

# DIVERSE VOICES

PRODUCED BY THE IUP COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & COMMUNICATIONS DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STANDING COMMITTEE

August 2020

Two actions that help students feel welcome and included in your courses :

1. Add syllabus language that communicates IUP's values about diversity and inclusion
2. Carefully consider assigned texts/readings

## Syllabus Diversity Statement

### A diversity statement in the syllabus:

1. Shows support for the wide diversity of students in your class,
2. Recognizes students' diverse needs,
3. Shows respect for diverse perspectives.

Remember that diversity includes a wide range of categories:

- Race & Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation & gender identity,
- Religion & national origin
- Age
- Ability/disability status
- Veteran's status

### Why add a diversity statement?

In DISC focus groups, IUP students reported feeling isolation and “invisibility” in classes, perpetuated by faculty and peers. When faculty

include a statement about diversity, that welcomes diverse ideas and recognizes diverse needs, students reported feeling more positive about the course and more included in the classroom. A syllabus statement is one way to communicate that everyone is welcome.

### Where can I find examples?

Visit the DISC Curriculum Sub-Committee's D2L discussion:

<https://d2l.iup.edu/d2l/le/2267744/discussions/List>

- Or on D2L DISC site, go to COMMUNICATION → DISCUSSIONS → DIVERSIFY YOUR SYLLABUS

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## Selecting Texts & Readings

- Diversify the readings you require in your courses.
- Why? Students report feeling more included when they see themselves reflected in course readings and content.

### Include texts written by diverse authors

- Consider authors from marginalized groups.
- Showcase “hidden figures” – people in your field who have made excellent contributions but whose work traditionally has been hidden from view.

### Include texts with diverse perspectives

- Go beyond readings from white/ethnocentric viewpoints. That may require going beyond the selected textbook.
- Engage students in discussions around diverse texts to build critical thinking skills and the ability to engage in difficult dialogues.

### Review texts for triggering content

- Consider whether texts could be offensive or triggering to students from various diverse groups.
- Many students come to class carrying the weight of the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor as well as the isolation and uncertainty of COVID-19. Review texts with new eyes to consider potential reactions from students.

### Go beyond “chapter 9”

- Textbooks may put all diversity content in one chapter. Consider having students read that chapter first to frame the course with diversity in mind.
- Include content related to diversity all throughout a course, rather than as an “afterthought.”