

# NSU Campus Inclusion Handbook

Offered by the NSU Inclusion and Diversity Council (ID)

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## **Introduction**

We are Diverse. We are Inclusive. We are One NSU.

Nova Southeastern University (NSU) is a majority-minority institution, with students from at least 116 countries around the world. In remarks delivered at the opening of the university's Annual African Presence Art Exhibition in 2014, NSU's 6<sup>th</sup> President, George L. Hanbury II, Ph.D. noted, "As many of you know, Diversity is one of NSU's Core Values, which permeates all that we do, and also reflects our student body. In fact, approximately 27% of our students are Black, 22% are Hispanic, 38% are White, and 10% are Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, or another minority.... We have been consistently recognized for our diversity, including master's and doctorate degrees awarded to African Americans and Hispanics. But at NSU, diversity is about so much more than a person's ethnic background or the color of our skin. Inclusiveness is a cornerstone that makes our campus and our lives so much richer. This foundation has been with us for our first 50 years, and will continue to guide us into the future." (<http://www.nova.edu/president/forms/african-presence-exhibition.pdf>)

As a majority-minority institution, and as a university recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) (defined in Title V of the Higher Education Act as not-for-profit institutions of higher learning with a full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate student enrollment that is at least 25 percent Hispanic), NSU's community includes multiple cultures and perspectives. As such, we find ourselves with the unique opportunity to invite all members of our community to learn from and appreciate others and to create a learning community that exemplifies inclusiveness and respect for diversity.

### **Purpose**

This Campus Inclusion Handbook was developed by NSU's Inclusion and Diversity Council (ID) to provide information and resources that help to cultivate a university learning community that embraces and celebrates diversity by inspiring individuals to promote inclusion. The first version of the handbook was developed under the leadership of Debra Nixon, Ph.D., in 2007, and the handbook has been revised and updated over the years by other members of the ID, with the guidance and support of Honggang Yang, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and

Social Sciences.

NSU is committed to creating a more engaged and inclusive campus environment. We know that when individuals feel welcomed, they are much more likely to join a community and stay with that community—thus, inclusiveness is essential in efforts to recruit and retain both students and employees. This handbook represents our efforts to establish NSU as a place of inclusive excellence.

### **What are Inclusion and Diversity?**

Diversity is one of eight core values identified by the university as essential to institutional excellence. NSU's Core Values are:

- Academic Excellence
- Student Centered
- Integrity
- Innovation
- Opportunity
- Scholarship/Research
- **Diversity**
- Community

**Diversity.** As defined by the university, “Diversity includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, philosophy, gender, physical, socioeconomic status, age and sexual orientation. Differences in views, interpretations and reactions derived from diversity are important. Diversity enriches a learning environment focused on preparing individuals to live and work in a global society” (<http://www.nova.edu/about/mission.html>).

**Inclusion.** Whereas the word *diversity* refers to all forms of difference, the term *inclusion* refers to the act or state of being included. To *include* is to actively invite presence and participation; *diversity* defines what we invite: variety. Inclusion represents the interaction, mutual respect, and sense of community among those from diverse backgrounds and with diverse perspectives within a particular environment.

## **NSU Inclusion & Diversity Council (ID)**

The Inclusion and Diversity (ID) Council advances the mission of Nova Southeastern University by helping to facilitate the infusion of inclusive consciousness and behavior within the entire NSU community and beyond. We are a coalition of NSU students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and community members with a shared goal to promote and support a range of services and programs that enhance inclusive excellence at NSU.

The Inclusion and Diversity Council was originally organized by Dean Honggang Yang and Dr. Debra Nixon in 2006 as part of the Campus Climate initiative “Do Something Different.” The group’s primary objective was to invite a campus-wide change in behavior related to diversity matters. Over successive years, the group devoted increased attention to the management of diversity—inclusion.

Our mission is to cultivate a university learning community that embraces diversity and celebrates multiculturalism by inspiring individuals to promote inclusion. By modeling inclusive excellence through making connections, creating forums, and encouraging dialogues, we contribute towards a safe, campus community where diversity is honored, invited, and celebrated. Our goal is to make our differences a channel of celebration and an opportunity to pool resources and talents to create a healthier, more unified and aware university community.

Please visit our website: <http://www.nova.edu/inclusion/index.html>. If you interested in becoming a member of the ID Council, please email Dr. Robin Cooper at [robicoop@nova.edu](mailto:robicoop@nova.edu).

### **Guiding Principles**

The following statement was originally drafted by the faculty of the Department of Family Therapy in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. NSU’s ID Council has adopted it (with some modifications), as reflecting the broader guiding ideals of the Council and NSU as a whole.

Our programs and workplaces are guided by the principles of inclusion, diversity, and affirmative practices in the classroom, coursework, as well as all professional and collegial relationships and interactions. We are committed to training our students and interacting with

fellow university employees in a manner that is respectful of and sensitive to religious/spiritual beliefs, cultural traditions and practices, gender identities and in all areas that distinguish individuals. Our goal is to be self-reflexive practitioners, holding ourselves accountable for our commitment to our principles.

