

Glossary of Terms

CSUSM Diversity and Equity Graduation Requirement

Spring, 2019

To provide consistency and clarity, we offer the following key terms and definitions as they pertain to the Diversity and Equity Graduation Requirement courses. These terms are derived from the CSUSM Diversity Strategic Plan when applicable, or from relevant literature. We recommend looking at the complete Glossary from the [CSUSM Diversity Strategic Plan](#) for a more comprehensive set of definitions.

Culture: Culture refers to the learned and shared values, beliefs, customs, habits, rituals, language, attitudes, and behaviors of a society, group, or organization. Cultural groups can share a distinguishing set of characteristics, but individuals within cultures also vary from each other, often sharing aspects in common with individuals from other cultural groups. Many cultures also include sub-cultures.

Difficult & Meaningful Communication: Difficult and meaningful communication includes purposeful practices that establish healthy boundaries while also facilitating direct conversation that can provide clarity, improve decision-making, and build relationships. The goal of this type of communication is to face conflict directly, with respect for all parties, in order to cultivate deeper understandings of multiple perspectives.

Disposition: Disposition is a quality of character, a habit, a state of readiness or a tendency to act in a specified way that is either inherited or may be learned. While “character” is determined by your inner values, disposition refers to the way a person views the world, especially an attitude that favors one alternative over others.

Diversity: Diversity is “the representation of multiple identity groups and their cultures in a particular group, organization, or society.” The term diversity serves as a large umbrella that includes principles of inclusion, social justice, and equity, as well as constructs such as intercultural proficiency, multiculturalism, pluralism, institutionalized inequality, power, and privilege.

Equity: Equity means giving everyone what they need in order to be successful. An equity perspective honors and attends to justice and diversity, signaling that true equality may only be possible by meeting the different needs of people and correcting for systemic exclusion and differential treatment and impact. Achieving equity can sometimes mean helping groups overcome obstacles that have been placed in their way.

Historical Legacy: A legacy is something that is handed down from one period of time to another. Historical legacies are an important component of many explanations of contemporary outcomes in political systems, organizational practices, and social norms.

Inclusion: Inclusion is a system of “creating and embedding organizational, leadership and interpersonal practices that result in a sense of safety, full belonging, participant, and voice across the range of diversity dimensions, without requiring assimilation or loss of valued identities.” Inclusion both contributes to and benefits from a climate of value, respect, connection and fairness across multiple dimensions of diversity.

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is the theory and perspective that individuals are best understood by examining the multiplicity of identities that make up who they are, and that looking at one aspect of identity, such as gender or race alone, is not as informative or complete as appreciating the integration and overlap of the many aspects of identity.

Oppression: Oppression is the systematic and institutional abuse of power by one group at the expense of others and the use of force (either material or symbolic) to maintain this dynamic. Oppression enables those in power to have access to control resources and choices, while making those labeled as inferior vulnerable to a variety of negative outcomes, such as poverty, violence, and/or early death. Oppression is a set of processes, actions and ideas that hind the oppressed from exercising their full freedom and identities.

Power & Privilege: Power and privilege, at the group level, involve unearned benefits bestowed on social groups that have historically cultivated political, economic, social, and financial prominence, advantage, and control. When groups and their members have power over others—and thus the ability to coerce behavior—it can be used in a discriminatory and oppressive way that creates or maintains dominant status. Power also includes access to social, political, and economic resources, and can often involve the ability to define what is normative, normal, or appropriate.

Social Location: Social location refers to the groups people belong to because of their place of position in society. Often, social location is determined in part through comparison to other groups. It includes identity categories such as race, socio-economic class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, ability, educational status, political views and more.

Social Justice: Social justice is “the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities.” Social justice involves promoting and making efforts toward equal rights for all of society’s members by mitigating injustices and prioritizing inclusion and diversity.

Systems, Structures & Processes: Within a framework of diversity and equity, “systems, structures, and processes” refer to the overall organization of power within everyday life, which is used to create norms for behavior and influence relationships between the individual and society. For example, this includes the economic structure of a society, the hierarchical organization of institutions, and the processes of media production and consumption.