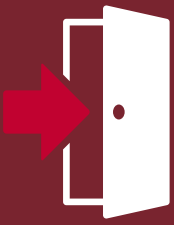


Western Technical College



The four pillars of equity



Access

- **Access** is more than admission and enrollment. Access provides students with the resources, service, and equipment needed for success in concert with the ability, convenience, and knowledge to use them.
- **Access** ensures all facilities on Western campuses are easily accessible by all students, regardless of ability.
- **Access** provides high-quality teaching and learning experiences at all Western locations.
- **Access** is student awareness of available support — Counseling Services, Access Services, Career Services, Multicultural Center, and more. Western staff evaluates and refers students to the appropriate contact and service.
- **Access** encourages students to embrace their full potential because it powers continued success.
- **Access** is, for the most vulnerable students, tailored pathways for successful navigation through Western. These pathways are 'blazed trails' available to everyone.

Examples of Equitable Access at Western

1. Providing education and pathways into Western from the jail, and expanding that work to other county jails.
2. Ensuring all major doorways into our facilities meet and go beyond ADA compliance.

Considerations for Access

- Consider the hoops students are required to jump through in order to participate.
- Consider the obstacles for enrollment at Western. Ruminates on the stresses of navigating a new and wholly unfamiliar organization.
- Consider your physical abilities and knowledge of Western. How has that given you unearned access to our physical and virtual spaces.

Discussion Questions

1. How would a first-generation student who is economically disadvantaged and an unemployed single parent living in Sparta gain access to your office or department?
2. How do you educate students on the availability of resources and support? How do you know if you have reached them? How does your effort align with other Western efforts?
3. Think about a skill you use daily, a skill you probably take for granted. How was this skill learned? How has this skill made success easier? How would your day differ without knowing and using this skill?

Equit



Inclusion

- **Inclusion** builds on student strengths and talents by tailoring teaching methods and providing appropriate support and resources to promote success and program completion.
- **Inclusion** is dignity and respect in an environment that is understanding, accepting, and fosters a real sense of belonging.
- **Inclusion** creates space for many student voices and perspectives in the classroom, in activities, in surveys, etc.
- **Inclusion** intentionally leverages each student's culture and environment while celebrating commonalities and differences to achieve educational excellence.

Examples of Inclusion Practices at Western

1. Western's residence hall is making the 5th floor gender-inclusive.
2. Campus employees are encouraged to display their preferred pronouns in their email signatures.
3. Western embedded ReadSpeaker into Blackboard. ReadSpeaker is software that reads and translates text and captions videos. ReadSpeaker perfect for students with disabilities and is also excellent for all online learners.

Considerations for Inclusion

- Consider how to make students feel welcome at every step of their journey. When referring a student to another employee, does the process preserve their dignity and comfort with their new contact?
- Consider how departments communicate with students to promote messages of belonging, acceptance, and empowerment.
- Consider implicit biases and life experiences as they shape all actions; explore the concept of diversity within these aspects.
- Consider the student holistically — race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, economics, family support, etc. How do these qualities influence and shape their Western experience?

Discussion Questions

1. Are different perspectives, realities, identities, and cultures welcomed, embraced, and validated in your department? Discuss how and why?
2. How do you hear the voices of underserved students and reflect those voices in your service model? How does it inform policy, practice, and procedures?

ty, Inclusion, a



Removal of Barriers

- **Removing Barriers** means that basic needs are academic needs; all resources are available to students.
- **Removing Barriers** depends on educating Western employees on what a diverse culture means. A real understanding leads to wise and purposeful solutions.
- **Removing Barriers** depends on knowing what students want and need. Campus relationships are paramount to ensuring equitable practices and outcomes for students. Leverage relationships for specific, helpful, and productive insights.

Examples of Equitable Practice at Western

1. Students without computer access during Western's COVID-19 instructional model may borrow one; Wi-Fi and computer lab access is available on campus and at all Regional Learning Centers.
2. The Cavalier Cupboard is located in the Learning Commons for easy access and increased hours of availability. Open to all students, pantry access is granted by a swipe of their free Student ID.

Considerations for Removing Barriers

- Consider how geography may influence access to resources and may increase barriers if not intentionally considered.
- Consider professional development to educate for cultural proficiency to provide differentiated service and instruction to our diverse student body.
- Consider department availability to serve students and how this access relates to gaps in student needs. How can we operate effectively and efficiently while supporting the most student needs? During the COVID19 pandemic this has improved in some areas—how might we identify these gains and keep them?
- Consider ways to increase efforts and resources to promote our alternative high school and adult diploma students' transition into programs and ultimately, careers!
- Consider the communication sent to students during their enrollment journey. Identify points where students are struggling to find ways to improve communication.

Discussion Questions

1. How can we change our practices to anticipate, identify, and preemptively remove barriers instead of reacting to issues as they arise?
2. Formulate essential questions to identify barriers that might exist in your area and others.
3. What biases and judgments get in the way of identifying barriers? Name these preconceived notions to systematically and overtly address them.

and Support



Fairness

- **Fairness** ensures the educational experience is unique for each student as needed. **Fairness** is meeting students where they are with the proper support and service.
- **Fairness** recognizes individual needs to define what resources are needed. Contrast this with equal distribution of resources across the board: equity versus equality.
- **Fairness** realizes that traditional criteria and measurements do not meet our current standards or educational model.

Examples of Equitable Fairness at Western

1. Academic support faculty are available to provide “just in time” assistance for students in high fail rate gateway courses.
2. Waiving the application fee for students who indicate meeting one of four financial constraint questions asked on the College application.

Considerations for Fairness

- Consider the necessary components that impact the successful onboarding of students and employees, such as training, clarity, context, mentors, and meaningful relationships.
- Consider how we assess student groups with which we don't readily communicate. Are we missing opportunities to hear from our underserved students?

Discussion Questions

1. Think about one source of support that helped you through your own education. How can we provide the same or similar support for our students? (What have you done for your own children lately?)
2. What about the word fairness is challenging? Is equal equitable? Why or why not?
3. How are the terms fair and equal different? What is an example of a fair practice in the classroom? What is an example of an equitable practice in the classroom? An example of both terms outside of the classroom?



Equity, Inclusion, and Support

Access Western Technical College commits to advancing **Access** through our practices, policies, and instruction to create an environment of excellence where student success and empowerment are the norms. We commit to **Access** as an educational pillar by providing high-quality instruction, services, activities, and spaces.

Inclusion Western Technical College commits to advancing **Inclusion** through our practices, policies, and instruction to create an environment of excellence where student success and empowerment are the norms. We commit to **Inclusion** as an educational pillar by inspiring every student to feel essential and valued by intentionally using their strengths and abilities to co-create successful academic outcomes.

Removal of Barriers Western Technical College commits to advancing the **Systematic Removal of Barriers** through our practices, policies, and instruction to create an environment of excellence where student success and empowerment are the norms. We commit to the **Systematic Removal of Barriers** as an educational pillar by ensuring the inclusivity of every student, especially our underserved students.

Fairness Western Technical College commits to advancing **Fairness** through our practices, policies, and instruction to create an environment of excellence where student success and empowerment are the norms. We commit to **Fairness** as an educational pillar by ensuring every student receives the individualized support they need to be successful.

Western Technical College

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