Glossary of Key Terms

Culture: refers to the patterned ways that people behave, communicate, and give meaning to shared social life

Discrimination: actions we make based on prejudice; making distinctions showing behavior in favor for/ against a person based on the group, class, or category to which that person belongs rather than on individual merit

Diversity: the state of being diverse; variety; a range of different things; the state of having people who are from different cultures in a group or organization

Equity: The creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations (students, employees) to have equal access to professional growth opportunities and resource networks capable of closing the demographic disparities in leadership roles in all spheres of institutional functioning (California State University – East Bay)

Ideology: the attempt to fix values and world-views based on power. Maps of meaning which, while they purport to be universal truths, are historically specific understandings that obscure and maintain the power of privileged social groups (i.e. class, gender, race, sexuality)

Implicit/Explicit Bias: an inclination for or against something or a social category of people; Cognitive short cut, sorts/categorizes information quickly; Positive bias (preference towards) and negative bias (discrimination against); both conscious and unconscious; both implicit and explicit

Inclusion: the act of including; the state of being included; the act or practice of including individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds

Intersectionality: refers to the unique combination of two or more (privileged and/or marginalized) identities and the way this combination of identities shapes individual perspectives, experiences, and communication

Marginalization: people who are socially constructed as useless in the participation of social life are pushed to the outside margins of society – over time this leads to social extinction and/or material deprivation

Microaggressions: Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights, invalidations, and insults to an individual or group because of their marginalized status in society (Sue, 2010)

Multiple identities: the assumption that people have many different and potentially contradictory identities at different times which do not form a unified coherent self

Prejudice: attitudes toward an individual based one or more a social identities

Privilege: unearned, unasked for, often invisible benefits and advantages experienced in life by dominant group members; privilege has nothing to do with merit; It’s not about how hard we work; It’s about how the systems and structures of society are built to advantage certain populations of people

Self-identity: the way we think about ourselves and construct unifying stories about the self

Social Identity: memberships within social groups (demographic categories – gender, race, age, ability, social class, organizational affiliation, occupational, etc.); explains ways in which individuals and collective groups are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collective groups

Stereotype: vivid and simple generalizations which reduce people to a set of exaggerated, usually negative, character traits