

The Language of Appeasement: Diversity & Inclusion Versus Justice & Equity

Adapted¹ from the article “Colleges need a language shift, but not the one you think” by Dr. Dafina-Lazarus Stewart²

Diversity asks: “Who is in the room?”	Equity responds: “Who is trying to get into the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?”
Inclusion asks: Have everyone’s ideas been heard?”	Justice responds: Whose ideas won’t be taken seriously because they aren’t in the majority?”
Diversity asks: “How many more of [pick minoritized identity] group do we have this year than last?”	Equity responds: “What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?”
Inclusion asks: “Is this environment safe for everyone to feel like they belong?”	Justice responds: “Whose safety is being sacrificed and minimized to allow others to be comfortable maintaining dehumanizing views?”
Diversity asks: “Isn’t it separatist to provide funding for safe spaces and separate meeting places?”	Equity responds: “What are people experiencing here that they don’t feel safe when isolated and separated from others like themselves?”
Inclusion asks: “Wouldn’t it be great to have a panel debate Black Lives Matter? We had a Black Lives Matter activist here recently, so now we should invite someone from the alt-right.”	Justice responds: “Why would we allow the humanity and dignity of people to be the subject of debate or the target of harassment and hate speech?”
Diversity celebrates: “Increases in numbers that still reflect minoritized status in the organization and incremental growth.”	Equity celebrates: “Reductions in harm, revisions to abusive systems and increases in supports for people’s life chances as reported by those who have been targeted.”
Inclusion celebrates: “Awards for initiatives and credits itself for having a diverse leadership group.”	Justice celebrates: “Getting rid of practices and policies that were having disparate impacts on minoritized groups.”

¹ Adapted by Sheri Atkinson, Ed.D, Mark Ewert

² From Inside Higher Ed website, March 30, 2017. <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/03/30/colleges-need-language-shift-not-one-you-think-essay>