Promoting Diversity in University Teaching
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Diversity and Global Mindedness are integral components of an education at Duquesne University. What does your teaching contribute to student learning about diversity? As a result of your class, will students be able to do any of the following goals relating to diversity?

- Demonstrate appreciation of diverse cultures, religions, and persons
- Learn from diverse schools of thought and be open to new ideas and perspectives
- Appreciate the importance of community in local and global contexts
- Recognize the individual’s potential to effect change in organizations, environments, and society at large

Student appreciation of diversity can happen informally. William Bowen, former President of Princeton, says,

A great deal of learning occurs informally. It occurs through interactions among students of both sexes; of different races, religions, and backgrounds; who come from cities and rural areas, from various states and countries; who have a wide variety of interests, talents, and perspectives; and who are able, directly and indirectly, to learn from their differences and to stimulate one another to reexamine even their most deeply held assumptions about themselves and their world.

Faculty can intentionally help promote an appreciation of diversity and global mindedness by adopting some of the following strategies.

**Design Your Courses to Promote Diversity.** A great place to start promoting diversity is in the course syllabus. You can select texts that reflect the diversity of scholars within your field. How have their contributions to your discipline shaped and changed the conversation? Contextualize why these contributions are so important. Endeavor not to place diversity readings at the end of the semester or unit. This signals to students that the contributions are marginal and not integral to the courses topics. Your goal should be to represent the diversity within your discipline while integrating it into the course and its content.

**Promote Group Learning Strategies.** Group projects, activities and assignments that require students to work together can be a great way to promote diversity and get students working with people who are unlike themselves. However, anyone who has allowed students to form their own groups knows that such groups can become homogeneous in make-up. Intentionally promote diversity by requiring students to form diverse groups that reflect a mixture of genders, races, ages, or demographic issues. Encourage students to remember the advice of Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell: “People do not learn very much when they are surrounded by the likes of themselves.”
Model Diversity Decorum in Class Discussions. Issues of global mindedness and diversity can generate heated viewpoints. Faculty must model and require students to practice respectful discussion techniques.

- Do not allow injurious or stereotypical comments to pass without comment.
- Never pick out a student to speak for a whole group (e.g., for women, for Hispanics, for African Americans, for Muslims, etc.)
- When students disagree, ask them to restate the opposing view before stating their own objections.
- If a discussion becomes too heated, call for a time out. Have the students write down what they understand to be the essential issues in the debate. Invite the students to be specific in their responses. The writing exercise helps students to cool down and gives the instructor the opportunity to bring clarity to the conflict.

Highlight the Value of Diversity through Lectures. Barbara Gross Davis in Tools for Teaching suggests bringing in guest lecturers: “As appropriate, you can broaden and enrich your course by asking faculty or off-campus professionals of different ethnic groups to make presentations to your class.”

You can also use lecture materials to show how your field has become more diverse. Present information about the increases in women, minorities, international employees in the profession. Discuss how the changing population has affected the field. How is the profession adapting to a global market?

Employ Service-Learning to Promote Diversity. Service-learning is a teaching pedagogy that combines academic instruction, meaningful service and critical reflective thinking to enhance student learning and social responsibility. Through service, students are able to connect a course’s theoretical knowledge with first-hand experience at their service site. Student involvement with organizations and groups outside the classroom brings new meaning to the course material and exposes students to diversity and multiculturalism. If you are interested in learning more about service-learning, please contact the Office of Service-Learning at 412-396-5893.

The Center for Teaching Excellence helps faculty and TAs excel as teacher-scholars deeply invested in student’s learning.

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