

Common Language Glossary

- Diversity
 - Involves the representation or composition of a work group, organization, or community as it relates to the presence of different social identity groups. Different social identity groups can refer to individual differences, (e.g., personality, prior knowledge, and life experiences), group and social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, indigeneity, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, country of origin, and (dis)ability), historically underrepresented populations, and cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations. While there is a recognition that individuals have multiple social identities and are a part of multiple social groups, a *more diverse* group is that which is comprised of individuals from different social groups corresponding to different levels of power and privilege in society, and thus, different experiences of marginalization and oppression.
- Equity
 - The active creation of opportunities for historically marginalized and underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participation in their highest state of health and other functioning. Equity is an ongoing process of assessing needs, correcting historical inequities, and creating conditions for all members of society to thrive.
- Inclusion
 - The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions. Inclusive environments are those that affirm, celebrate, and appreciate different styles, approaches, perspectives, and experiences, thus allowing individuals to demonstrate their strength and capacity in ways that affirm their whole selves.
- Inclusive Excellence
 - It is designed to help colleges and universities integrate diversity, equity, and educational quality efforts into their missions and institutional operations. It calls for higher education to address diversity, inclusion, and equity as critical to the well-being of democratic culture. It is an active process through which colleges and universities achieve excellence in learning, teaching, student development, institutional functioning, and engagement in local and global communities.
- Social Justice
 - Commitment to creating fairness and equity in resources, rights, and treatment of marginalized individuals and groups of people who do not share equal social, legal, or proprietary power in society.
- Intersectionality
 - “A way of understanding how various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other.” [Source](#)
- Marginalized
 - “To put or keep (someone) in a powerless or unimportant position within a society or group. This is commonly used to discuss historically disenfranchised groups within a society.” [Source](#)

- Power
 - “The ability to influence and make decisions that impact others.” [Source](#)
- Safe Space
 - “A space that doesn’t incite judgment based on identity or experience – where the expression of both can exist and be affirmed without fear of repercussion and without the pressure to educate. While learning may occur in these spaces, the ultimate goal is to provide support.” [Source](#)
- Brave Space
 - “A space that encourages dialogue. Recognizing difference and holding each person accountable to do the work of sharing experiences and coming to new understandings – a feat that’s often hard, and typically uncomfortable.” [Source](#)
- Privilege
 - “The advantages and benefits that individuals receive because of social groups they are perceived to be a part of. Privilege is often a result of systematic targeting and/or marginalization of another social group.” [Source](#)
- Tokenism
 - The practice of using marginalized people (particularly in a workplace or organization) to make a space seem more accepting or diverse than it is. This is a symbolic gesture that does nothing to create a more accepting or diverse environment. [Source](#)
- Ally/Allied
 - “A person who uses their privilege to advocate on behalf of someone else who doesn’t hold that same privilege.” [Source](#)
- Social Identities
 - “The portion of an individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership in a relevant social group.” [Source](#)
- Oppression
 - “The unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power.” [Source](#)
- Bias
 - “A preference either for or against an individual or group that affects fair judgment.” [Source](#)
- Microaggression
 - “A comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group.” [Source](#)
- Discrimination
 - “The practice of unfairly treating a person or group of people differently from other people or groups of people.” [Source](#)
- Civil Discourse
 - “Engagement in conversation intended to enhance understanding.” [Source](#)
- Accountability
 - “An obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions.” [Source](#)
- Respect
 - “A feeling or understanding that someone or something is important, serious, etc., and should be treated in an appropriate way.” [Source](#)

Other Existing Glossaries

- [California Community Colleges](#)
- [University of Washington](#)
- [Pacific University – Oregon](#)
- [Harvard HR](#)
- [APA Inclusive Language Guide](#)