TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE: EMBRACING DIVERSITY, AND FOSTERING EQUITY AND INCLUSION THROUGH CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS AND ACTION
What type of academic leadership do we require to engage conversations about historical, systemic and political underpinnings across difference, necessary for change and transformation?
How can we rupture current understandings and practices often grounded in dominant comfort/framing to provide critical approaches to guided pathways and advocating inclusive excellence?
“Any real change implies the breakup of the world as one has always known it, the loss of all that gave one an identity, the end of safety.”

-James Baldwin

The paradox of education is precisely this—that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.

James Baldwin

One must say yes to life, and embrace it wherever it is found—and it is found in terrible places.... For nothing is fixed, forever and forever, it is not fixed; the earth is always shifting, the light is always changing, the sea does not cease to grind down rock. Generations do not cease to be born, and we are responsible to them because we are the only witnesses they have. The sea rises, the light fails, lovers cling to each other and children cling to us. The moment we cease to hold each other, the moment we break faith with one another, the sea engulfs us and the light goes out.

-James Baldwin-
Equity and Inclusion

Equity
Historically and politically, equity refers to the process of creating equivalent outcomes for members of historically underrepresented and oppressed groups. Equity is about moving toward ending systemic discrimination against people based on their identity and background, and focuses on filling areas where gaps exist based on institutional needs to achieve diversity and inclusion.

Inclusion
Exists when traditionally marginalized individuals and groups feel a sense of belonging and are empowered to participate in majority culture as full and valued members of the community, shaping, and redefining that culture in different ways.

WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP MEAN?

WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP REQUIRE OF ME?
Diversity Leadership in the 21st Century

Diversity as social justice based practice through which dialogue about privilege, power, and difference is encouraged, and campus and community members are able to speak up and challenge inequitable policies and practices.

Self implication of oneself to cultivate a deeper and critical awareness of personal biases, beliefs, and or historical roots that contribute to different forms of educational oppression instigated by how the individual is structurally anchored, as well as his/her/their daily experiences and practices.
QUALITY leadership is neither the product of one great individual nor the result of odd historical accidents. Rather, it comes from deeply bred traditions and communities that shape and mold talented and gifted persons. Without a vibrant tradition of resistance passed on to new generations, there can be no nurturing of a collective and critical consciousness—only professional conscientiousness survives.

- Cornel West

Great leaders don’t set out to be a leader... they set out to make a difference. It’s never about the role—always about the goal.
What cultivating social justice looks like

• A democratic, inclusive, and participatory process focused on affirming human agency and cultivating equitable spaces where people can collaborate to create change

• Representation of diverse voices/ experiences

• Distribution of resources is equitable

• All members are physically and psychologically safe and secure

## Towards Inclusive Excellence: 4 Elements

*Williams, Berger, & McClendon (AACU, 2005)*

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<th>A focus on student intellectual and social development. Academically, it means offering the best possible course of study for the context in which the education is offered.</th>
<th>A purposeful development and utilization of organizational resources to enhance student learning. Organizationally, it means establishing an environment that challenges each student to achieve academically at high levels and each member of the campus to contribute to learning and knowledge development.</th>
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<td>Attention to the cultural differences learners bring to the educational experience and that enhance the enterprise.</td>
<td>A welcoming community that engages all of its diversity in the service of student and organizational learning.</td>
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ACTING INCLUSIVELY

TAKES RESPONSIBILITY: Accountability

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Validation

OPPORTUNITY FOR LEARNING AND GROWTH: Courage/ intentionality

HUMILITY: It’s not about you; intentions v. impact

RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES: Listen generously

HUMANITY: Affirming and respecting our humanities

COLLABORATION: Enlist help from others

TRUST THE SPACE: spirit of openness; mutual endeavor.
When HONEST meets NICE

Hey man, that shirt's not cool
Interactions with my children
Why? Lawlessness in the name of LAW
Wounded Knee 1890

