

*"No matter how inclusive we are working towards being,
we can always do more. We can always do better."
- Victoria McGovern*

Inclusive Teaching **@LAFCOL**

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LAFAYETTE
CENTER FOR THE INTEGRATION OF
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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY



At Lafayette, we are committed to ensuring that every student feels a sense of belonging inside and outside the classroom that maximizes their learning, scholarly development, and personal growth. We strive to be an inclusive learning community where students are encouraged to explore new ideas and express their views in an environment that welcomes and respects such exploration and expression. We nurture diversity of experience, ideas, and learning methods. This document is a valuable faculty resource that contains a repertoire of inclusive teaching and mentoring practices that can nurture such diversity and lead to impactful learning for every student. I encourage you to use this resource and to share your successes with our community.

Jamila Bookwala

Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Psychology

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I. OVERVIEW

Inclusive teaching involves creating equitable, welcoming environments for our diverse learners. At Lafayette College we are committed to inclusive teaching both within and beyond the classroom setting. The relationship between belonging and student achievement and well-being is described in the literature (Walton et al., 2010; Gopalan & Brady, 2019), and feeling a sense of belonging is critical for our learners at Lafayette. In a modified version of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire administered in 2017, members of the Class of 2020 were asked “Which of the following have contributed to you feeling that you belong at Lafayette? Check all that apply.” The second-ranked response out of twenty options was “my professors” and the fourth-ranked choice was “my classes.” These results highlight a significant role for Lafayette faculty in designing learning experiences where students feel welcome.

To support our inclusive teaching efforts at the college, this document presents information specific to the student population at Lafayette and several examples of instructional behaviors that exemplify inclusive excellence and are inspired by faculty who teach at the college. Additional resources on inclusive teaching are also embedded in this document as well as the website of the Center for the Integration of Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship where you can find a wealth of resources on inclusive teaching.

II. WHO ARE LAFAYETTE STUDENTS?



Understanding who our Lafayette students are with regards to their visible and invisible diversity can support the design and enactment of inclusive learning experiences. To provide some insight into our student population, we highlight institutional data collected mostly on the Class of 2024 and focus on factors such as first-generation status; country, state, and region of origin; type of high school attended; socioeconomic status; as well as religious affiliation. Of the members of the Class of 2024, 12% report being first-generation students, those whose parents or legal guardians have not obtained a bachelor's degree. Approximately 21% are domestic students of color (8% Hispanic or Latino, 4% Black or African American, 4% Asian, 0% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 0% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 5% two or more races), 70% White, 6% International students, and 2% did not report their race or ethnicity. The figure below represents the countries of origin of international students in the Class of 2024.

With regards to socioeconomic status, 10% of the Class of 2024 are Pell grant recipients, 30% are on a work-study (federal or institutional), and 54% receive some form of financial assistance (federal, state, institutional and/or outside). Forty-two percent of students worked on campus during the 2020-2021 academic year. The parental income brackets of these students are: \$0-75,000 (14%), \$75,001-175,000 (19%), \$175,001 and more (25%), and Unknown (42%). Their religious preferences are: Catholic (26%), Protestant (19%), Jewish (8%), Muslim (2%), Hindu (1%), Buddhist (1%), Mormon (0%), no religious preference (22%), unknown (19%), and other (2%).

Approximately 20% of the student body utilizes the Lafayette College Counseling Center each academic year. Anxiety, depression, and stress have been at the forefront of concerns for students using services. In general, approximately 40% of Lafayette students have sought out counseling services at some point during their time at the college. Lafayette students also have a variety of accessibility needs, and have increasingly utilized the services of the Academic Resource Hub. On average, 11% of the Lafayette student population register with Accessibility Services. Testing accommodations are the services most offered by the Academic Resource Hub. In general, common accommodations include: extended time, a reader, a scribe, no scantron, distraction-reduced environment, breaks, and a computer for typing.

Student-athletes also make up a large portion of our student body. Twenty-five percent of students in the class of 2024 are athletes, and 23% of students at Lafayette are athletes. Student-athletes span across majors with the most in Economics and Engineering fields. Each semester approximately 80% of student-athletes have a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

There are many other ways that our students are diverse, whether through the prior knowledge and skills that they bring to the classroom, personality, temperament, gender identity, disability status and other aspects. The strength of our community lies in these differences given the contributions that our diverse learners can make to our college. In this regard, diversity is an asset and also necessitates teaching in a manner that is equitable and welcoming.

Thought Question

What are some attributes that stand out to you about our students? What attributes about you as an instructor do you believe stand out to your students? How can you use this information to design equitable, welcoming classrooms?