We further strive to train students and encourage colleagues to respond to each other with the same honor and respect. Subsequently, we expect students and employees will treat fellow students, staff, and clients accordingly. We stress a commitment to servicing populations in an affirmative, supportive and competent manner including but not limited to underprivileged, minority, and socially oppressed groups, ethnic, racial, religious groups, LGBTQ individuals, foreign nationals, individuals with different levels of ability both physical and mental, as well as individuals of various genders, ages and socioeconomic and relationship statuses.

Ultimately, we believe that individual belief systems and values should be respected but that those belief systems and values do not hinder our professional practices.

### **Diversity Dialogues**

The Diversity Dialogues were established through the leadership of Dean Honggang Yang and Dr. Debra Nixon in 2006. These monthly discussions were initiated to bring the university community together to consider issues of diversity. Dr. Nixon conceived the idea based on behavioral changes of her students at the former School of Humanities and Social Sciences, now the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS), in a Marriage and Family Therapy Diversity course. What she found was that many students were ignorant of the larger discourses that informed bigotry in the United States. However, after entering the course and being challenged to confront those ideas, students were often more receptive, less bigoted, and often expressed appreciation for a transforming experience, naming the class' contents as the reason for their change. Dr. Nixon's primary method of teaching was providing information and opportunities for communication, and she believed such opportunities would benefit the broader campus community as well.

With the support of Dean Yang of CAHSS, Dr. Nixon and Dr. Susanne Marshall, Associate Dean, were invited to co- facilitate the Diversity Dialogues, guided by the premise that one chief

reason communities continue to struggle with issues of difference (diversity) is that there has not been a healthy platform to talk honestly and openly about them. The dialogues continue to be held for one hour at noon on the first Tuesday of the month, on a range of topics and with a range of speakers and panelists, including students, faculty and other university employees, alumni, and community members. The dialogues are free and open to all; they are also available via an online platform for those who wish to participate online. For more information, see the following website: <http://www.nova.edu/inclusion/diversity-dialogues/index.html>. If you have questions about the Diversity Dialogues or suggestions for topics and/or presenters, please email Dr. Robin Cooper at [robicoop@nova.edu](mailto:robicoop@nova.edu).

### **Best Practices**

The ID Council invites each NSU community member to help to create a safe campus environment of inclusion and acceptance by:

- Talking openly and respectfully about issues of diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusion
- Modifying behaviors to be more openly respectful and inclusive of others
- Attending an event outside of your field of study or usual interests
- Being respectfully inquisitive about your neighbor's practices that are different from yours
- Being self-aware and genuinely apologizing if you realize you're being racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic, or classist, etc.
- Forming a habit of asking curious questions of those whose perspective is different from yours and listening openly to their ideas, seeking to understand, even if you don't agree
- Thinking carefully before you utter something that may be hurtful to someone else

Inclusivity begins with self-reflexivity, considering how our long-held views shape what is "known" and believed about others and ourselves. Change emanates from within; therefore, change can begin by unmasking inaccurate culturally and/or historically informed opinions. Hence, we recommend the following attitudes as springboards for self-reflection and inclusive action:

- *Openness*—respect and curiosity about other perspectives

- *Invitation*—Gentle, sincere request
- *Acceptance*—Non- judgmental approval
- *Value* (of difference)—The implicit understanding and explicit demonstration of the worth that all bring to a task
- *Intentionality*—Purposeful inclusive actions
- *Warmth*—Genuine friendliness and graciousness
- *Freedom*—The liberty to be one’s unique self without concern of rejection
- *Collaboration*—The understanding that we function as a team and that every voice is valued

### **Instructors**

- During or before your first class- meeting introductions, ask students to share their ethnicities and nationalities
- Then, use the above information when teaching your class, affirming the contributions of others’ cultural groups
- During class, ask students to share different perspectives on the subject matter
- Ask students to share with you privately if there are spiritual or religious practices (or other practices) that will affect their being full participants in course studies
- In group or team activities, invite students to pair themselves with members other than their usual colleagues
- Think carefully before you utter something that may be hurtful to someone else
- Be self- aware, and genuinely apologize when you realize you’re being racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic, or classist, etc.
- Form a habit of asking questions of those whose perspective is different from yours and listen openly to their ideas
- Acquaint yourself with available professional resources that can offer help beyond your scope

**See various teacher resources below in the Resources section.**



## **Administration**

- Take advantage of every opportunity for diversity and inclusion training
- Be self- reflexive, questioning your decisions regarding staff assignments and other administrative initiatives
- Seek out a mentor to help ensure a balanced leadership approach
- Be open to constructive feedback or suggestions regarding your leadership style
- Support as many activities and campus- wide events as possible
- Be self- aware and genuinely apologize when you realize you're being racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic, or classist, etc.
- Form a habit of asking questions of those whose perspective is different from yours
- Check in with staff members to see if there is something more you could do to make the work environment more welcoming
- Lead by example

### **See various administrator resources below in the Resources section.**

Note: The above suggestions are just a starting place. We invite you to share with us ways that you are doing something inclusive. We especially want to know how your practices are making a difference in our campus community.

