

INSTRUCTION, RESEARCH AND STUDENT AFFAIRS
JUNE 28, 2021

SUBJECT

Board Policy III.K. Diversity, Educational Equity, and Inclusion – First Reading

REFERENCE

May 2021

The Board was provided an update on legislation, including the discussions around House Bill 377 and the concerns from legislators that social justice and diversity programs were negatively impacting the quality of education at Idaho's public postsecondary institutions. The Board discussed the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion from a business perspective and the need for the Board to change how it messages issues around diversity and inclusion. The Board discussed setting the tone of the conversation around diversity, equity, and inclusion and defining these terms.

APPLICABLE STATUTES, RULE OR POLICY

Article I, Section 9, Idaho Constitution
Sections 33-138 and 33-139, Idaho Code

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

This policy is the result of Board discussions around diversity, equity, and inclusion in the public school system in response to unfounded allegations of systematic indoctrination occurring at the four-year public postsecondary institutions in Idaho. This policy embodies the charge and expectation of each institution to promote and advance the principles of diversity, educational equity, and inclusion. These concepts are necessary components of educational experiences that challenge individuals to grow, improve critical thinking, refine skills, build character, develop awareness, and engage in freedom of thought and expression.

IMPACT

Through implementation and promotion of the principles of diversity, educational equity, and inclusion, each institution will more fully safeguard the right of every individual to participate in meaningful experiences that foster belonging and promote awareness of differing viewpoints. Encouraging and supporting these principles is central to academic success, to engendering innovation and creativity, and to fully preparing students to thrive in an increasingly diverse and global workforce. This new Board policy will formally require each institution to establish and maintain local policies related to diversity, educational equity, and inclusion, in accordance with the unique Board-approved missions and purposes of each institution. The new policy will also require each institution to develop and maintain local policies that describe and make transparent a process for addressing claims of oppression and unlawful discrimination.

**INSTRUCTION, RESEARCH AND STUDENT AFFAIRS
JUNE 28, 2021**

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Board Policy III.K. Diversity, Educational Equity, and Inclusion –
First Reading

STAFF COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All four institutions currently have policies and procedures, as well as specific efforts and activities, for promoting diversity, educational equity, and inclusion. This new Board policy will establish uniform definitions for, and standards related to, these important concepts. It is anticipated the local institutional policies will be updated to reflect these definitions and standards. Accountability toward the goals of this new policy will be accomplished through the Presidential Annual Reports, at the direction of the Executive Director. This policy was developed through conversation with leaders of each institution. It was also reviewed by members of the Idaho Indian Education Committee, the Hispanic Commission for Idaho, and the members of the Instruction, Research, and Student Affairs Committee of the Board.

BOARD ACTION

I move to approve the first reading of proposed amendments to Board Policy III.K, Diversity, Educational Equity, and Inclusion, as submitted in Attachment 1.

Moved by _____ Seconded by _____ Carried Yes _____ No _____

Idaho State Board of Education
GOVERNING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: III. POSTSECONDARY AFFAIRS

SUBSECTION: K. Diversity, Educational Equity, and Inclusion

August 2021

1. Purpose

This policy embodies the charge and expectation of each public four-year postsecondary institution in Idaho (hereafter “institution”) to promote and advance the principles of diversity, educational equity, and inclusion set forth herein. Diversity, educational equity, and inclusion are necessary components of educational experiences that challenge individuals to grow, improve critical thinking, refine skills, build character, develop awareness, and engage in freedom of thought and expression. Through adherence to and implementation of the principles of this policy, each institution will more fully safeguard the right of every individual to participate in meaningful experiences that foster belonging and promote awareness of differing viewpoints. The Board affirms that encouraging and supporting diversity, educational equity, and inclusion is central to academic success, to engendering innovation and creativity, and to fully preparing students to thrive in an increasingly diverse and global workforce.

2. Definitions

- a. Diversity accounts for differences in human characteristics such as race, color, national origin, sex, mental or physical disability, religious or ethical value systems, age, socioeconomic status, and ideological or political beliefs.
- b. Educational Equity is the assurance that each member of an educational community has equitable opportunities, including individualized access to the resources, support, and tools needed to succeed.
- c. Inclusion is the fostering of an environment in which the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals are recognized and valued, and where individuals have equitable opportunities to be included, engaged, and accepted with a sense of belonging.

3. Standards

- a. Each institution shall recognize and appreciate that every member of its community harbors unique values, beliefs, and ideologies, and that these characteristics reflect an individual’s life experiences, shape aspirations, and constitute ways of life.
- b. Consistent with its unique identity and mission, each institution shall take proactive measures to ensure educational equity in all facets of its operations.
- c. Consistent with the Board’s commitment to freedom of expression as well as academic freedom and responsibility as defined in Board Policy III.B., each institution shall strive to create environments in which diversity and inclusion are

INSTRUCTION, RESEARCH AND STUDENT AFFAIRS
JUNE 28, 2021

ATTACHMENT 1

valued, promoted, and embraced, in alignment with the goal of achieving educational equity.

- d. Each institution shall promote and facilitate civility and strive to diminish incivility among its community members. No student or employee of an institution shall oppress or unlawfully discriminate against any individual or group of individuals on the basis of traits, values, or beliefs.
- e. Each institution shall comply with current accreditation standards related to diversity, educational equity, and inclusion in order to promote student achievement, remove barriers to academic excellence, and close student achievement gaps.

4. Implementation

- a. Nothing contained in this policy should be construed to infringe upon or otherwise diminish the rights of individuals affiliated with any institution to speak as private citizens on matters of public concern, nor should it be interpreted to infringe upon the well-established confines of academic freedom and responsibility.
- b. Enforcement of this policy shall be accomplished through institution-level policies related to diversity, educational equity, and inclusion, in accordance with the unique Board-approved missions and purposes of each institution. Each institution shall develop and maintain policies that describe and make transparent a process for addressing claims of oppression and unlawful discrimination. All such policies must align with Board governing policies and procedures related to employee and student complaints.