



ADVANCE BU

Advancing and Maintaining Equity

July 2024

Monthly Newsletter

Rethinking Your Syllabus for Greater Student Engagement and Better Learning Outcomes

As faculty work on creating course syllabi for the Fall, the scholarship of teaching and learning encourages us to reflect on what course syllabi are actually communicating to our students. Certainly, effective syllabi will clearly communicate course goals, schedules, requirements, policies, and procedures. But in addition to this explicit information, syllabi convey implicit messages that can either signal a welcoming and inclusive learning environment or a hostile and alienating one. Not only do more inclusive teaching practices lead to greater student learning outcomes, but they are also crucial for the bottom-line, as universities seek to recruit and retain an increasingly diverse student population. Professor Kevin Gannon, Director of the Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFE) and Professor of History at Queens University of Charlotte, urges faculty to **ask themselves**:

“Does [my] course design — including assigned readings, assessments, and daily activities — reflect a diverse array of identities and perspectives? Am I having my students read a bunch of monographs, all authored by white males, for example? And if I am, what am I telling students about how knowledge is produced in my field, and more important, about who is producing it? What types of people do my students see when they watch a video featuring an expert in my discipline? Do the experts look like my students? In my teaching, am I mostly relying on one pedagogical method, where I might be able to connect with a wider array of students by differentiating the types of instruction I use? What assumptions am I making about my students’ prior experiences and educational opportunities when I ask questions in class or design my exams?”

Both new and experienced faculty will find **tips on what to include (and avoid!) in course syllabi here** and in the course design rubric below from the Department of Bioengineering at Stanford University.

Equity Quick Takes

This evidence-based **Inclusive Course Design Rubric** from the Department of Bioengineering at Stanford University also provides sections on creating an inclusive classroom community, inclusive assessments, inclusive course policies, and an inclusive teaching persona.

Course Design Equity and Inclusion Rubric

Content: how the content of learning experiences and assessments is chosen and presented

Rubric Item	Exemplary	Present	Developing	Absent/Needs Improvement
Personal Connections & Relevance	Motivates content with its impact on students and/or their communities	Makes most content relevant and personal for students	Relates content to some common experiences and/or recent events	No evidence of attempt to connect content to student experiences or events
Adaptability of Content	Creates space and opportunities to tailor content to the interests and concerns of cohort	Allows for some adaptation on how content is covered based on student interests	Solicits student interests and adds content to address them	Course content and material set in stone from year to year
Transparency of Content	Communicates decisions and expectations around content: how content is chosen, how it connects together, and what level are students supposed to know and why	Communicates which content will be covered in the course and why it was chosen, as well as how the topics connect	Communicates which content will be covered in the course and how it connects together	Plan for content to be covered and the level of understanding required is largely unknown to students
Diversity of Perspectives	Sources are diverse in authorship and philosophy, showing multiple possibly even conflicting views on the content	Course brings in multiple sources with varying views or varying authorship	Course largely aligns to a single source and brings in a few supplemental sources	Course aligns to a specific textbook or a single source material
Diversity of Media	Course offers multiple options of media for learning that are equivalent and up to student choice	Course alternates between more than one form of media	Course occasionally incorporate different forms of media (e.g. written format with a few videos)	Course relies exclusively on one form of media (e.g. written format) to convey information
Diversity of Imagery & Examples	Examples and images across the course reflect the diversity of student identities and cultures with attention to intersectionality	Good balance of images that represent either a diversity of racial identities or gender identities	Some images or examples representing minoritized identities supplement the single majority identity images and examples	Few images and examples of individuals are used or all examples used represent single majority identities
Reflection on History of Discipline	Any historical disparities are actively highlighted, discussed, and related to the present state of	Mentions disparities or issues in the history of the discipline	Discusses history of the discipline without any mention of potential disparities or issues	No evidence of history of the discipline being mentioned in course

	the discipline			
Diversity & Inclusion as a Goal	Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field is a core goal of the course and connects to departmental goals	Course goals are attentive to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field	States a course goal of student inclusion	Course goals do not tie to diversity, equity, and inclusion in any fashion