## **Resources**

### **Student Resource for NSU Student Organizations Related to Inclusion and Diversity**

NSU has a wide range of student organizations representing aspects of diversity such as national and regional groups, religious and ethnic groups, political groups, and groups related to gender or sexual identity, among others. To see a listing of current student organizations, and for more information on these groups, please visit <http://novasoutheastern.orgsync.com/home>.

### **Student Resource for International Students at NSU**

The Office of International Affairs (OIA) at Nova Southeastern University fosters campus internationalization and serves as a central support, advisory, and information center for all

students. The OIA also collaborates with faculty and staff on campus, at our Regional Campuses, and our international instructional sites to promote and facilitate international education programs and initiatives, celebrate diversity, promote multiculturalism, and create opportunities for students that encourage the development of a global mindset. For more information, visit <http://www.nova.edu/internationalaffairs/index.html>.

### **Teacher Resources from the Equity Literacy Institute**

Free downloadable handouts and resources from EdChange and the Equity Literacy Institute are available at <https://www.equityliteracy.org/resources>. The website notes: “Feel free to download, copy, and distribute these handouts. No special permission is needed.” These resources include “Awareness Activities” <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activityarch.html> and “Diversity Awareness Quizzes” <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/quizzes.html>, both of which can be used, copied, and distributed without permission, per the Equity Literacy Institute.

### **Teacher Resources from Teaching Tolerance**

Teaching Tolerance is an organization with a mission of “educating for a diverse democracy.” They encourage all educators to “discover and develop world-class materials with a community of educators committed to diversity, equity and justice.” Visit <https://www.tolerance.org/> for a range of classroom and professional development resources related to diversity and inclusion.

### **Administrator Resources from the Nat. Assoc. of Diversity Officers in Higher Education**

The National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) is an organization with a vision “to lead higher education toward inclusive excellence through institutional transformation.” Their website offers a range of resources and information to support those working on inclusion and diversity initiatives within institutions of higher education. For more information, visit <http://www.nadohe.org/>.

### **Administrator Resources from CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion**

Visit <https://www.ceoaction.com/> to learn how executives are advancing inclusion in the workplace. As noted on the website, “The CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion is the largest CEO-driven business commitment to advance diversity and inclusion within the workplace. This

commitment is driven by a realization that addressing diversity and inclusion is not a competitive issue, but a societal issue. CEOs recognize that change starts with them. With more than 450 CEOs of the world's leading companies and business organizations, our goal is to leverage our individual and collective voices to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace." These leaders of organizations share many actions leaders have taken on a range of areas that relate to diversity and inclusion in the workplace, with many ideas relevant to higher education institutions (<https://www.ceoaction.com/actions/>).

### **Diversity and Inclusion Resources Collected by the University of Southern California**

The University of Southern California has developed a research guide on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion with a wide array of resources, including teacher resources from several universities, demographic data, best practices, and other information. Please visit <http://libguides.usc.edu/diversityandinclusion> for this helpful collection of resources.

### **Diversity Style Guide**

As noted at [www.diversitystyleguide.com/](http://www.diversitystyleguide.com/), the Diversity Style Guide brings together definitions and information for "more than 700 terms related to race/ethnicity, disability, immigration, sexuality and gender identity, drugs and alcohol, and geography." Prepared for journalists and other media professionals, but relevant to all, the guide help anyone speak and write about "a complex, multicultural world with accuracy, authority and sensitivity."

### **Website on Diverse Issues in Education**

A resource that collects news items, blogs, webinars and more related to diversity and inclusion, <http://diverseeducation.com/> is a valuable website for anyone interested in diversity and inclusion in education.

### **Association of American Colleges & Universities Article on Diversity**

A 2016 article by Alison R. Bernstein entitled "Addressing Diversity and Inclusion on College Campuses: Assessing a Partnership between AAC&U and the Ford Foundation" offers some historical context regarding inclusion and diversity initiatives at higher education institutions in the United States and the Campus Diversity Initiative funded by the Ford Foundation. To read

the article, please visit <https://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2016/spring/bernstein>.

### **Information and Resources from the Southern Poverty Law Center**

The mission of the Southern Poverty Law Center is “fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society.” Their website includes a variety of useful information and resources on hate and extremism, children’s rights, immigrant justice, LGBT rights, economic justice, and criminal justice reform. Visit <https://www.splcenter.org/> for more information.

### **Afterword**

This Campus Inclusion Handbook is designed to be a living document that will continue to change as our understanding of what it means to be truly inclusive evolves, and as we learn of additional resources and best practices. We invite and welcome suggestions and feedback.

The development of this handbook, as well as the establishment of the Diversity Dialogues and the Inclusion and Diversity Council, would not have been possible without the steadfast commitment to inclusion efforts on the part of Honggang Yang, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Dean Yang has been the true champion and role model of inclusive excellence at NSU, and we are profoundly grateful for his leadership.