

Unit-level Inclusive Environment Inventory

by Dr. Becky Freer

Use this inventory to evaluate your unit. For each item, check “yes” or “no.” Items shaded gray are written in reverse and are undesirable characteristics. If an item does not apply to your unit, cross it out. You may also add additional items that you have identified for your unit.

When you are finished, go back and put an “x” in the “Priority” column for 4-10 items that you perceive to be a priority for your unit. Consider how your unit contributes to students’ overall success and how your unit engages students of different identities and circumstances as you identify priorities. After all members of the unit have completed this inventory, you will be asked to share your selections and engage in an activity to narrow your priorities to 4 items that your unit will focus on.

Section I: Student-Centered Team

Role models who are authentic, competent, and supportive can influence students’ success. Additionally, students who enter universities feeling as though they do not belong can gain a sense of belonging through authentic relationships with people in positions of authority who have high expectations and offer affirming messages that students can achieve these expectations. Thus, it is critical to examine how we engage with students.

| STUDENT-CENTERED TEAM | Yes | No | Priority? |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------|
| Do staff in your unit have empathetic and supportive mindsets toward students? | | | |
| Do staff listen and validate students’ experiences and perceptions? | | | |
| Do staff use self-disclosure and personal narratives to destigmatize challenges and increase sense of belonging (without glorifying risky behaviors). | | | |
| Is advice to students (in videos, etc.) framed via personal experiences? | | | |
| Do staff express high expectations and high support for students? | | | |
| Do staff celebrate students’ successes? | | | |
| Do staff vent about students in front of students/student staff? | | | |
| Do staff maintain appropriate boundaries? | | | |
| Does your unit proactively identify and reach out to students who may be absent, isolated, or lonely? (e.g., do not attend events, do not accept financial aid, etc.) | | | |
| At events/trainings, do staff show up? | | | |
| Do staff stand in the back, off to the side, or near their colleagues? | | | |
| Do staff engage with students they don’t know? | | | |
| Do staff scan and engage with students who seem alone or lost? | | | |
| Do staff facilitate connections between students? | | | |
| When leading events and trainings, do staff foster inclusion? | | | |
| Do staff state their pronouns and explain why they share pronouns? | | | |
| Do staff acknowledge the land and explain why they acknowledge the land? | | | |
| Do staff create ground rules that promote vulnerability and openness? | | | |
| Do staff encourage self-care? | | | |

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| Does your unit go where students are? | | | |
| Does your unit offer programs/services in different spaces on campus? | | | |
| Does your unit offer office hours in different spaces on campus? | | | |
| Does your unit offer programs/services online? | | | |
| Does your unit require students to reach out? | | | |
| How do staff refer students to other units/staff? | | | |
| Do staff offer to directly connect them to staff via phone, email, or face to face? | | | |
| Do staff offer to walk them over? | | | |
| Do staff simply tell students where to go? | | | |
| Do staff seek answers when they do not know the answers to questions? | | | |
| Are pronouns available on: | | | |
| Business cards? | | | |
| Name tags? | | | |
| Email signature lines? | | | |
| Website bios? | | | |
| Are business cards in braille? | | | |
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Section II: Peer Support and Social Networks

People are better able to manage challenges when they have a support network to help cope with and overcome challenges. Students are no different. Students turn to friends when they do not understand assignments, to study, to get notes for a missed class, to pick up food when sick, or to manage larger challenges and adversity. Furthermore, peer relationships can have a positive effect on mental health. Peer relationships help make the campus feel like a home regardless of whether students live on or off campus. Peer relationships can also help make large schools, that may seem daunting, feel small and personal.

