



The AGLS General Education Leader's Playbook

HOW DO WE BRING DEIJB WORK TO GENERAL EDUCATION?

INTRODUCTION

Diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice are all important to the educational experience for students across the higher education landscape. Equitable pedagogies and assessment level the playing field for learning and success. All students deserve access to the best learning opportunities. And students should feel safe and supported in our collective commitment to learning and achievement.

There is certainly no one-size-fits-all way of bringing DEIJB work to general education. Over the past several years, these issues have only become more contentious and polarizing. A gen ed leader must understand the broader context of their program, know where to get outside expertise and guidance, collaborate with institutional partners and experts, be aware of the different models for embedding this work into gen ed, and do their homework to be as informed as possible. This chapter delves into the who, what, why, and how of bringing DEIJB to general education, but it is by no means exhaustive.

Note: general education can play a role in this work, but it cannot do it all on its own. Rather, it should align with, and contribute to, the larger DEIJB goals and initiatives of the institution at large.

CONTEXT AND GUIDANCE FOR THE WORK

General education programs do not exist in a vacuum. A gen ed leader will need to consider the laws, policies, and cultural milieu in which the institution and program is situated. In many cases, legislation or guardrails guide or govern our DEIJB efforts at our institutions and must be followed. And sometimes a higher authority is needed to push back against local or institutional resistance.

Here are some resources and perspectives to consider:

1. **State Legislation:** What state level legislation (if any) exists that governs this work? Some states or political leaders support the efforts, whereas others have passed legislation that greatly influences higher ed broadly and even gen ed specifically. The Chronicle of Higher Ed has an interesting [DEI legislation tracker](#) that shows what is happening in each state.
2. **Local Perspectives:** What is the local perspective on this work? Institutions may exist in an area with strong viewpoints on the issue that must be navigated when thinking about town-gown relationships, how events and guest speakers may be received, etc.

3. **American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U):** AAC&U serves as a national leader in higher education and liberal education support. DEI work is a typical track in their annual general education conference, a component of their institution on general education and pedagogy, and they have an entire conference and team dedicated to supporting diversity and equity efforts. They also provide resources to embed [High-Impact Practices \(HIPs\)](#) into courses and programs, experiences that promote equity across the curriculum with significant educational benefits for historically underserved demographic groups. In addition, their [Value Rubrics](#) provide a great starting point for developing a shared language and understanding of what these concepts mean in the context of student learning.
4. **NACE Career-Readiness Competencies:** Currently, there is a strong sentiment for higher education to prepare students for jobs. Equity and Inclusion is one of the key career-readiness competencies and it calls for all students to be able to: “Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.” DEIJB also plays a role in teamwork, another NACE competency, indicating that students should be able to “effectively manage conflict, interact with, and respect diverse personalities.”
5. **Regional Accrediting Bodies:** Regional accrediting bodies can lend guidance to the work. For example, SACS-COC provides [this position statement on DEI](#) that “supports and encourages the leadership role of its institutions in promoting and sustaining diversity, equity and inclusion in all arenas of higher education.”
6. **Disciplinary Accrediting Bodies:** Many programs are guided by their own accrediting bodies or national groups. For example, accredited engineering programs are guided by the [Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology \(ABET\)](#) who claims their “staff, volunteers and leadership are committed to the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion through global leadership in STEM education, incorporating the highest standards of professional integrity, dignity, fairness, justice and respect for everyone.”
7. **Expert Literature and Tools:** There are many helpful resources on this topic, but some key places for a gen ed leader to start include [AAC&U’s resources related to DEI](#), books and articles specifically for educators and educational leaders (see list in last section of this chapter), and useful tools like the [Inclusive Teaching Strategies course planning cards](#) from Johns Hopkins Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation or the [Constructive Dialogue Institute](#) to support talking across difference.
8. **Institutional Identity:** A general education program should align with the short and long-term institutional mission, values, goals, and priorities. The institution’s strategic plan will likely call for greater focus on and success in DEI goals and metrics. If the university has a strong, clearly defined commitment to diversity, then the shared curriculum of all its undergraduate students should reflect that.
9. **Institutional Governing Boards:** What is the makeup and interests of the institutional Board of Trustees or Board of Visitors? How has the group weighed in on other issues related to DEIJB? Depending on the shared governance structure of the institution, it’s likely that this group will be involved at some point with the gen ed program and should be engaged intentionally.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

A gen ed leader can't do this work alone. Here are some potential partners and collaborators:

1. **Office of Diversity and Inclusion:** This unit, along with their cross-institutional network of faculty and staff, often has the expertise, communication means, raw data, and policy understanding to serve as a strong collaborator in implementing and supporting DEIJB work into the gen ed program.
2. **Centers for Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence:** This unit, along with their cross-institutional network of faculty and offices, often has the expertise and resources to provide DEIJB teaching and learning course design and pedagogy support for inclusive pedagogy, decolonizing the syllabus, anti-racist pedagogies, accessible classrooms, etc.
3. **Office of Institutional Research:** This unit can often provide student performance (e.g. DFW, GPA, academic progress, etc.) and enrollment data to help evaluate student experience and progress disaggregated by various identity groups.
4. **Human Resources:** Frequently, Human Resource offices will include staff specializing in DEIJB matters. The campus partners can provide important information about training, recruitment, and designing inclusive environments for faculty and staff.
5. **Office of Assessment:** This unit can often provide guidance on developing, measuring, and reporting on student learning outcomes related to DEIJB.
6. **Advisors:** Advisors often have their finger on the pulse for the challenges and lived experiences of marginalized and underrepresented students. They are also charged with answering 'Why do I have to take this course?' and need a strong justification for every component of your gen ed program, including any DEIJB-aligned pieces.
7. **Cultural Centers:** These units can often provide perspectives and insights around the experiences and needs of students of various identities and cultures.
8. **Departments with Expertise in the Field:** Many institutions have scholars and experts on the history and lived experience of marginalized populations and can be leveraged to design and inform curricular development and to evaluate courses seeking endorsement for meeting DEIJB learning outcomes.
9. **Faculty, Curriculum Committees, Faculty Senate:** The gen ed curriculum falls in the purview of the faculty, so faculty should be informed on and engaged in this work throughout the design, implementation, and ongoing maintenance of the program. These groups can conduct informed dialogue/debate on the issues and provide a strong voice against resistance.
10. **Student Groups:** Students can often be allies in this work; support from student groups and student voices in general can be powerful. DEIJB in general education offers a unique opportunity to include students in gen ed curriculum design discussions. If students are involved, it is important to manage expectations and set parameters for engagement.
11. **Alumni:** Alumni engaged with the institution can provide well-informed, real-world insights and/or examples for how this work can contribute to a strong workforce and engaged community and citizenry.
12. **Student Affairs:** Student affairs units across campus typically have a strong emphasis on DEIJB matters. The professional organizations of ACPA and NASPA have made DEI central to their philosophy and mission. These colleagues will have training and experience infusing DEI into programming efforts. This expertise can inform classroom practices.