III. INCLUSIVE TEACHING BEHAVIORS



Photo Featuring Professor Rosie Bukics

Inclusive teaching involves continual reflection on the design and enactment of instruction to support all learners. There are a variety of behaviors that faculty implementing inclusive teaching approaches exhibit. Below we focus on four major areas: (1) instructor awareness of inclusivity and mindset, (2) fostering an inclusive classroom climate, (3) creating inclusive course materials and content, and (4) inclusive teaching methods and strategies. Accompanying each area are specific examples inspired by our own Lafayette faculty. Please keep in mind that this resource is not meant to be an exhaustive list, rather it serves to highlight major aspects of inclusive teaching. Additional resources are conveniently embedded throughout this document.

1. **Awareness and Mindset**

Inclusive professors are aware of who their students are in the classroom and they have a growth mindset of inclusion, embracing, and valuing the differences that exist between their learners. Inclusive instructors believe that diversity in the classroom is an asset to knowledge production and that students' experiences and backgrounds can enhance course concepts. Early in the semester inclusive professors are proactive in learning more about their students as people in order to design inclusive learning experiences. The information inclusive instructors collect on their learners may include items such as prior experiences with course material, why they are taking the course, pronouns used, hobbies, extracurricular activities and employment, access to technology, and other aspects that may impact student achievement or belonging in the course. They recognize and are aware of their own blind spots. They do not make assumptions about their students. They reduce stereotype threat in the classroom by reframing the purpose of assignments and providing feedback that reflects students' best abilities and is not inherently tied to students' self-worth or intelligence. Though seemingly simple, the act of better understanding learners can be mutually beneficial to both faculty and students.

Examples

At the beginning of a course, a professor invites students to complete an anonymous online survey such as the Who's in Class? Form and voluntarily share information about themselves that may impact their success in class. In doing so, the instructor discovers that some students are unable to bring a laptop to class for a particular planned activity. Instead, the professor decides to hold the class in the computer laboratory to ensure technology access for all students.

A faculty member holds one-on-one meetings with each learner during office hours at the beginning of the semester to provide an informal opportunity to get to know their students on an individual level.

A professor asks students to share an artifact that describes their personality or connection to class content as a way to make space for students to showcase their personality and uniqueness.

An instructor builds flexibility into a course by implementing a “Life Happens Pass” which students can use once during the semester to replace points on weekly questions, reflections or discussions, or prevent grade deductions on late assignments.

Challenge

Listen to the ACUE module on [Embracing Diversity in the Classroom](#). Reflect upon any assumptions that you hold about students and how you embrace their differences in your classrooms. Identify ways in which you can continue your own personal growth and reflection on your mindset, in addition to strategies for better understanding your learners.

Resources

- Who's in Class? Form. A tool for inclusion developed in collaboration with students, faculty, and staff members. The form helps instructors foster an inclusive learning environment early on and throughout a course by increasing their awareness of the diverse assets that their students bring to the classroom.
- CBE-LSE Evidence-based Teaching Guide - Inclusive Teaching: Developing Self-Awareness. Resource on the importance of developing self-awareness as a step in creating inclusive learning environments.
- Implicit Association Test. This website contains a number of tests based on different identities around which biases manifest.
- Embracing Diversity in the Classroom (ACUE). This resource focuses on helping faculty examine how their own experiences have shaped their perspectives and the importance of valuing different viewpoints.

2. **Course Materials & Content**

Inclusive professors carefully design their courses to be welcoming to diverse learners. Their courses include content that builds upon their students' prior knowledge and they take into account the diverse range of experiences that students bring to the classroom. When choosing course materials that align with learning outcomes, inclusive professors ensure affordability or offer alternatives for students who do not have financial means to purchase class items. They ensure that their digital content is accessible to all learners. Inclusive professors consider the cultures of their students and infuse diversity within course content.

For some instructors, this may involve carefully examining their course syllabus, incorporating more contributions and examples from groups historically marginalized, having students bring in their own scholarly contributions that connect to course content, or implementing inquiry-based projects that encourage students to delve into a question or problem that they find personally compelling. Inclusive professors also recognize the value of formative feedback and provide students with multiple opportunities to learn course material given the diversity of student backgrounds.

Examples

Recognizing that some of the materials in their course come at a high cost to students, a professor applies for an Open Educational Resource (OER) grant through Skillman Library to consider alternative textbooks. When examining relevant materials, the faculty member decides to adopt an open-source textbook of similar quality to the one they used historically through a different publisher.

A close examination of a course syllabus shows that most of the authors of a course are European. This particular course is one that is steeped in Eurocentric traditions and so the canonical authors cannot necessarily be sidestepped. The professor pairs the canonical work with more contemporary visions from authors who do not have a Eurocentric background and that may draw from or speak to the canonical authors themselves. The professor also has students write from their own unique perspective and create space for autoethnography in the same vein as a course author.

