

# New PACEI Disability Inclusion Subcommittee

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In 2019, PACEI recommended the creation of a new subcommittee, Disability Inclusion, to address the specific suggestions made in the 2018 Montgomery College Middle States Self-Study Report.

The Middle States Self Study Report recognized and identified opportunities to model national best practices by the [Association on Higher Education and Disability](#) in reframing disability from a medical model to a social justice model<sup>1</sup>. This can be accomplished by expanding discussions of disability as a distinct aspect of diversity at the College and providing increased educational programming on disability history and culture. There are opportunities to include disability in training related to culture and identity, education on bias and microaggressions, and focused programming during Disability Awareness month. The fundamental vision is to create a culture that inspires inclusion and considers access for persons with disabilities in all decision-making throughout the College.

The Disability Inclusion subcommittee was charged to recommend prioritized goals and strategies from five target areas including Academic Access (A), Program and Electronic Information Technology Access (P), Architectural Access (R), Employment Access (E), and Campus Climate for Persons with Disabilities (C). In acknowledgement of the opportunities identified in the 2018 Montgomery College Middle States Self-Study Report and Montgomery College's commitment to the full implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Disability Inclusion subcommittee will work toward the full inclusion of people with disabilities, including creating a pathway toward inclusion and equity from a social justice perspective for persons with disabilities at Montgomery College.

Leadership, Assessment, Education and Awareness, and Universal Design<sup>2</sup> and Accessible Information Communication Technology are the four prioritized goals developed from the five target areas in the Disability Inclusion committees.

<sup>[1]</sup> The concept of ableism is central to social justice. Implicit in the ableist perspective is the belief that disability is a negative status. However, rather than attempting to "fix" people with disabilities so that they will "fit" into an ableist society, advocates address the oppressive culture. Employs concepts such as social justice, liberation, and oppression to analyze, evaluate, and transform systems of social behavior, discriminatory institutional structures, and cultural practices (M. Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007). The focus is on ableism—the oppression of people with disabilities. Postulates: (a) Focus on privilege and oppression. (b) Emphasis on diversity and intersectionality of experiences, roles, and identities. (c) Goal of educating both individuals with disabilities and those who are not disabled about the existence of disability oppression. Practitioners can use the concept of ableism to analyze and assess their campus environment and departmental policies. Rather than locating the problem within the individual with a disability, practitioners can use the social justice model to change oppressive components of the broader culture, including ideas (e.g., beauty, independence, normality), policies (e.g., laws), and attitudes (e.g., paternalism, pity, sympathy). Evans, Nancy J., Disability in Higher Education: A Social Justice Approach (p.90), 2017.

<sup>[1]</sup> The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Copyright (C) 1997 NC State University, The Center for Universal Design.