Yet, many students find it more challenging to form friendships in college than they found it in high school. In high school, students may take several courses together, participate in similar activities, and see one another several times each day of the week. However, in college, classes are often larger and may only meet a for few hours a week. Furthermore, students may attend courses virtually or have competing priorities that limit their participation in on-campus activities. Thus, it is important for all of us to help students form friendships and facilitate opportunities for students to build connections when they cannot meet in person.

| PEER SUPPORT AND SOCIAL NETWORKS | Yes | No | Priority? |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------|
| Does your unit help students make friends? | | | |
| Does your unit offer routine opportunities for students to engage in small groups? | | | |
| Does your unit allow students to join pre-existing groups throughout the year? | | | |
| Is this clearly stated? | | | |

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| Are meeting times, dates, and locations visible? | | | |
| Is contact information included? | | | |
| Does your unit offer engagement opportunities that students find meaningful? (e.g., service, social causes, career interests) | | | |
| Does your unit engage with students virtually? | | | |
| Does your unit stream events? | | | |
| Does your unit host online communities? | | | |
| Are students able to participate virtually? | | | |
| Does your unit offer students opportunities that have financial or academic benefits? | | | |
| Does your unit offer employment opportunities to students? | | | |
| Does your unit offer internships and/or course credit for engaging in projects? | | | |
| Does your unit work with instructors to promote internships and project opportunities? | | | |
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Section III: Physical Spaces and Cues

Students' sense of belonging can be influenced by physical spaces and cues. To foster an inclusive campus where all students see UWM as home, we must examine whether our spaces are inclusive, welcoming, and conducive to success. We must be mindful that our spaces do not prioritize one culture, identity, or background over another. Omissions can send just as powerful messages to students as signs of inclusion. We must be intentional about thinking about who we are forgetting about, whether intentional or not. Even spaces that primarily focus on an identity must ensure to consider multiple and intersectional identities. Furthermore, we can reinforce our commitment to students by having clean spaces where students feel that they matter. We can also ensure that all students can access our spaces and feel invited to these spaces.

| PHYSICAL SPACES AND CUES | Yes | No | Priority? |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------|
| Does your space use stickers or decals to designate inclusive and supportive spaces? (e.g., safe space, human rights, dreamers, TIX trained) | | | |
| Does your space have art, photos, that reflect a multicultural community? | | | |
| Does your units' meeting spaces include land acknowledgment placards? | | | |
| Does your space convey openness to all religious backgrounds? | | | |
| Does your space refrain from decorations associated with one religion? | | | |
| Does your space convey that students matter? (e.g., clean, uncluttered, with no broken furniture) | | | |
| Does your space convey that students are welcome? (e.g., open space for students to gather, comfortable furniture, open doors) | | | |

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| Does your space diffuse power disparities? (e.g., not seated across a desk; chairs at an angle) | | | |
| Does your space offer comforts? (e.g., tissue, candy, mints, giveaways) | | | |
| Is hot-line information posted in both highly utilized and discrete locations where students can snap photos and have help? (e.g., suicide, sexual assault, food assistance, housing assistance) | | | |
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Section IV: Community of Support

For students to see the university as a home, staff must do so as well. We all have a responsibility to guide and support students not only in our area of expertise, but in all aspects of the institution. We must be engaged in the entire student experience. To do this, we make efforts to get to know colleagues from other units. We make sure we know how to navigate the basic operations, resources, policies and urgency/emergency response systems that students may use. We know how to assist students when they face major challenges. We also champion students' interests, and we lead our colleagues and our campus in areas where we have expertise.

| COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT | Yes | No | Priority? |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------|
| Do staff in your unit foster connections with colleagues? | | | |
| Do staff know how to contact staff in other units? | | | |
| Do staff know where other units are located? | | | |
| Do staff have basic knowledge about institutional operations in: | | | |
| Financial aid? | | | |
| Add/drop/withdrawal deadlines? | | | |
| Tuition deadlines? | | | |
| Housing contracts? | | | |
| Meal plans? | | | |
| Transportation? | | | |
| Renting/purchasing texts and course materials? | | | |
| Tutoring? | | | |
| Writing support? | | | |
| Accessibility & accommodations? | | | |
| Computer labs? | | | |
| Printing resources? | | | |
| Policies on exams, absences, etc.? | | | |

