

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training requirement proposal

Submitted by the DEI Taskforce

Passed by the IU Kokomo Faculty Senate on November 8, 2021

Rationale

In 2005, the Indiana University Kokomo Faculty Senate approved statements of campus mission, campus vision, and commitments for the campus to a series of values in our service to our students and to the region (see <https://www.iuk.edu/academic-affairs/academic-resources/mission.html>). A prevalent feature of both the IU Kokomo mission statement and the vision statement is the promotion of diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, the Faculty Senate expressed their obligation to the promotion of diversity and inclusion in its approval of the Commitment to Diversity statement:

The campus community demonstrates its commitment to diversity by providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment that promotes integrity and respect among all members of the campus community and by valuing shared governance and open, civil discourse.

Our ability to meet this commitment depends, in part, on the will of the faculty to develop and exercise the skills needed to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus community. Given increasing social awareness of sensitivities regarding race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, gender identity/sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, and economic status, the need for such skills is perhaps even more important now than when the faculty approved the statement of commitment some 16 years ago. Unfortunately, in the last few years, our campus has lost students, staff and faculty because of micro- and macroaggressions targeted at them, and because of the perception that the campus is not totally motivated to change. We have revamped our diversity requirements in general education, so our students are better global citizens, but as of now we still do not have any such expectations of faculty. While numerous programs providing such training have been available on campus for some time, there has heretofore been no formal campus-wide requirement for faculty members to participate in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training on a regular or semi-regular basis. As such, our application of DEI principles to our interactions with our students and the community has been inconsistent at best, which undermines our ability to prepare students to live and work in a diverse world.

Training requirement

Consistent with various Indiana University policies, including the Principles of Ethical Conduct (<https://principles.iu.edu/>) and the IU Code of Academic Ethics (<https://policies.iu.edu/policies/aca-33-code-academic-ethics/index.html>) and their efforts to foster respect for and inclusion of our campus' diverse constituents, this proposal requires that faculty members:

- engage in DEI (diversity, equity, inclusion) training every calendar year for a minimum of two hours in total (e.g., this may comprise a single two-hour presentation, or two or more shorter sessions);
- include a short narrative statement in the supplemental materials section of their Faculty Annual Reports (FARs) to describe those efforts (see below for further description); and
- pursue a broad range of available DEI training topics. For example, if a faculty member participates in SafeZone training one year, they should avoid training in LGBTQ+ issues the next year, so they could pursue training related to Asian American culture and the “model minority” myth). The objective over the long term should be to seek breadth of knowledge with respect to potential topics and issues pertaining to DEI.

The spirit and intent of training should be to encourage development and training in areas for which faculty members do not have recent training, and to engage in a process of continual effort to foster a campus climate that is welcoming to all its members.

Types of training

Recognition of the diverse constituencies that make up our campus and surrounding community is key to addressing concerns that stem from inequity, exclusion, stereotyping, and discrimination. To that end, faculty members should pursue annual DEI training in areas such as LGBTQ+ issues; accessibility; race; ethnicity; mental health; linguistic diversity; and socioeconomic status. Faculty members may consult with a dean or the Diversity Committee to determine whether other activities may be counted.

The following types of activities may be included in a faculty member’s annual report:

- Professional conference workshops or panels devoted to a DEI topic;
- Trainings or webinars advertised in the IU Diversity newsletter and offered through IU Bloomington (including recordings of past events, such as those found at <https://diversity.iu.edu/diversity-education/previous-workshops/index.html>);
- Training sessions organized and offered by the IUK Diversity Committee;
- Book/reading clubs (topic should be approved by the Diversity Committee, Chair, or Dean);
- Online training (such as sessions offered by the Equity Learning Institute) or Eventbrite;
- Universal Design Guidelines, or other courses relating to accessibility offered by the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
- Salon-type activities that feature an invited speaker or panel on some issue of importance or topic related to DEI
- Other DEI topics approved by a unit leader (Chair or Dean) and/or the Diversity Committee.

Documenting DEI activity

Each year, faculty members will include evidence of their efforts with DEI training and implementation in the FAR. Every faculty member should strive to mark the diversity indicator for relevant activities within DMAI.

In addition, faculty members should prepare a brief statement (no more than two pages) regarding their engagement with DEI; this document should be included in the “Supplemental Materials” section of the FAR. Written commentary should be a self-reflection that goes beyond listing activities in which a faculty member has participated, though it should remark briefly upon how the faculty member has strived for breadth in training (e.g., “my last DEI narrative emphasized accessibility issues; in the past year, I turned to the concerns of LGBTQ+ community members”). It may describe a faculty member’s efforts to alter their teaching or curriculum; to include greater diversity in the course materials or activities that are used; or to describe how the faculty member strived to improve in areas that relate to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The emphasis of the diversity statement should focus more upon a faculty member’s engagement with DEI principles, rather than its length.

Compliance

Supervisors who carry out FAR evaluations (e.g., chairs and deans) are responsible for verifying faculty members’ compliance with DEI training. In cases of alleged violation of this policy, the academic dean or chair should respond by noting the absence of documentation for DEI training in a faculty member’s annual evaluation letter. If noncompliance persists, supervisors may place a letter of record in the faculty member’s personnel file, and may engage in further action as stipulated by Indiana University policies.

Faculty members who experience any disciplinary responses for alleged noncompliance may pursue their concerns through the academic chain of command (beginning with a chair or dean, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and Chancellor). They may also pursue a complaint using the Board of Review appeals process.