An instructor encourages the class to draw on course concepts in order to pose and solve a problem that the students find meaningful.

Challenge

Review your course syllabus and materials such as textbooks, books and other items. In addition to aligning with learning outcomes, do these materials account for the diverse range of students in your classroom? Do these materials account for the diverse range of perspectives in your scholarly area? What changes can you make?

Resources

- Creating Accessible Digital Materials. This resource describes the principles of accessibility in higher education and presents various frameworks to support the accessible course design process. It also contains resources available on Lafayette's campus to support accessibility in course design.
- OER and Textbook Affordability. This guide provides information and resources for instructors wishing to learn more about Open Educational Resources (OERs) and other textbook alternatives, or to begin the process of replacing expensive course materials at Lafayette.
- Inclusion by Design: Survey Your Syllabus and Course Design. Self-assessment tool designed to examine syllabi and course design in terms of inclusion and teaching practices.

3. Classroom Climate

Professors who are inclusive endeavor to foster welcoming environments in their courses where learners of all backgrounds feel they belong. They take a variety of steps to establish this climate early on, and sustain it throughout the course. Both their actions and words communicate that their learners' contributions are valued. Inclusive professors engage in active listening and view their students as partners in their educational experiences. They establish or co-create classroom guidelines and ground rules that foster inclusivity, and address any issues that arise when guidelines are transgressed.

Examples

An instructor incorporates a diversity statement on their syllabus which describes and respects their students as learners. They reinforce the ideas within the statement over the course of the semester.

During the first few classes of the semester, a professor invites students in a class to use name tents so that they can learn the names of their peers. The professor uses this as an opportunity to also learn the names of all members of the class.

An instructor showcases that they value the multilingual environment of a diverse classroom by encouraging students to share words or phrases that help to describe course concepts or student perceptions but that may not be seen as standard English.

In the first week of class, an instructor uses an ice-breaker activity that encourages students to identify feelings and behaviors related to inclusion and exclusion (e.g., enthusiastic and takes initiative vs. anxious and withdrawn). Following the activity, students identified what aspects they liked most and least about participating in classes. These aspects were linked to the inclusion/exclusion concepts to generate an actionable rubric of "best practices" for class participation and discussion. This rubric served as a supplement to the syllabus to establish collaborative classroom guidelines.

Challenge

Reflect upon a course in which all students seemed to feel welcome and that they belonged. What led to this climate? Identify specific methods that are relevant for the courses that you teach in building a positive classroom environment.

Resources

- Lafayette College Diversity Statement.
- Sample Diversity Statements for Course Syllabi. Various examples of diversity statements for course syllabi that Lafayette instructors can incorporate into their syllabi.
- Creating Collaborative Classroom Guidelines. This resource was developed by Angela Bell, Assistant Professor of Psychology and 2019-20 Distinguished Teaching Fellow. (Requires MyLafayette ID. For the web page version, see link above).

- Gender Inclusive Pedagogy. This resource provides an overview of gender and the education system as well as a discussion on the reasons why becoming a gender inclusive educator matters to students, faculty, and staff, and recommendations and resources for creating a more gender inclusive classroom environment.
- Working with International Students. Teaching suggestions for international students whose English is not their first language from the English for Academic Purpose (EAP) at Lafayette.
- The Myth of the Model Minority. This resource on the myth of the model minority, its history, and ways to combat it at Lafayette was developed by Rehnuma Nasrin '20 & Danielle Bellefeuille '20, CITLS student fellows.

4. Teaching Methods & Strategies

The teaching approaches chosen by inclusive professors are equitable and help students from diverse backgrounds reach their learning goals. Such professors utilize multiple modes of instruction and engage students in active learning methods. They carefully structure their courses utilizing backward design and formative assessment in order to advance learning. They consider frameworks that support inclusive teaching such as Universal Design for Learning. They are equitable in key aspects of teaching including encouraging equitable participation by students and forming groups. They also ensure that their grading practices minimize inconsistencies or biases.

Examples

A foreign languages professor implements a chat tool with students from another country to foster global connections. The professor also pauses the class to think through stereotypes and the social and political components that produce cultural norms.

To minimize bias, an English professor engages in blind grading practices for writing assignments, asking students to put their names on the back of their essays.

An Economics professor uses an online tool that uses a variety of student attributes to help students form diverse teams.

A STEM professor invites female speakers as experts to visit their course in order to counter the gender imbalances seen within the discipline.

Challenge

How do your course methods and activities support equitable learning and belonging for all students?