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| Do staff know what to do if a student discloses a serious incident related to: | | | |
| Title IX? | | | |
| Hate/bias incident? | | | |
| Suicidal ideation/mental health concerns? | | | |
| Issue with instructor or staff member? | | | |
| Issue with a student? | | | |
| Threat or act of violence? | | | |
| Are staff aware of current issues on campus and in the larger community? | | | |
| Do staff authentically acknowledge the issue and/or associated pain? | | | |
| Are staff comfortable engaging students in conversations about incidents? | | | |
| Does your unit appropriately champion students' interests? | | | |
| Does your unit lead initiatives for the division/campus on topics for which they are experts? | | | |
| Does your unit offer trainings to other staff and units on topics for which they are experts? | | | |
| Does your unit engage in professional organizations and trainings to advance their practice in supporting students' success? | | | |
| Does your unit invite other units and colleagues to train staff on topics for which they are not experts? (e.g., psychologists discuss isolation and mental health) | | | |
| Does your unit engage with community partners? (e.g., service organizations, hospitals, social workers, high schools, businesses, grant organizations, etc.) | | | |
| Does your unit engage in fundraising efforts for students? | | | |
| Does your unit have a partnership with the development unit? | | | |
| Does your unit save testimonials, and share them? | | | |
| Do staff write grants? | | | |
| Does your unit go where students are? | | | |
| Do staff welcome students at move-in, UNITE, and other welcome events? | | | |
| Do staff advise student organizations or lead student workshops? | | | |
| Do staff attend student programs and events? (e.g., drag show, graduation, etc.) | | | |
| Do staff volunteer at student events? (e.g., Fall Welcome, Ignite, etc.) | | | |
| Do staff visit spaces where students hang out? (etc., LGBTRC, WRC, MVRC, IEC, Roberto Hernandez Center, etc.) | | | |
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Section V: Information

Universities have many specialized and decentralized operations which can be difficult for students to navigate. As such, students may miss out on opportunities to get involved, make costly mistakes, get frustrated, give up, and potentially even leave the university. For example, students will often first try to seek information on their own, as they do not want others to think that they don't know how to do something or they may not have time to seek help when the university is open. Yet, if students do seek assistance, they may not know who to turn to. Thus, units must ensure that their information is easy to find, student-friendly, and accessible to all students. Units should work to ensure their materials can be understood by students who may not have prior knowledge of their unit to foster their engagement. This section is designed to help units ensure that information is available, accessible, inviting, well-explained, and online.

| INFORMATION | Yes | No | Priority? |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------|
| Do students know about your unit? | | | |
| Do publications clearly tell students what services/resources are offered? | | | |
| Do publications explain <i>how</i> the unit supports students' success? | | | |
| When does your unit promote its services to students? | | | |
| Are communications/outreach strategically timed? | | | |
| Does your unit promote its services often? | | | |
| Is your unit visible on multiple platforms? (e.g., social media) | | | |
| Do communications reach non-traditional and marginalized groups? | | | |
| Does your unit use language that speaks to a broad range of students? | | | |
| Does your unit use plain language? | | | |
| Does your unit use acronyms? | | | |
| Can they be eliminated? | | | |
| If not, are they clearly explained? | | | |
| Do publications use inclusive pronouns (e.g., they instead of he/she) | | | |
| Are your resources accessible? (e.g., braille, captions, large text size, usage of color and graphics, etc.) | | | |
| Are publications available in different languages? | | | |
| Is your unit website effective at engaging students? | | | |
| Does your unit website: | | | |
| Explain why students may want to access/engage with the unit? | | | |
| Tell students what services/resources are offered? | | | |
| Include instructions on <i>how</i> to use resources? | | | |
| Include guidance on <i>when</i> students should use your unit's resources? | | | |
| Explain <i>how</i> the unit supports students' success? | | | |
| Explain how the unit is committed to equity and inclusion? | | | |

