Inclusive Success: Structures and Practices, Asset-Based Learning

Beloit College
Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusiveness
#MakingEquityRealatBC

April 13, 2016
Mission

Beloit College engages the intelligence, imagination, and curiosity of its students, empowering them to lead fulfilling lives marked by high achievement, personal responsibility, and public contribution in a diverse society. Our emphasis on international and interdisciplinary perspectives, the integration of knowledge with experience, and close collaboration among peers, professors, and staff equips our students to approach the complex problems of the world ethically and thoughtfully.
Statement for Hiring
Because equity and inclusion are central to our students’ liberal education and vital to the thriving of all members of our residential learning community, Beloit College aspires to be an actively anti-racist institution. We recognize our aspiration as ongoing and institution-wide, involving collective commitment and accountability. We welcome employees who are committed to and will actively contribute to our efforts to celebrate our cultural and intellectual richness and be resolute in advancing inclusion and equity. We encourage all interested individuals meeting the criteria of the described position to apply.
Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusiveness (OADI) -
How we implement the college mission and hiring statement:

• Re-envisioning of pedagogy and recognition of the validity and importance of student lived experiences, with the goal of creating inclusive classrooms through an **equity asset-based** framework.

• Challenging dominant understandings of what is considered “academic” as a means to create more **equitable** institutional opportunities.

• Reimagining how diversity and inclusion operates at Beloit College using a **equity asset-based** framework.
Deficit-based approaches locate the problem within the students, their families, and communities. It often ignores or gives insufficient weight to social and structural forces like racism and discrimination that systematically create barriers to black/brown student success (McClaurin 2016, “SCIENCESpeak: Brown And Black Giants Of Science: Making The Invisible Visible (Part 1)”
Asset- or Strength-based approaches recognize the importance, value, and strength of the lived experiences students bring with them to college and uses these experiences, skills, and knowledge to create equitable engagement within the classroom and across campus.

**A Comparison Between Deficit & Strength-Based Thinking**

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**Strength-Based Thinking** is a common sense idea which discovers the greatest qualities of what we do by combining:

- Personal Strengths
- Positive Experiences
- Individual Initiative
- Personal Responsibility
- Independence
- Capacity to Act

[http://www.teacherdrivenchange.org/deficit-strength-difference](http://www.teacherdrivenchange.org/deficit-strength-difference)
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But does an asset-based approach alone fully address structural discrimination?

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Equity

The creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion (AAC&U).
Equality doesn’t mean Equity
Video: Unequal Opportunity Race, by African American Policy Forum (AAPF)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBb5TgOXgNY
Equality doesn't mean Equity
Inclusive Success

OADI defines inclusive success as recognizing and dismantling the structural barriers in place that prohibit the attainment of our college mission for underserved and underrepresented students. This entails reforming institutional structures and practices to position underrepresented bodies and their assets (lived experiences, skills, capacities) at the center. Inclusive success recognizes and values marginalized approaches to knowledge production and dissemination. This is attained when understandings of what is considered “academic” include non-majority discursive practices and ways of knowing.
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**Band-Aid**
- Classic diversity work (Kumbaya)
- Coddle our underrepresented students (deficit-based)
- Be nicer to each other
- Focus on individuals and individualism, rather than the “ground”

**Tumor**
- Structural/Institutional racism
- Whiteness as a normative discourse
- Deficit-based model for student engagement and learning
- Subjects nobody wants to talk about

**How to cut out the tumor?**
- Inclusive success as “chemotherapy”
- Paradigm shift towards an equity, asset-based framework that simultaneously reveals and begins the work of rooting out structural inequality and oppression