Standing Rock 2016
Marginalization v. Devaluation

Police brutality w/ no accountability

Detention Centers

Discrimination and And Racism

Deportations

Gender Inequities

Bullying
What the conversation might look like

**Poverty**

- Incarceration rates by race & ethnicity, 2010

**Prison Industrial Complex**

**Unemployment**

- Annual unemployment rate of whites and blacks (1963–2012 average) compared with average annual national unemployment rate during recessions since 1963

**Voting Rights**

- Share of black children in segregated and intensely segregated schools, 1968–2010

**Segregated Schools**

**Immigration**

- Percent of poor children living in areas of concentrated poverty, by race/ethnicity, 2000–2010 average

**Incarceration Rates by Race & Ethnicity, 2010**

- (Number of people incarcerated per 100,000 people in that group)

**Adults Without Valid Photo ID**

- Sources: Brennan Center for Justice; Gabriel R. Sanchez, Stephen A. Núñez, and Matt A. Barreto
WHO'S HELPED BY RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE?

WHAT PEOPLE THINK
Teenager
Works part time after school
Lives with parents
Earning extra spending money

THE REALITY
Average age: 35 years old
88% are not teens. They're 20 or older
36% are 40 or older
56% are women
28% have children
55% work full time
On average, they earn half of their family's total income
CULTURAL COMPETENCE / RELEVANCE

Cultural competence is having an **awareness** of one’s own cultural identity and views about difference, and the ability to learn and build on the varying cultural and community norms of persons represented in a given space. It is the ability to **understand** the within-group differences that make each person unique, while **celebrating/honoring** the between-group variations that make our country a tapestry and organizations function. (Adapted from the National Education Association, 2015)
CULTIVATING CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- Understanding the value difference offers
- Capacity for awareness/self-assessment of one’s own beliefs.
- A consciousness of the dynamics inherent when people from different groups interact
  - Knowledge of the role power and culture play in human society/relations
- An appreciation of, and ability to, adapt to varying intercultural communication and learning styles
“Civility is treating others with appropriate courtesy and respect. Much of what civility involves is context relative, and often it is relative mainly to what is needed for a shared task or mutual endeavor. Then the question of what civility requires in a given context or association is related to the question of what we are trying to accomplish together. Notice that the context may well include people who are strangers and even past opponents, so we cannot rely on affection, friendship, or familiarity to set boundaries; civility is something we intentionally bring to the situation, not necessarily something that flows from natural feelings. Notice also that civility involves patience and restraints; it has much to do with what we will not do to each other as what we will do for each other.”
Towards A model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Post-secondary Institutions AACU (Williams, Berger, & McClendon); 2005

Inclusive Excellence (P.16)

• re-envisions both quality and diversity;
• reflects a striving for excellence that has been made more inclusive by decades of work to infuse diversity into recruiting, admissions, and hiring;
• into the curriculum and co-curriculum;
• into administrative structures and practices;
• embraces newer forms of excellence
• expands ways to measure excellence that account for research on learning and more nuanced accountability structures
Envisioning a Critical and Authentic Inclusive

• Beyond duality: multiplicity and polyculturalism
• Positionality and Location of Self
• Co-implication
• Participatory engagement
• Responsiveness to context
• Vulnerability
• Student Centered as opposed to teacher centered

• Students as empowered learners
• Nurtured vs. Nature
• An obligation to each other
• Suspension of disbelief
• Addressing Implicit Bias
• Accounts for Social identities
“The demand, that is, that right thinking belongs intimately to right doing. In this sense, to teach right thinking is not something that is simply spoken of or an experience that is merely described. But something that is done and lived while it is being spoken of, as if the doing and living of it constituted a kind of irrefutable witness of its truth (p. 42).”

Paulo Freire
(Pedagogy of Freedom, 1998)
Michael Benitez, Ph.D., © 2019
Scholar Activist, Educator, Author, Speaker, Workshop Leader, Poet

20 years of experience with equity, diversity and inclusion work in academic and student affairs, and teaching; selected to be included in documentaries, authored book chapters and articles on topics of identity, ethnic and cultural studies, theory and practice, critical pedagogy in higher education, hip hop, campus climate and institutional research. Currently serves as Chief Diversity Officer, and Dean of Diversity and Inclusion, University of Puget Sound