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| Does your unit website display contact information (i.e., phone number, email, physical location) on the main page and in obvious places? | | | |
| Does your unit website include staff names with: | | | |
| Photos? | | | |
| Bios? | | | |
| Pronouns? | | | |
| Identities and background? | | | |
| Self-disclosure, interests? | | | |
| Information on how individual staff members engage with students? | | | |
| Is your unit webpage easy to navigate? (i.e., information not buried) | | | |
| Have students tested the functionality of the website? | | | |
| Does your unit website include definitions to unfamiliar/technical words? | | | |
| Is your unit website easy to find? | | | |
| Do key units' websites link to your unit's website? | | | |
| Is your unit easily searchable on the institution's website? | | | |
| Is your unit easily searchable on web browsers? (i.e., Google) | | | |
| Will searches of key words and phrases bring up your unit? | | | |
| Is your unit website accessible? | | | |
| Video captions? | | | |
| Alt text for pictures? | | | |
| Languages translations? (e.g., Google translate) | | | |
| Works with older equipment? | | | |
| Does your unit have information, resources, and/or webpages for families? | | | |
| Does your website inform faculty and staff how to connect students to your unit? | | | |
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Section VI: Student-Centered Policies

Students encounter several university policies and procedures daily. Policies guide student behavior, student employment, student organizations, equipment checkout, major changes, course drops, information sharing, incident reporting, campus living, ID cards, complaint submissions, and so on. Though policies are often written with objectivity in mind, they may impact students differently when put into practice. Thus, it is important that units review their policies through an equity lens to ensure students with different circumstances, identities, and backgrounds have similar outcomes. Further, policies can also contribute to students' sense of belonging. Thus, policies should be framed with an asset-mindset, be developmental, and treat students with dignity and respect.

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| STUDENT-CENTERED POLICIES | Yes | No | Priority? |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------|
| Are policies posted on your unit's website? | | | |
| Are policies written in plain language and easy to follow? | | | |
| Are policies accessible for students with disabilities? (e.g., font size, braille) | | | |
| Are policies translated in different languages? | | | |
| If not, does your unit have the ability to do this upon request? | | | |
| Does your unit clearly inform students how to make this request? | | | |
| Can students make the request in an inconspicuous way? | | | |
| Do policies allow exceptions for physical health, mental health, financial need, and/or extraordinary circumstances? | | | |
| Do policies have inherent structural biases? (i.e., though applied consistently, some students benefit more than others) (e.g., <i>requiring</i> students to be physically present during appeals) | | | |
| Are policies framed with the assumption that most students have good intentions? (e.g., "no late work" versus "contact me in advance if you have an exceptional circumstance") | | | |
| Are consequences proportionate to behaviors? (e.g., if students are one day late, what will happen?). | | | |
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Section VII: Seamless Systems

In high school, students can ask their teachers a question about anything and they can expect to get an answer. However, in college, students are expected to navigate complex and often unfamiliar systems. Students may especially struggle to navigate processes that involve multiple units, require multiple signatures, or have several steps. Students may spend a lot of time learning how to navigate systems, taking time away from studying or being engaged in learning. Furthermore, students who have competing responsibilities and limited resources may struggle to navigate systems that have to strict timelines, physical presence requirements, or fee components.

| SEAMLESS SYSTEMS | Yes | No | Priority? |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------|
| Are processes for students clearly explained and easy to navigate? | | | |
| Are processes described on the unit website? | | | |
| Are graphics and flow charts used to increase understanding? | | | |
| Are there FAQ's for common questions and/or challenges? | | | |
| Are timelines clearly explained? | | | |
| Is contact information provided for students who have questions? | | | |
| Are records maintained electronically to reduce filing errors? | | | |
| Are forms electronic? | | | |