Spotlight:
Turner School Director Focuses on Equity, Both on Campus and Globally

As ADVANCE BU moves into our second year, we welcome to our leadership team Dr. Mary Conway Dato-on, Executive and Academic Director of Bradley’s **Turner School of Entrepreneurship and Innovation**. Through curricular, co-curricular, and community-engagement programs, the Turner School provides a focal point for the Bradley community to “Dream, Design and Develop” solutions to some of the world’s most pressing social and environmental problems. One such program, Empowering Women Globally - which Dr. Conway Dato-on directs - focuses on empowering women around the world through education and entrepreneurship while aligning with the United Nations Sustainability Goals of quality education, gender equality, decent work, and economic growth. To that end, Conway Dato-on has created both short- and long-term immersion programs where international students, professors, and female entrepreneurs engage with the Bradley and Peoria communities to advance purposeful business growth and individual and community development.



“The work I do, both at the Turner School and in the Empowering Women Globally program, motivates me to make a difference every day,” notes Conway Dato-on. “I truly believe and see every day how education drives transformation of individuals and communities. This work is important because in many ways, what schools are teaching and what the world needs are misaligned, and I believe that through innovation and entrepreneurial mindsets we can achieve realignment.” For instance, while schools typically emphasize disciplinary mindsets, theoretical assessments, rationality, and individualistic approaches and outcomes, the world today needs problem-solving mindsets, synthesis and practical application, empathy, and relational approaches and outcomes.

With Bradley's emphasis on boundary-breaking innovations, it is well positioned to “create new pathways for students, faculty, staff and the university as a whole,” notes Conway Dato-on. Perhaps nowhere is this clearer than in the Turner School’s annual **Big Idea and Social Impact competitions** and its Innovation Expo, which bring together students from across the university in innovative efforts to address issues in fields as diverse as engineering and technology, health care, fashion, the arts, business, and human rights.

Looking ahead to the 2024-25 academic year, Conway Dato-on, a proud Bradley alum, says that she is excited to work with ADVANCE BU, “both because it aligns with my beliefs and life’s work and because for Bradley to carry its success and the legacy of Lydia Moss Bradley forward we must admit where we have failed and unite to build a better future - one where all feel valued and empowered to succeed. Frankly, equity and inclusive access are fundamental human rights. As an educational institution, we have an obligation to ensure these exist for our faculty, staff, and students. ADVANCE BU is a lever to make this happen.”

Higher Ed Equity in the News

Hiring Couples May Help

Upcoming ADVANCE BU Events

Fall Forum | Aug. 14

Join us for workshops and networking opportunities designed specifically for past, present and near-future Bradley department chairs. (Details TBA)

[Diversify Faculty Ranks, Tenure Pipeline](#)

[University Partner Hire Scorecard](#)

[Why Summer is So Important](#)

[Mexico Elects Climate Scientist as First Woman President](#)

“On the Line” Workshop | Sept. 17, Noon–1:15 p.m.

This virtual, live workshop uses evidence-based scripts performed by professional actors to explore issues of equity, fairness and transparency related to tenure and promotion. (Details TBA)

Faculty Award for Excellence in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Applications Due | Sept. 1

The Provost’s Office, in partnership with the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and ADVANCE BU, invites applications for this inaugural award highlighting Bradley University’s commitment to fostering inclusivity on campus. This annual award honors faculty who have made significant contributions to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion through advocacy, curriculum development, community building, research/creative production or leadership and service. The successful nominee will receive a monetary award, and will be recognized at the University’s Founder’s Day celebration. Applications will be accepted by the Provost’s Office until Sept. 1. Find full details on eligibility and the nomination process in the **award outline document**.



[Contact Us](#)

This material is based upon work that is supported by the National Science Foundation, under award No. 2303732

**[How useful was this information?](#)
[Share your feedback here.](#)**



[Learn More](#)



National Science Foundation



BRADLEY
University

Bradley University Marketing and Communications | 1501 W Bradley Ave | Peoria, IL 61625 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)