Resources

- [Transparency in Learning and Teaching Higher Ed Examples and Resources](#). Link to the TILT framework website which contains an overview of the framework, resources for faculty and students, as well as sample assignments from a variety of disciplines.
- [Assignment Design Using the Transparency in Learning and Teaching \(TILT\) Framework](#). CITLS resource on the TILT framework geared toward assignment design.
- [Frameworks to Create Accessible Course Materials](#). Summary of accessibility frameworks including Universal Design for Learning (UDL) which focuses on affective, recognition, and strategic networks.
- [Universal Design for Learning Guidelines \(Center for Applied Special Technology\)](#). Summary of UDL guidelines in terms of engagement, representation, and action and expression.

IV. GENERAL RESOURCES FOR ESTABLISHING AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

The following are general resources on inclusive teaching and excellence that can support the teaching efforts of Lafayette faculty:

- [Setting Up an Inclusive Classroom: A Guide Created by Lafayette Students for Faculty](#).

- Who's in Class? Form, developed in collaboration with students, faculty, and staff members, helps instructors foster an inclusive learning environment early on and throughout a course by increasing their awareness of the diverse assets that their students bring to the classroom. Please contact citls@lafayette.edu to use the form.
- List of teaching_podcasts of interest some of which have episodes focused on inclusive teaching. Please also view the Student Podcast: Inclusive Teaching at Lafayette.
- Sharing Our Inclusive Teaching Strategies video series with Lafayette faculty and students.
- Addy, T. M., Dube, D., Mitchell, K. A., SoRelle, M. 2021. What Inclusive Instructors Do: Principles and Practices for Excellence in College Teaching. Stylus.
- The Chronicle of Higher Education Advice Guide: Want to Reach All of Your Students? Here's How to Make Your Teaching More Inclusive.
- Faculty Focus: What Two Students Want You to Know About Inclusive Teaching (Co-authored by Lafayette students).
- University of Michigan CRLT Rubric: Reflecting on Your Practice: Applying Inclusive Teaching Principles.
- Tobin, T & Behling, K. (2018). Reach Everyone, Teach Everyone: Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education. Morgantown: West Virginia University Press.

Massive Open Online Courses

A few institutions offer free online courses each semester that can help faculty design more inclusive classrooms.

- [Inclusive Teaching: Supporting All Students in the College Classroom, Columbia University](#). Self-paced exploration of the principles of inclusive teaching and application to support diverse learners.
- [Teaching and Learning in the Diverse Classroom, Cornell University](#). Self-paced online course for instructors at any level of diversity expertise. Modules explore strategies for inclusive course design, social identity and self-reflection, and pedagogical practices that effectively support student engagement and a sense of belonging across difference.

Inclusive Teaching in STEM Disciplines

- [Hanson Center for Inclusive STEM Education at Lafayette College](#).
- [Tanner K. D. \(2013\). Structure matters: Twenty-one teaching strategies to promote student engagement and cultivate classroom equity. *CBE life sciences education*, 12\(3\), 322-331. doi:10.1187/cbe.13-06-0115.](#)
- [CBE-LSE - Evidence-Based Teaching Guide: Inclusive Teaching](#). Guide on inclusive teaching which includes modules on various components including developing self-awareness and empathy, classroom climate, pedagogical choices, and more.

Programming of Interest Offered by CITLS to All Faculty

Inclusive Teaching & Excellence Series

The Inclusive Teaching & Excellence Series involves sessions facilitated by CITLS staff, invited speakers, faculty members, administrators, and Distinguished Teaching Faculty Fellows. Through this series, the Lafayette community explores timely topics related to creating equitable and welcoming environments.

Inclusive Instructors Academy

The Inclusive Instructors Academy immerses participants in semester-long experience focused on inclusive teaching to advance instructional excellence at the College. All faculty are welcome to apply by the respective semester deadlines.

Student Pedagogical Partnership Services

Student-faculty pedagogical partnership models are highly effective at advancing teaching efforts. Our student partners are trained on a range of inclusive teaching tools. If you are interested in a student partner providing feedback on one of your classes, please complete the request form.

V. SUMMARY

Inclusive teaching is equitable and can foster a welcoming environment for the diversity of learners at Lafayette College. All faculty are encouraged to reflect upon the four major areas of inclusive teaching described in this document. The Center for the Integration of Teaching, Learning and Scholarship and the Hanson Center for Inclusive STEM Education are on-campus resources for faculty interested in engaging in such approaches, and can support faculty at Lafayette College in their inclusive teaching efforts. There are also a number of other academic, student-focused offices on equity and inclusion on campus that can support faculty in their work such as Intercultural Development, the Counseling Center, the Office of Advising and Co-curricular Programs, and the Academic Resource Hub (including English for Academic Purpose, Accessibility Services, Support for Athletes).

References

Gopalan, M., & Brady, S. T. (2019). College students' sense of belonging: A National perspective. Educational Researcher.
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X19897622>

Walton, G.M. et al. (2011). Outcomes of minority students: A brief social-belonging intervention improves academic and health outcomes. Science, 331, 1447.