p>Do not use the term “colored people.” (ie) African American, Asian and Hispanic vs. people of color</p>
Underserved/Underrepresented	<p>Do not use the term minority to describe students from diverse backgrounds. When referring to multiple groups of students from diverse backgrounds, use “Underserved/Underrepresented students,” however, use the specific group title when possible.</p>	<p>For example: LGBTQ+ students, Black students, undocumented students etc.</p>
Immigration Status	<p>Do not use the word “illegal immigrant” or “illegal alien” to refer to individuals who are not U.S. citizens/permanent residents, who do not hold visas to reside in the U.S. or who have not applied for official residency.</p>	<p>Example: Undocumented students, Undocumented individuals</p>

GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Identity	Explanation	Example(s)
LGBTQ(+)	Shorthand and umbrella term for individuals who have a non-hetero/cis-normative gender or sexuality. LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. The “+” includes all other non-hetero/cis- normative identities not included within the LGBTQ acronym.	
Lesbian	Women who are primarily attracted to other women.	It is not appropriate to use the word “homosexual” or “WSW” (women who have sex with women).
Gay	Men who are attracted to other men, Some individuals refer to lesbian women as “gay women.” Generally, do not do so unless preferred by the group/individual.	It is not appropriate to use the word “homosexual” or “MSM” (men who have sex with men).
Bisexual	An individual who experiences attraction to men and women.	
Transgender	A gender description for someone who has transitioned (or is transitioning) from living as one gender to another. Transgender can sometimes be written as “trans.”	It is not appropriate to ask a transgender individual which part of their transition they are currently in. A biological man who is transitioning into a woman is a transgender woman, or transwoman. A biological woman who is transitioning into a man is a transgender man or transman.
Queer	An umbrella term to describe individuals who do not identify as straight and or cisgender.	It is important to consider the context when using the word queer as it was formally used as a derogatory word. It has since been reclaimed. Never add “a” in front of the word. Example: He is Queer.
Ally	A typically straight and or cisgender person who supports and respects members of the LGBTQ+ community.	
Cisgender	A gender description for when someone’s sex assigned at birth and gender identity corresponds in the socially constructed and socially expected way.	
Gender Non-Conforming	A gender identity label that indicates a person who identifies outside of the gender binary (binary: man or woman).	

NOUN USAGE

Subjective	Objective	Possessive Adjectives	Possessive Pronouns	Reflective	Pronunciation
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself	Pronounced as it looks.
He	Him	His	His	Himself	Pronounced as it looks.
Ze	Zim	Zir	Zirs	Zirself	Pronounced Zay or Zee/Zim (rhymes with them). Zir (rhymes with their).
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves	Pronounced as it looks.

ABILITY STATUS AND (DIS)ABILITIES

When discussing language surrounding (dis)ability status, the Department of Diversity Initiatives recommends approaching the conversation with a “People First” mentality. People with (dis)abilities are people first.

When referring to an individual with disabilities it is important to identify them as a person with a (dis)ability, not a disabled person: person on the autism spectrum, not autistic or autistic person.

The “People First” mentality also should be applied when discussing mental illness. A person with a mental illness is a person first. When referring to an individual with mental illness, it is important to identify them as a person living with a mental illness rather than a mentally ill person.

Use the term accessible rather than disabled or handicapped to refer to facilities. Avoid outdated, offensive words such as handicapped, retarded, crazy, etc. Avoid using self-diagnosing language such as, “I’m OCD,” and “I’m having an anxiety attack right now,” unless these mental illnesses have been diagnosed.

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