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## Mentors Helping Mentees Explore DEI [poster]

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# Mentors Helping Mentees Explore DEI

## Luigi Lopez

### Why This Topic?

According to my experiences as a peer educator, when it comes to first-year students...

- Fixed Mindset
  - 1) Not Interested
  - 2) Hesitant/Resistant
  - 3) Not Aware
  - 4) Ambivalent
- Implicit Bias

As peer educators, we want our students to be leaders—take on our roles.

### Research

- **Study:** Gathering data from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, a study was conducted that examined the effects of individual and institutional characteristics on first-year students' growth in openness to diversity and challenge (**ODC**: a psychological proclivity that manifests itself through a variety of emotions, behaviors, and reactions to experiences).
- **Results:** Curricular and cocurricular diversity-related experiences were associated with increases in students' ODC in their first-year Spring semester.

(Woo-jeong & Perez, 2018)

- **Study:** A study was conducted using a longitudinal sample of 8,615 first-year undergraduates at 49 colleges.
- **Results:** Rare/moderate diversity interactions are associated with essentially no growth in leadership skills, psychological well-being, and intellectual engagement. Conversely, consistent diversity interactions are correlated with significant growth (e.g., leadership skills, intellectual engagement, intercultural effectiveness).

(Bowman, 2013)



### DEI at UNI

Student Enrollment '22-'23

- 8.9k students
- ~2,200 New Students for Fall 2022
- Race/Ethnicity
  - 87% White
  - 90% American Indian/Alaskan Native
  - 90% Hispanic
  - 89% Asian
  - 87% Black/African American
  - 75% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
  - 90% Two or more
- Transfer Students
  - ~370 students

(University of Northern Iowa, 2022)

### What Strategies Can We Use?

- (Macro) College Recruiting (Bowman, 2013)
  - Recruiting from high schools with student populations not represented in higher education
  - Being conscious of race, social class, and other factors during the admissions process
  - Offer additional financial aid to specific student groups
- (Micro/Macro) Co-Curricular/Curricular Involvement (Woo-jeong & Perez, 2018)
  - Student engagement with diversity-related practices is important
  - Having a supportive campus climate leads diverse students to feel safe and build lasting relationships
- (Micro) Encouragement
  - Promoting organizations/events as peer educators
  - Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice in Maucker Union

### Why is DEI Important?

In the **higher education** sense:

- Enhances the educational experience
- Promotes personal growth
- Strengthens communities

(Parker, 2022)

To **me**:

- Solidifies relationships and builds trust between myself and student
- Become educated and educate others
- Students will inevitably work with people different from themselves

### Thoughts

What have I noticed? What did I learn?

- First-year freshmen attitudes towards DEI simply vary
- Continuing to learn
- Personal growth

What will you notice? What can you learn?

- Get to know your student
- Be proactive yourself
- Encourage co-curricular activities that you're personally involved with/passionate about

### References

- Bowman, Nicholas A. "How Much Diversity Is Enough? The Curvilinear Relationship Between College Diversity Interactions and First-Year Student Outcomes." *Research in Higher Education*, vol. 54, no. 8, 2013, pp. 874–94, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-013-9300-0>
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