

MRAC Racial Equity Statement Glossary

Ability refers to the spectrum of physical, emotional and mental capacity.

Ableism^{1,2} refers to either individual or institutional actions and language that disadvantage or disempower people with disabilities, people experiencing disabilities, or disabled people. It is the bias or discrimination against people with disabilities. It can take many forms, including: employment, housing and other institutional discrimination; lack of accessibility on streets, buildings and public transportation; stereotyping and ableist language, lack of media portrayals or stereotyped depictions of people with disabilities; bullying; low expectations, isolation and pity. While ableism is not often discussed when we talk about our identities and bias, it is important that students understand and reflect on examples of ableism in their own lives and in society because it contributes to a culture of intolerance and injustice.

Disability¹ refers to a mental, emotional, or physical difference that limits a person in everyday activities and can range from physical or cognitive, visible or invisible, severe or minor. Increasingly, disability is being discussed as a social construct, meaning that the mental, emotional, and physical norms from which we then determine what is different or what is a disability are arbitrary.

Art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.

Culture¹ is a set of shared ideas, customs, traditions, beliefs, and practices shared by a group of people that is constantly changing, in subtle and major ways.

Diversity^{1,3,5} refers to the representation of differing of people, viewpoints, experiences, and their numerical representation. Race and ethnicity is not the only way in which we are diverse as a group. There are countless visible and invisible facets of diversity that can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical abilities, nationality, language, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic background and other areas of identity. Furthermore, a person cannot be “diverse” (as in “diverse candidate”). Diversity is the outcome of inclusion and equity efforts.

As diversity has come to refer to the various backgrounds and races that comprise a community, nation or other grouping, in many cases, the term diversity does not just

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acknowledge the existence of diversity of background but implies an appreciation of these differences. It also references the differences among us based on which we experience advantages or encounter barriers in access to opportunities and resources. The structural racism perspective can be distinguished from a diversity perspective in that structural racism takes direct account of the striking disparities in well-being and opportunity areas that come along with being a member of a particular group and works to identify ways in which these disparities can be eliminated.

Equity^{3,4} is the term utilized to talk about addressing disparity of resources and how they are structurally allocated to marginalized communities. Resources are defined as money, power, access, human resources. Outcomes focused; used to address “disparities” caused by “structural” impediments to opportunity. Equity is an approach based in fairness to dismantle systems that privilege and disadvantage people based on their identities. In practice, it ensures everyone is given equal opportunity to thrive; this means that resources may be divided and shared unequally to make sure that each person can access an opportunity. Equity takes into account that people have different access to resources because of system of oppression and privilege. Equity seeks to balance that disparity.

Ethnicity¹ refers to the social characteristics that people may have in common, such as language, religion, regional background, culture, foods, etc. Ethnicity is revealed by the traditions one follows, a person's native language, and so on. Race, on the other hand, describes categories assigned to demographic groups based mostly on observable physical characteristics, like skin color, hair texture and eye shape.

Gender⁷ is a social construct associated with how a person relates or doesn't relate to their physical anatomy identified at birth. It is the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated and expressed with one's gender identity. However, when a person's gender identity and biological sex are not congruent, the individual may identify along the transgender spectrum, genderqueer or outside of the gender binary.

Gender Binary¹ is the false assumption that there are only two genders, male and female.

Gender Expression/Presentation¹ is the way that someone outwardly displays their gender through clothing, style, demeanor, and behavior.

Gender Identity¹ refers to how a person self identifies on the gender spectrum. There are countless ways in which people may identify themselves.

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Genderqueer¹ refers to a person whose gender identity or gender expression does not align with the gender binary.

Transgender¹ refers to a person whose gender identity (and sometimes expression) is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans is an umbrella term that refers to many different ways that people identify differently than their biological sex.

Two Spirit¹¹ is a term only appropriate for Native people, and comes from Anishinabe language meaning to have both female and male spirits within one person, often referred to as being a third gender. The Two-Spirit community is historically known to hold a role of long held traditions, prayer and responsibility in Native culture, predating colonized notions of LGBTQ+ identity labels. It is not interchangeable with being a gay native. Claiming the role of Two Spirit is to take up the spiritual responsibility that the role traditionally had. Walking the red road, being for the people and our children/youth, and being a guiding force in a good way with a good mind are just some of those responsibilities.

Inclusion³ refers to when diverse representation of people, viewpoints, experiences are “heard” and counted. Belief that this leads to better solutions. Associated with policies and practices. Perceived (by some) to be the floor towards the goal of equity. It is active, intentional, and ongoing engagement of the diversity of an organization, organizational culture, production of art on stage (essentially all of the ways that an individual might connect and interact with the organization, systems, and community) in order to create equal access, well-being, and a sense of belonging for all members of the organization. Inclusion is closely tied to the culture of an organization.

Indigenous People¹ refers to and is also known as first peoples, aboriginal peoples, native peoples, or autochthonous peoples, indigenous people are ethnic groups who are descended from and identify with the original inhabitants of a given region, in contrast to groups that have settled, occupied or colonized the area more recently.

Intersectionality⁴ is a term coined by feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw. Intersectionality originally was created to account for the ways in which black women experience both racism and sexism. The term has now expanded to account for the ways that an individual can experience multiple forms of oppression based on multiple marginalized identities. A salient quote on intersectionality is Audre Lorde’s quote “There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.”

