



## Ensure Diverse Representation in Course and Campus Materials

Creating a sense of belonging for students and colleagues requires that we ensure that materials, including print, images around the institution, social media posts, and the school website, reflect a diverse and inclusive community. When our students and team members see people who look like them represented in our materials, at cocurricular events, campus offices, and in campus-wide print and digital materials, they feel that they belong, and they put in more effort. A study conducted by BetterUp exploring the impact of belonging at work found that high belonging was linked to a 56% increase in job performance, a 50% drop in turnover risk, and a 75% reduction in sick days (Eatough, 2021).

Research also shows that belief in one's ability to succeed increases when seeing people like oneself succeed in that same endeavor (Bandura, 1997). Further, the lack of diverse representation in course readings and campus materials can limit students' awareness of career opportunities in various fields (Harris et al., 2020). These findings extend to experiences outside of the classroom as students, faculty, staff, and leaders engage in cocurricular activities and departmental meetings and workshops.

### Ensure That Materials Include Diverse Perspectives

To begin, critically examine your materials from multiple viewpoints to ensure that they include items that accurately represent various perspectives, including gender, nationality, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, linguistic background, etc. (Cornell University, n.d.). The following are examples of strategies that you might use to ensure that your area of campus reflects diversity, including classrooms, housing, food services, activities, event spaces, offices, and common areas.

1. Examine your materials. In critically examining your reading list, videos, textbooks, print materials, flyers, and other resources, it may be helpful to include an image of the authors and experts that you use in your materials to see if they truly are diverse in age, race, gender, ethnicity, etc.
2. Solicit reading and resource recommendations from students. An important part of including diverse perspectives and experiences is valuing the contributions of students.
3. Examine your physical space to ensure that your décor and print materials are diverse.
4. Incorporate examples that are relevant to students. Many of us have spent much of our lives in academia, which means that our references and analogies often come from an academic viewpoint. It is important to explore ways in which we can incorporate examples that are current and relevant. Consider explicitly asking students to share examples from their lives, work, child-rearing, or community experiences. Doing so may enrich the learning environment and help everybody in the course or activity feel involved.



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## Explore the Lack of Diverse Representation

Depending on your subject area, the first step to addressing this issue is to do a deep search for other authors, scholars, or experts in the field. It may be helpful to search journals from other countries, search on social media, reach out to colleagues in the field, and ask for resources and suggestions from students and team members.

**Be Explicit if There is a Lack of Diversity in Your Field.** If you find that the list of experts or authors in your discipline is not very diverse, share your findings with students and ask them to think about the impact of this lack of diversity. Ask questions such as,

- How is our field affected by the fact that it was created and produced by one group of people?
- What is missing from the study of this topic because of the lack of diversity?
- What are some of the obstacles to people being in this field?
- How can we take what people in this field who are not representative of our society have to offer and still apply it to our work in this field today?

Even when including perspectives and viewpoints that have been historically marginalized, it is important to provide context for why and how this marginalization has taken place (University of Portland, n.d.). Explore with your students the impact that marginalization of diverse perspectives and experiences has on those communities, our society, and on your field.

**Share How a Lack of Diversity Has Impacted Your Field.** Use the lack of diversity in your field as a call to action for increasing diversity in these fields. For instance, the fields of public health and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) have historically lacked diversity and need professionals who can manage various issues through interdisciplinary approaches and diverse perspectives (Mays et al., 2008).

**Motivate Students to Fill Gaps in Your Field.** You want to particularly encourage students to go into the field, including academia. Explore with your students whether the problems the field is currently addressing are related to a lack of diversity in the field. Also examine the relationship between a lack of diversity in the field and obstacles to inclusion in accessing the discipline. Returning to the example of the field of public health lacking diversity (Mays et al., 2008), explaining this in a course that addresses public health in the context of how women's health, child protective services, or culturally responsive mental health care can have a far-reaching impact on society may motivate students to study and work in fields that lack diversity.



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