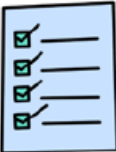# DEIA GLOSSARY

I work hard to educate myself in being as welcoming and inclusive to my peers as possible. Working in an environment that holds the same values is important to me. Here are some terms and communication styles that I recently learned and hope that you find useful too.

"People First" Language

When writing about people, avoid using labels, status, or abilities as the driver.

Similarly, when writing about communities, consider an "asset-orientation" approach to describing social and economic factors including racial and ethnic composition.

For example, instead of: "we help predominantly low-income Latino students" consider, "our mission serves schools and communities traditionally under-served or under-resourced, with a majority of students who identify as Latino."

Please note, when drafting written communication regarding a person, please allow them to self-identify where possible (i.e. Kamala Harris is the first female to serve as Vice President of the United States of America and she identifies as Black).

Verbal Communication: "People First", Race/Ethnicity, and Gender

NON-EXAMPLE	SITUATIONAL EXAMPLE	EXAMPLE
Poor, impoverished, or underprivileged	Low-income	Economically disadvantaged
Homeless		Unhoused
Housing Insecurity		Unhousedness
Disabled person		Person with disabilities
Hungry, Hunger	Food insecurity	Food security
	Underserved	Under-resourced
	Latinx (pronounced "lah-tin-ex"; gender-neutral, but not embraced by all persons of Hispanic descent)	Latino, Latina (unless "Latinx" is requested to be used instead)
Chairman, Chairwoman (and similarly gendered terms)		Chairperson
Transgender (noun), Transgendered (noun or verb)		Transgender Person

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DEIA GLOSSARY

Academic and Socioeconomic Terms

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS (SES) Tends to refer to a combination of factors related to a student's social class. In the context of students, this typically includes family income, parental education (e.g., first-generation status), and parental occupation.
Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power, and control.

UNDERREPRESENTED Refers to racial and ethnic populations that are chronically represented at disproportionately low levels in each institution; can also describe any group in an institution that is represented in numbers disproportionately below their representation in the general population, ex: people who identify within the female binary gender in STEM careers/programs.
Be mindful that institutions are not limited to schools and colleges. Institutions can include the workplace, fields of study, industry sectors, leadership/management levels, or well-established practices or behaviors in a culture, like marriage.

UNDERREPRESENTED MINORITIES (URMS) Black/African Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, and Latinos, who have, historically, comprised a minority of the U.S. population.
Some have begun to utilize the term People of the Global Majority (PGM), which is an emerging term within discussions surrounding race that is arguably the most universally inclusive. Unlike the terms "minority" or "marginalized," the term People of the Global Majority offers Black, Brown, and Indigenous people – who are, in fact, numerically in the majority all over the world – an empowering term that encompasses global solidarity against racial injustice.

UNDERSERVED: Those who do not receive equitable resources as other populations. Typically, these groups of people include economically disadvantaged, racial/ethnic minorities ("people of color" or "students of color" is the preferred use, not "minorities"), and first-generation students, among others.
When describing people and students from underserved populations consider inequitable access to quality city services, healthcare, educational opportunity, transportation, jobs, food, safety, internet, etc. Also, consider the unhoused community and students who are part of the foster care system.

TRANSGENDER: a person whose sex at birth does not match their gender identity. Also includes gender non-binary, gender fluid, or gender non-conforming individuals and masculine, feminine, and androgynous sub-identifiers.

Source: Northern Arizona University Writing Style Guide: Gender

Language Considerations About Communities

⊘ Focus on describing the conditions (that we are hoping to influence or change) not the student(s). Avoid defining the students by the deficits in their communities.

⊘ Be aware of encouraging any perception that students are "working the system" to get free food or other assistance.

⊘ Listen carefully to how a student or another source tells their story and use similar or the same language. Watch for assumptions and biases in your writing about the reasons for their income status, stereotypes, etc. Be clear and set expectations with students that this is a shared process where the student's voice will be elevated at the level that is most comfortable for the student. This becomes an opportunity to teach about self-advocacy.

Source: Read more about Asset Framing and the use of deficit descriptors

DEIA GLOSSARY

Race and Ethnicity

The U.S. Census Bureau defines race as a person's self-identification with one or more social groups which can include: white, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and/or Other Pacific Islander. "Hispanic or Latino" is an ethnicity, not a race.

