

Educational Equity in Graduate Education: Creating a Culture of Belonging

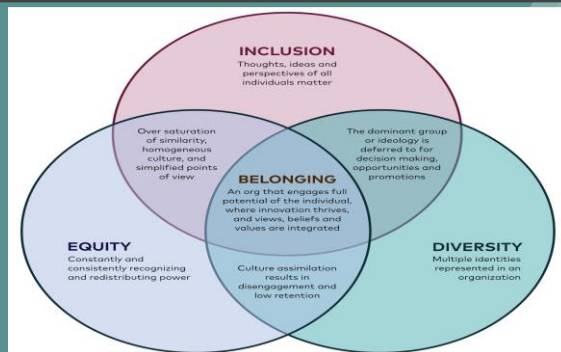
Geraldine Q. Young, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, CDCES, FAANP
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer
Frontier Nursing University (FNU)

Background

- Having a sense of **belonging** within an institution of higher learning addresses the mental and physical wellbeing of underrepresented groups and creates a feeling of safety (Ogunyemi et al., 2020).
- Garcia (2020) defines five primary characteristics of belonging: where I have a role or responsibility, where people look like me, where I am valued and cared for, where my racial identity and culture are recognized and valued, and where I share interests or values with others.
- Conducting internal and external climate assessments, focus groups, self-assessments; knowing internal and external demographics and statistics; and examining the literature are crucial to creating a culture of belonging.
- FNU has created a President's Taskforce on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to integrate DEI and antiracism throughout FNU. Creating a culture of belonging will be a significant element of this work.

Purpose

This project aims to integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism support throughout FNU and create a welcoming environment for the community.



"Each element represents a different piece of the full human experience. Addressing only one or two of these falls short on gaining the full human experience — a sense of belonging" (Kyr, 2019).

Objectives

- Determine the need for the most significant diverse Special Interest Groups (SIGs).
- Create forum(s) held on antiracism, diversity, equity, and inclusion related topics.
- Provide diverse support groups and/or access to other educational programs through collaborative partnerships (local, state, and national organizations or SIGs).
- Design and/or adopt climate surveys to assess for a safe culture of caring and belonging.
- Recruit and retain people (faculty, staff, and students) from diverse groups.

CULTURE OF BELONGING

Program Outcome Statement: The aim is to recruit and retain underrepresented groups at Frontier Nursing University (FNU) and create an environment where employees and students feel welcomed.

INPUTS	OUTPUTS Program Activities	OUTCOMES - IMPACT		
		SHORT-TERM	INTERMEDIATE	LONG-TERM
The Health Resources and Services Administration grant funding The President's Taskforce on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) The Office of DEI Diversity and Inclusion Committee Consultants	FNU has defined underrepresented groups. The FNU president's taskforce and diversity support will: 1. Create diverse Special Interest Groups (SIGs) 2. Create forum(s) held on anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion related topics 3. Provide diverse support groups and/or access to other educational programs through collaborative partnerships (local, state, and national organizations or SIGs) 4. Design and/or adopt climate surveys to assess for a safe culture of caring and belonging 5. Recruit and retain people (faculty, staff, and students) from diverse groups.	The President's Taskforce on DEI will be assembled. A comprehensive plan will be developed to create a culture of belonging at FNU, including methods to identify all defined underrepresented groups.	FNU will recruit and retain underrepresented faculty, staff, and students. Retention rates for faculty, staff, and students from underrepresented groups will be 80% or above. The learning and workplace environments at FNU will exhibit a culture of belonging.	The number of underrepresented groups will increase over the next 3-5 years. Retention rates for faculty, staff, and students from underrepresented groups will be 80% or above. The learning and workplace environments at FNU will exhibit a culture of belonging.

Assumptions

Creating a welcoming environment will attract and retain people from underrepresented groups.

External Factors

The literature supports the need for underrepresented employees and students to feel welcomed at higher education institutions.

Evaluation

- Diversity demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, and identity)
- Student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates
- Employee hiring and retention rates
- Internal and external climate and culture assessments
- Employee and student perceptions