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| If not, are forms downloadable from your unit's website? | | | |
| Can students submit forms via email or without visiting the unit? | | | |
| Do students need to come to the office for submission, approval, etc.? | | | |
| Do students need to contact multiple offices to resolve an issue? | | | |
| For hearings/meetings/trainings: | | | |
| Can students participate virtually or over the phone? | | | |
| Are there multiple dates and times available for participation? | | | |
| Are there evening and weekend options for participation? | | | |
| If not, can you offer alternate times or arrangements if requested? | | | |
| Are fees that are associated your unit necessary? | | | |
| Can fees be waived? | | | |
| Is the waiver process easy to apply for and fast to receive a decision? | | | |
| Can students who did not file FAFSA get a waiver? (e.g., undocumented) | | | |
| Is the waiver process made clearly available to students? | | | |
| Is your unit open during the evenings? | | | |
| What resources are available when your unit is closed? | | | |
| Do event start and end times coincide with bus/train/shuttle schedules? | | | |
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Section VIII: Continuous Improvement

Though our institution strives to be equitable and inclusive, we still have gaps in student achievement based on identities and circumstances. Thus, we must continue to make improvements to ensure we serve all students well. Furthermore, the university exists within a societal context that is constantly shifting with changing demographics, generational behaviors, community and global challenges, industries, technology, and so on. As such, students have evolving needs and expectations. Units must actively seek information so we can evolve and serve students well.

| CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT | Yes | No | Priority? |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------|
| Does your unit utilize a student advisory committee to seek feedback? | | | |
| Is the committee diverse (race, ethnicity, gender, class, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, veteran, parental status, age, etc.)? | | | |
| Does your unit seek student input to review: | | | |
| Publications? | | | |
| Webpages? | | | |
| Policies? | | | |
| Strategic plans and goals? | | | |

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| <p>Does your unit have clear and visible means for students to submit complaints or feedback?</p> <p>Can students submit feedback anonymously?</p> <p>Are complaints reviewed timely and methodically?</p> <p>Do staff give sincere consideration to students' complaints?</p> | | | |
| <p>To identify students who under-utilize your unit's services, does your unit track participation/usage? (i.e., take ID numbers) Specifically is data disaggregated by:</p> <p>Race/ethnicity?</p> <p>Gender?</p> <p>Income/class?</p> <p>Sexual orientation?</p> <p>Gender identity?</p> <p>Ability?</p> <p>International status?</p> <p>Age?</p> <p>Other identities or statuses? (e.g., parental, veteran, live on/off campus)</p> <p>Intersectional identities? (e.g., race and class, race and gender identity)</p> | | | |
| <p>Does your unit evaluate outcomes (awards, appeals, conduct, learning, satisfaction) for implicit biases? Specifically, does your unit evaluate outcomes by:</p> <p>Race/ethnicity?</p> <p>Gender?</p> <p>Income/class?</p> <p>Sexual orientation?</p> <p>Gender identity?</p> <p>Ability?</p> <p>International status?</p> <p>Age?</p> <p>Other identities or statuses? (e.g., parental, veteran, live on/off campus)</p> <p>Intersections of identities? (e.g., race and class, race and gender identity)</p> | | | |
| <p>Does your unit use data to prompt changes? Specifically, does your unit:</p> <p>Seek feedback from student groups who do not access your unit?</p> <p>Seek feedback from students do not have good experiences with your unit?</p> <p>Implement changes to engage students who do not access your unit?</p> <p>Change policies or systems to reduce structural biases?</p> <p>Participate in trainings to recognize/reduce implicit biases?</p> <p>Change systems to reduce implicit biases? (e.g., remove names from applications)</p> | | | |

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| Does your unit regularly engage in diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings? Specifically: | | | |
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| Anti-racism training (doing “self work” by examining implicit biases, structural biases, & white supremacy)? | | | |
| Microaggressions/belonging? | | | |
| Stereotype threat (internalization of stereotypes about ones' own identities)? | | | |
| Destigmatizing mental health? | | | |
| Disabilities & accommodations? | | | |
| Gender biases, masculinity, femininity? | | | |
| Inclusive interviewing & hiring? | | | |
| Allyship & bystander training? | | | |
| Intercultural communication, behaviors, and customs? | | | |
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