Written Communication

NON-EXAMPLE	SITUATIONAL EXAMPLE	EXAMPLE
African-American		African American
black		Black
Native-American		Native American
Asian-American		Asian American
Native-Hawaiians		Native Hawaiians
Pacific-Islanders		Pacific Islanders
	Latinx (gender-neutral, but not embraced by all persons of Hispanic descent)	Latino, Latina (unless "Latinx" is requested to be used instead)
White		white

Gender and Sex: Labels and Descriptors

Gender is on a spectrum that can be fluid or binary.

DATA COLLECTION

Descriptive data collection, generally, uses the following gender categories:

- **Male**
- **Female**
- **Gender Non-Conforming or Non-Binary**

In some instances, the Sex/Gender category "Unknown" may be also used.

TERMS TO AVOID

- **Hermaphrodite** (preferred term: intersex)
- **Normal/norm** (to refer to people who are not transgender, gender-fluid, non-binary)
- **Sex change** (preferred terms: sex reassignment, gender transition)
- **Sexual preference**
- **Transsexual**
- **Transvestite** (preferred term: cross-dresser)

Gender-Inclusive Language: Do's and Don'ts

- ⊘ **Don't use masculine pronouns (he, his, him) as the default:** This practice is outdated and will confuse or offend audiences.
- ⊘ **Pronouns when gender is unknown:** In situations where a pronoun needs to refer to a person whose gender isn't known, writers sometimes use he or she or he/she (or even s/he), her/him, etc. This may be distracting if used multiple times in a statement or paragraph, and excludes those persons who do not refer to themselves using either pronoun.
- ⊘ **Use of "They" as a singular pronoun:** If you do not know which gendered pronoun is appropriate, use "they" as a singular pronoun. The pronoun "they" has become acceptable preceding a singular antecedent. Example: Look for the academy leader, they will be standing outside near the front door.
- ⊘ **Just ask:** When speaking with, interviewing, introducing, or otherwise referring to someone, respectfully ask them "what are your preferred pronouns?" Ask if there are any terms they wish not to be used, and in what cases.
  You can practice this by sharing your pronouns when introducing yourself and with your pronouns. (i.e. "Hi, I'm [Name] and I use she/her pronouns, what are your preferred pronouns?" and changing a video call name to "[Name], she/her")

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DEIA GLOSSARY

Tips For Writing About People with Disabilities

- ✓ If the disability is not part of the story and there isn't a need to include it, don't.

- ✓ Don't refer to someone who does not have a disability as "able-bodied." You can simply say they do not have a documented disability when it's necessary to distinguish that someone doesn't have a disability. Avoid using the term "normal."

- ✓ Avoid sensationalizing a disability by using phrases like, but not limited to, "afflicted with," "suffers from," or "victim of."

- ✓ Use "accessible" when describing a space, location, or event that is modified to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

- ✓ People with disabilities are typically not suffering from a disease or illness, therefore they should not be referred to as "patients," unless under a healthcare setting.

- ✓ To show inclusiveness and sensitivity to students, you may want to refer to them as "students who are receiving services," which may include physical or mental help, or "students with a verified disability."

- ✓ Always confirm the preferred term of the protagonist when telling stories.

Disclaimer and More Information

This document was adapted from an original document written by Tara Bellevue, Vice President of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) Strategy at NAF.

Many entries reflect AP style, especially when there was no other guidance to be found. Portions of this style guide are inspired by leadership from the California State University, whose style guide can also be reviewed here.

Approaches and definitions evolve. Thus, this document is a snapshot of what is currently being used and we encourage anyone using this guide in the future to research further to learn more about diversity, equity, inclusion, and access principles and what the current, accepted terminologies are as we all work towards a more inclusive future.

For more information about asset-oriented communications, use https://www.philanthropy.com/article/You-Can-t-Lift-People-Up/246559

This article examines methodologies for communication that deeply associate societal challenges with the people who experience them. This unintentionally but categorically lets systemic instigators off the hook. Review this resource as we drive to communicate for the good of the people we serve.

For more information about Latino vs. Latinx, use

https://www.census.gov/topics/population/hispanic-origin/about.html

This article highlights the U.S. Census Bureau adheres to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) definition of ethnicity. There are two minimum categories for ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. OMB considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race.

For more information about writing about people with disabilities, use https://adata.org/factsheet/ADANN-writing

The words you use and the way you portray individuals with disabilities matter. This factsheet provides guidelines for portraying individuals with disabilities in a respectful and balanced way by using language that is accurate, neutral, and objective.

For more information about equity and social justice within the child welfare system, use

https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3057-equity-and-social-justice-in-child-welfare

This is a collection of resources surrounding the topics of equity-focused and social justice approaches to the child welfare system, a system which students and/or internship supervisors may have been a part of.

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