DIVERSITY CHECKLIST: GUIDELINES FOR COURSE PLANNING

As instructors, it is important to foster an environment that respects diversity and fosters an open environment in which all students are able participate and learn. Below is a list of issues to keep in mind when designing and leading a course:

- Consider including a diversity statement in the course syllabus (For an example, please visit http://www.education.uiowa.edu/coedean/policies/syllabus/index.html#diversity). In addition, include Penn State's anti-discrimination policy, found at http://guru.psu.edu/policies/ad42.html.
- Create a safe classroom environment through ground rules of discussion. Establish a contract with your students that outline rules for respectful classroom conduct.
- Use gender neutral language in lectures, presentations, assignments, and exams.
- Be aware of gender used in examples. Use a mix of male and female examples. Use examples with women and underrepresented students in desirable roles.
- Include in your syllabus procedures for making up assignments that are missed due to religious holidays.
- Choose a textbook with gender neutral terms. Check to see if examples and photographs include people of both genders and of various races and nationalities.
- If you do need to use materials that are not written in gender neutral language, such as older books and articles, point this out to your students. You may use this as an opportunity to discuss how gender issues have evolved over time in your discipline.
- When assigning students tasks, each task assigned should be non-gender specific and of equal contribution.
- How students are evaluated should match course objectives. The evaluation procedure should be made clear through a grading rubric.
- Ensure all students are able to participate in class discussion and group activities.
- Ask students how to pronounce their names and work hard to pronounce them correctly. Also, ask students how they would like to be addressed in class.
- Assume that not all students in a class are heterosexual.
- Assume that some of your students are non-Christians.
- Do not make assumptions about a student's race or ethnicity based on appearance.
- Do not single out a student to represent his/her group.
- Clarify expectations for classroom activities. Stereotyping is most likely to occur when situations are ambiguous. When situations are made clear, stereotyping is avoided.
- Provide an opportunity for students to give anonymous feedback on classroom climate. A drop box in an online course management system may be used for students to submit anonymous feedback.
- Address your students consistently. If you refer to male students by using their first and last names, be sure to use first and last names for female students.

- Use a random system for asking questions or encouraging class participation. A random system of participation solicitation will give every student an equal chance of participating in classroom discussion or activities.
- Monitor class discussions to make sure that one group (or person) is not dominating classroom discussion.
- Allow students to finish their question or comment before answering or responding. In class discussions, monitor discussion to make sure each student is able to complete his/her question or response.
- In group presentations, require each student to speak.
- For multiple group tasks, use a rotating leader system. This allows for different members of the group to serve in a leadership position.
- Make sure small groups are composed of students from different groups. However, if possible, groups should contain more than one member from each group to avoid tokenism.

Sources:
Instructional Consulting, Indiana University Bloomington, *Teaching Technology, & Diversity*, http://www.indiana.edu/%7Eicy/diversity_gender.html
Josephs, Susan L. "Teaching Diversity." *Diversity in the Classroom: Diversity Resources*, http://fisher.osu.edu/offices/diversity/diversity-resources/diversity-in-classroom