WAYS TO EMBED DEI IN THE GEN ED CURRICULUM

Here are some options for meeting DEI goals in a gen ed program:

1. **Single Requirement Model:** One common means to ensure every student engages with DEIJB content and learning outcomes at least once is to create a single gen ed component that all students must complete. This typically consists of one or two courses and guarantees participation but can be isolated and treated as a one-and-done model (a common critique of gen ed in general). These requirements can carry different titles such as world perspectives, diversity, multiculturalism, and intercultural understanding. Campuses using this model should carefully construct related course requirements and student learning outcomes to ensure some degree of consistency across students' learning experiences.
2. **Overlay or Integrative Outcome Model:** To allow students to engage with DEIJB work across the program, learning outcomes could be developed and integrated across some, many, or all courses in the program. This could be done instead of or in complement to other models. These outcomes overcome the one-and-done perception of a single requirement model, but the challenge lies in providing adequate support and guidance to instructors from a variety of different fields, backgrounds, and comfort levels in doing this work well. Poor execution of DEIJB learning outcomes can cause more harm than good and increase the sense of marginalization among students.
3. **Credentials or Clusters:** Courses from a variety of disciplines and fields that engage with DEIJB concepts may be grouped into broader packages. These could include course clusters or themes designed to help students find more courses on a topic or they may be scaffolded into certificates or minors that show up on students' transcripts. To be done well, these all take some level of cross-institution oversight, communication, advising, and/or resource sharing.
4. **Teaching and Learning in the Classroom:** In addition to a requirement in the curriculum, instructors may be encouraged (or even required) to leverage inclusive pedagogies, anti-racist teaching practices, syllabus decolonization, universal design principles, and other means for creating a more equitable and inclusive learning environment where ALL students can be successful. This takes a good deal of expertise and training from institutional support units like Centers for Faculty Development, Centers for Teaching and Learning, Offices of Accessibility, etc., and must go beyond simply embedding a couple of articles written by authors of color. This support may come in the form of professional development events, workshops, facilitated book clubs, resource guides, etc. and can be tied to larger 'inclusive excellence' or student success efforts already occurring at the institution.
5. **Partnerships with Student Affairs:** Actively partnering with student affairs professionals is another way to bring DEIJB activities into the classroom. As noted above, student affairs frequently includes individuals who have considerable experience in developing and deploying DEIJB activities. Faculty could work with these colleagues to develop meaningful and appropriate engagements for students on a program or class basis.

DEI LITERATURE AND RESOURCES

Again, many resources are available on DEIJB work, but here is a list of books and articles to get started and keep the work rolling:

1. *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk: Expanding Practitioner Knowledge for Racial Justice in Higher Education* by Tia Brown McNair, et al.
2. *Inclusive Teaching: Strategies for Promoting Equity in the College Classroom* by Kelly Hogan and Viji Sathy
3. *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making It Work* by Daryl G. Smith
4. *Diversity and Inclusion on Campus: Supporting Students of Color in Higher Education* by Rachelle Winkle-Wagner and Angela M. Locks
5. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* by bell hooks
6. *Culturally Responsive Teaching and Reflection in Higher Education: Promising Practices from the Cultural Literacy Curriculum Institute* edited by Sharlene Voogd Cochrane, Meenakshi Chhabra, Marjorie A. Jones, and Deborah Spragg
7. *Becoming a White Antiracist* by Stephen D. Brookfield and Mary E. Hess
8. *Reframing Assessment to Center Equity: Theories, Models and Practices* edited by Gavin W. Henning, Gianina R. Baker, Natasha A. Jankowski, Anne E. Lundquist, Erick Montenegro
9. Resources from Oregon State University's Difference, Power, and Oppression website:
 - [Course Development Resources](#)
 - [Teaching Everyone Pedagogical Resources](#)

We understand this chapter is different from previous chapters you may have downloaded. Consider this chapter as an advanced strategy for developing your general education program and will give you a quick reference guide for bringing DEIJB principles to your general education work whenever possible.

Usually for a Playbook chapter, we include a worksheet designed to help you develop responses to the question posed. For this chapter, your next step is to create a list of campus DEIJB resources on your campus. Include names, titles, phone, email, and office hours for each of the resources. Why information on DEI campus resources? We understand that people come/go, offices close when state politics changes, and resources are always being updated. Having this information can help even when things change on campus – helping you always find the right people and resources.

Keep copies of your customized resources and ‘plays’ for CHAPTER 5 in your gen ed playbook with this chapter.

The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.

~bell hooks