Principles for Anti-Racist Community Engagement

Principle 1–Counteracting the Persistence and Impact of Racism on our Campuses and in our Community Engagement: Reframing our Institutional and Pedagogic Practices

1.1 recognizes that the burden of anti-racist training cannot rest alone on the shoulders of students and educators of color; white faculty and the institution at large must commit time and focus to developing anti-racist practices and structures

1.2 fosters collaboration with communities that is driven by and responsive to needs identified by community partners rather than overdetermined by perspectives on what needs to be done or how it should be done that emerge from the university

1.3 rejects working "on" to instead work "with" a community, positioning community partners as equal partners in the intellectual project, including identifying research questions or problems to be solved, designing methods to analyze these questions or problems, and creating solutions

1.4 repudiates ideologies of "white saviorism" or "charity" that position minoritized communities as in need of "saving" or "rescuing" by faculty and students within universities and prepares white students to enter and engage with communities without these mindsets

1.5 decenters whiteness by challenging its construction and through highlighting the wealth of knowledge communities of color possess about their own communities

Principle 2–Critical Reflection on Individual and Systemic/Structural Racism: Understanding positionality, bias and historic roots of systemic racism

2.1 raises student and faculty critical consciousness about white supremacy and racism, before and during community engagement, through reflective practices about power and privilege—questioning bias and false histories/narratives that justify/legitimize the status quo—in order to build critical understanding of oppression and political efficacy to challenge power and enact systemic change

2.3 critically considers the forms racism and white privilege take in higher education, their impact on knowledge production, and how normative epistemologies affect how we perceive and know the world

2.3 engages in dialogue with community partners to understand their own histories and issues to better support their work and build their capacity to access campus knowledge resources

2.4 recognizes, reflects on, and works towards addressing challenges that minoritized students face on campus alongside working on issues they care about within communities

2.5 acknowledges intersectionality is important to students' and faculty's understanding of racial inequity, while maintaining a primary focus on anti-racist goals

Background: This statement was developed by faculty from four Massachusetts public universities as part of a project, "Building on the Cultural Wealth of Minoritized Students: Anti-racist Community-Engaged Programming, Pedagogies, and Practices," funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. Drawing on the literature on anti-racist and community-engaged pedagogy and on input from students of color and community partners at each of the four campuses, this statement is designed to serve as a resource for community-engaged faculty adopting anti-racist pedagogy and practices. The contributors include DeMisty Bellinger-Delfeld, Will Cortezia, Joanna Gonsalves, Aldo Garcia Guevara, Asher Jackson, Deborah Keisch, Joseph Krupczynski, Cynthia Lynch, Nabin Malakar, Andrew Piazza, John Reiff, Roopika Risam, TreaAndrea Russworm, Christina Santana, Lindi Sibeko, Wafa Unus, Cindy Vincent, Elaine Ward, David Weiss.

Principle 3–Intentional Learning/Course Design**:** Developing Anti-Racist learning goals, course content, policies and assessment

- 3.1 develops specific anti-racist strategies to diversify course content (readings, discussions, assignments) that de-centers whiteness, integrates perspectives that have traditionally been marginalized, and emphasizes intersectional ways in which community-based knowledge production is recognized and valued
- 3.2 works with community partners to build an understanding of the community in terms of its assets and spoken languages, highlighting the cultural wealth and empowered potential of communities of color
- 3.3 equips students with a robust understanding of communities with which they will work, including a trauma-informed perspective, through sources that privilege and value the multilingual voices from the community
- 3.4 involves students and/or community partners in the creation of the syllabus, project, or collaboration and provides opportunities for community/student voice and agency (leadership development, community/student directed projects in the classroom and community)
- 3.5 develops diverse forms of assessment that best enable students to demonstrate their mastery of course objectives and provides instructors constructive feedback about the effectiveness of their anti-racist teaching practices

Principle 4–Compassionate/Reflective Classroom: Create a sense of belonging in the classroom by acknowledging student contributions and meeting students where they are

- 4.1 promotes the well-being of students, centers the intersections of their identities, and empowers the communities in which they live and/or serve
- 4.2 provides spaces to respond to microaggressions and difficult conversations in ways that facilitate learning and accountability, as well as providing opportunities for repair and healing
- 4.3 recognizes the community-based work that minoritized students already undertake but is not recognized, such as serving as translators for family and friends and helping family and friends navigate bureaucratic challenges with governmental apparatuses
- 4.4 features collaborative learning that builds on the cultural wealth of minoritized students and creates space for their knowledge and expertise to be applied to solving problems in our communities, without looking to them as “informants” who are expected to speak on behalf of a minoritized community
- 4.5 decenters higher education and centers the community as an open and reciprocal learning environment

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