Best Practices in Maintaining Equity and Inclusion in Remote Learning

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The University of New Haven remains committed to the tenets of equity, diversity, and inclusive excellence as we shift to a remote learning environment. We, as an institution of higher learning, believe in creating communities that are free from all forms of discrimination and where all can thrive and be successful. The University of New Haven will not tolerate any virtual acts of bias, discrimination, and harassment, including othering (*see below).

HELPFUL HINTS

- **Trend: Please watch out for Othering**
    o As defined by the Othering and Belong Institute: "Othering is a set of dynamics, processes and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality for diverse communities. Dimensions of othering include, but are not limited to, religion, sex, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, and skin tone."
    o Ensure that Asian and Asian-American members of our community are not being "othered" due to the Covid-19 crisis.

- **Recognize that our lived experiences and identities shape how we engage**
    o Equity-minded teaching calls us to understand the nuances of our learners' lived experiences which are oftentimes deeply tied to their social identities (i.e. race, class, gender, citizenship status, first-gen status, etc.).
    o Strategies adapted from San Diego State University:
        ▪ Address indirect, subtle or unintentional statements, actions or incidents that can make members of marginalized groups feel discriminated and/or stereotyped (microaggressions) in discussion boards, video conferencing, chats, and other places where people interact.
        ▪ Consider integrating course materials that are relevant to the cultural background of all of our community members, including circumstances they might be currently facing
        ▪ Be aware of variation in peoples' capacity to manage remote learning and engagement (i.e. ability to access a stable internet connection, familiarity with remote learning/engagement technologies, hearing ability, learning pace, etc.).

*Adapted from Framingham State University & San Diego State University

- **Safety with Belonging:**
  o It is okay to shift our language from "social distancing" to "physical distancing." Yes, we must limit our physical contact with one another, but we are also social creatures who can benefit from positive socializing. In times like these, we must remain connected and in community, as neighbors and as members of the University community.

- **Continue to practice connection and caring**
  o Continue to have opportunities for live, synchronous engagement throughout the semester
  o Talk to your students and colleagues about what is happening and how it's impacting them and you
  o Build/maintain community among your students, co-workers, etc.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- [San Diego State University – Maintaining Diversity and Inclusion in Virtual Learning Environments](#)
  o This resource includes tips on:
    ▪ Accessibility
    ▪ Flexibility
    ▪ Being identity-conscious
    ▪ Being proactive
    ▪ Being relational
    ▪ Transparency

- [Rice University](#)
  o This resource includes tips on how to:
    ▪ Address unequal access to technology
    ▪ Providing a balance between asynchronous and synchronous tools and course materials
    ▪ Creating an environment that includes and values all students

- [An Equitable Transition to Online Learning: Flexibility, Low Bandwidth, Cell Phones, and More](#)

- [Accessible Teaching in the Time of Covid-19](#)

- [Universal Design for Learning: What is it?](#)
  o Strategies to implement UDL from San Diego State University:
    ▪ Ensure all files, images, videos, and other posted content are fully accessible (i.e. visual content can be clearly translated by a screen-reader and audio content has visual captions)
    ▪ Provide approved accommodations for students or employees who present documentation
    ▪ Check whether content is mobile-friendly – not every student has a laptop or a desktop and rely heavily on their cell phone
    ▪ Consider variation in peoples' access to computers and stable internet service
    ▪ Balance synchronous and asynchronous delivery of content, tools, and materials

*Adapted from Framingham State University & San Diego State University