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IPOC stands for **Indigenous** and **People of Color (communities of color)**¹, using people first language. People of color is a multicultural umbrella term used to represent minority populations within the U.S. The term IPOC recognizes individuals for who they are, as opposed to terms such as "non-white", which reinforce the notion of white supremacy or white as the default. As Indigenous people are a sovereign people, established through treaty rights, terms like "American Indian" and "Native American" are political in nature. Thus, the reason POC alone does not appropriately encompass Indigenous people and necessitates the distinction of Indigenous people.

LGBTQ/LGBTQ+/LGBTQ2+ refers to populations whose gender and sexuality orientation includes Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and additional gender and sexual orientations outside of the traditional heteronormative (a world view that reinforces heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation) and cisgender binary (denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex). You may also refer to the definition of Two-Spirit for additional related context.

Marginalized⁴ refers to a population of people that is being excluded in a process by the wider society. Marginalization is the practice of this and is often used in an economic or political sense to refer to the rendering of an individual, an ethnic or national group, or a nation-state powerless by a more powerful individual.

Race¹ (as opposed to Ethnicity) is a social construct assumption that conflates skin color, physical attributes such as facial features and body size, and geographic ancestry with behavior, intelligence, stature, and culture. Though race is a false construct, it has real consequences for all people.

Racial Equity^{3,5} refers to what a genuinely non-racist society and systems would look like. In a racially equitable society, the distribution of society's benefits and burdens would not be skewed by race. In other words, racial equity would be a reality in which a person is no more or less likely to experience society's benefits or burdens just because of the color of their skin. This is in contrast to the current state of affairs in which a person of color is more likely to live in poverty, be imprisoned, dropout of high school, be unemployed and experience poor health outcomes like diabetes, heart disease, depression and other potentially fatal diseases. Racial equity holds society to a higher standard. It demands that we pay attention not just to individual-level discrimination, but to overall social outcomes.

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Racial Justice⁴ refers to a proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.

Racism constitutes of the mistreatment experiences or barriers and disadvantages encountered by virtue of one or more of our identities based on the perceived race of individuals or groups of people and is reinforced by systems of oppression.

Covert Racism⁴ Expresses racist ideas, attitudes or beliefs in subtle, hidden or secret forms. Often unchallenged, this type of racism doesn't appear to be racist because it is indirect behavior.

Individual Racism⁵ can include face-to-face or covert actions toward a person that intentionally express prejudice, hate or bias based on race.

Institutional Racism⁵ refers to the policies and practices within and across institutions that, intentionally or not, produce outcomes that chronically favor, or put a racial group at a disadvantage. Poignant examples of institutional racism can be found in school disciplinary policies in which students of color are punished at much higher rates than their white counterparts, in the criminal justice system, and within many employment sectors in which day-to-day operations, as well as hiring and firing practices can significantly disadvantage workers of color. This term is interchangeable with structural racism.

Structural Racism⁵ is a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with whiteness and disadvantages associated with "color" to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist. It is the racial bias across institutions and society that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color.

Systemic Racism⁵ is synonymous to "structural racism". If there is a difference between the terms, it can be said to exist in the fact that a structural racism analysis pays more attention to the historical, cultural and social psychological aspects of our currently racialized society.

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Socioeconomic⁶ refers to relating to, or signifying the combination or interaction of social and economic factors. This notion is often referencing socioeconomic status which is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power and control.

Systems refer to structures and processes in society in which human affairs and business are conducted.

Systems of Oppression refers to power structures in society that advantage certain groups over others, and include ideologies such as racism, sexism, cissexism, heterosexism, elitism, classism, ableism, nativism, colonialism, ageism, and sizeism. (collectively "the isms"). It is the combination of prejudice and institutional authority which creates a system that discriminates against some groups (or target groups) and benefits other groups (dominant groups). Examples of these systems are Racism, Sexism, Heterosexism, Ableism, Classism, Ageism, Anti-Semitism. Lastly these systems enable dominant groups to exert control over target groups by limiting their rights, Freedom and access to basic resources such as, Healthcare, Education, Employment, Housing.

Tribal Affiliation/Nation^{8,9} A distinct group of American Indian people with specific sovereign rights, as a formal nation to nation relationship to the federal government. While many Indigenous people share a common history of oppression and colonialism, tribal nations are diverse and different; failing to use the actual name of the tribe you are reporting on is neither accurate, fair nor thorough and undermines diversity by erasing the tribe's identity.

Tribal Sovereignty¹⁰ in the United States is the inherent authority of indigenous tribes to govern themselves within the borders of the United States. This ensures that any decisions about the tribes with regard to their property and citizens are made with their participation and consent.

Underserved¹² refers to a population of individuals, including urban minorities, who have historically been outside the purview of arts and humanities programs due to factors such as a high incidence of income below the poverty line or to geographic isolation.

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Sources:

- ¹ Adapted from [The Avarna Group](#)
- ² Adapted from [Anti-Defamation League](#)
- ³ Adapted from Beth Zemsky, referencing the Intercultural Index
- ⁴ Adapted from [Center for the Study of Social Policy](#)
- ⁵ Adapted from [The Aspen Institute](#)
- ⁶ Adapted from [APA Socioeconomic Status Resources](#)
- ⁷ Adapted from [APA LGBT Resources](#)
- ⁸ Adapted from [National Congress on American Indian](#)
- ⁹ Adapted from [The Diversity Style Guide](#)
- ⁹ Adapted from [U.S. Department of The Interior Indian Affairs](#)
- ¹¹ Adapted from [Indian Country Today](#)
- ¹² Adapted from [Office of Management and Budget](#)