

## INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE TERMINOLOGY

The list below presents some terms and definitions that orient Texas Tech's approach to fostering an inclusive and affirming environment. We recognize that this is not an exhaustive list. Though this list does not encapsulate all of the factors that contribute to an understanding of campus climate, we hope that this list can begin to provide some language for articulating various experiences on campus.

### **Ableism**

Systemic and cultural power awarded to able-bodied/minded people at the expense of people who identify as disabled and/or are socially defined as having a disability.

### **Accessibility: Facilities**

The extent to which a building or other facility is readily approachable and does not inhibit the mobility of individuals with disabilities. Accessibility can also refer to the extent to which curriculum and programming has been designed to accommodate the needs of individuals of all abilities, including cognitive, learning, and sensory.

### **Accessibility: General**

Accessibility references the ability to gain access to an environment, location, curriculum, and/or programming for individuals with varying physical, cognitive, learning, and/or sensory needs.

### **Acculturation**

The cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another (generally dominant) culture.

### **Affirmative action: Employment**

Proactive efforts to achieve equal employment opportunity and eliminate the effects of past and present discrimination, particularly on the basis of race and gender. The intent is to identify barriers to equal opportunity, eliminate the effects of bias (both conscious and subconscious), and achieve parity with workforce demographics among available and qualified individuals. Affirmative action is not: quota systems, lowering of job standards, selection of unqualified candidates, or reverse discrimination.

### **Assimilation**

Taking on the traits of another culture, leaving the culture of origin behind. Generally, assimilation is discussed in a context of taking on the traits of a dominant culture at the expense of a subordinated culture or culture of origin.

### **Bias**

An inclination or preference either for or against an individual or group that interferes with impartial judgment. Bias can be conscious or unconscious and is a product of socialization and life experiences that shape our perceptions and judgments.



## **Bystander**

A person who is present at an event or incident but does not take part.

## **Bystander effect**

Phenomenon in which someone is less likely to intervene in an emergency situation when others are present than when they are alone.

## **Civility**

At its most basic level, civility refers to showing others kindness, courtesy, and respect. Digging a little deeper, civility is about constantly being open to listen, to learn, to teach and to change. It seeks common ground as a beginning point for dialogue and actions when differences occur, while at the same time recognizing that differences enrich our community.

## **Classism**

Classism is differential treatment based on social class or perceived socio-economic class. It is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups to advantage and strengthen the dominant class groups (this includes systems of policies and practices that are set up to benefit the upper classes at the expense of the lower classes, resulting in drastic wealth and income inequality). It is also the systematic assignment of characteristics of worth and ability based on social class.

## **Conformity**

The process by which people's beliefs or behaviors are influenced by others, via subtle even unconscious processes or by direct and overt peer pressure. It is a group behavior. Factors such as group size, cohesion, status, prior commitment, presence of authority, and public opinion all help determine the level of conformity an individual will reflect toward his/her group.

## **Disability**

A permanent or temporary mental, physical, cognitive, or developmental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual. Under applicable laws, a person who has a past record of having had a disability, or who is regarded by others having a disability, qualifies for protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **Discrimination**

Unfair treatment (including intent to deny or limit access or participation) or denial of rights based on a person's race, skin color, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, pregnancy, marital or parental status, religion, age, arrest record, conviction record, military service, veteran status or other legally protected identity/status. Different state and federal laws may not grant the same protections to all individuals in all circumstances based on all of the above identity characteristics.

## **Diversity**

The sum total of all of the dimensions of difference that exist among people, including our identities, experiences, abilities, and worldviews/perspectives. Diversity may be visible or invisible, but it exists in every interaction between people. Dimensions of diversity include: gender identity or expression, age, ethnicity, language, class, culture, sexual orientation, race, ability, size, etc.



### **Ethnicity**

A category of people who identify with each other, usually on the basis of a presumed common genealogy or ancestry or on similarities such as common language, history, society, culture or nation.

### **Equal opportunity**

A system of employment or educational practices under which individuals are not excluded from any participation, advancement or benefits due to race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, disability, pregnancy, marital or parental status or any other action which cannot lawfully be the basis for limiting equal access.

### **Equality**

The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities.

### **Equity**

Fairness and justice in allocating resources, opportunity, treatment and success. This is different from equality. Equality means getting the same, equity means getting what is fair.

### **Gender Expression**

A person's behaviors, mannerisms, interests, and appearance that are associated with gender in a particular cultural context.

### **Gender identity**

An inner sense or lack thereof of gender.

### **Harassment**

Unwelcome verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct that:

- Is directed at an individual or group of individuals on the basis of the individual or group of individuals' actual or perceived protected status, or affiliation or association with person(s) within a protected status (as defined herein above); and
- is sufficiently severe or pervasive so as to interfere with an individual's employment, education or academic environment or participation in institution programs or activities and creates a working, learning, program or activity environment that a reasonable person would find intimidating, offensive or hostile.

To constitute prohibited harassment, the conduct must be both objectively and subjectively harassing in nature. Harassment may include but is not limited to verbal or physical attacks, threats, slurs or derogatory or offensive comments that meet the definition set forth herein. Harassment does not have to be targeted at a particular individual in order to create a harassing environment, nor must the conduct result in a tangible injury to be considered a violation of this policy. Whether the alleged conduct constitutes prohibited harassment depends on the totality of the particular circumstances, including the nature, frequency and duration of the conduct in question, the location and context in which it occurs, and the status of the individuals involved.



### **Hate crime**

A criminal act-such as vandalism, arson, assault, or murder-committed against a person or persons because of their real or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, age, gender, or other protected status. Hate crime laws typically increase the punishment applicable to the underlying criminal act, on the grounds that the act was motivated by bias. The Texas Hate Crimes Act, Chapter 411.046 of the Texas Government Code, defines hate crimes as crimes that are motivated by prejudice, hatred, or advocacy of violence including, but not limited to, incidents for which statistics are or were kept under Public Law 101-275 (the Federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act). The federal law further defines hate crimes as crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, and added in 1997, disability.

### **Homophobia**

Homophobia refers to the interpersonal and institutional devaluing and dehumanizing of lesbian, gay, or bisexual people, or more generally with people whose sexual orientations are or are perceived to be non-heterosexual.

### **Implicit bias**

Sometimes called unconscious bias, it includes the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness. Rather, implicit biases are not accessible through introspection.

### **Inclusivity**

The quality of trying to include many different types of people and treat them all fairly and equally. Inclusive organizations fully value different perspectives and reflect the interests of diverse members throughout all levels and aspects of the organization. Full inclusion implies dialogue and sharing of power between members of all subgroups.

### **Intersectionality**

Coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to explain how Black women faced legal discrimination on the basis of both race and gender combined, intersectionality is an analytic framework that attempts to identify how interlocking systems of power impact those who are most marginalized in society. Intersectionality considers that various forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, and ableism, do not exist separately from each other but are interwoven together.

### **Microaggression**

Microaggressions are brief and commonplace everyday exchanges that communicate hostile, derogatory, denigrating or negative slights and insults to certain individuals because of their group membership. The persons making the comments may otherwise be well-intentioned and unaware of the potential impact of their words. There are three categories of microaggressions: microassaults, microinsults, microinvalidations. The term was first coined by African-American Harvard psychiatrist Chester Pierce in 1970.



### **Minoritized group**

Usually a marginalized group of people distinctive by ethnicity, race, color, economic class, gender identity or expression, nationality, sex, ability, or religion. While a minority in strictly numerical terms is any subgroup that constitutes less than half of the whole group. In practice, a minoritized group is any group disadvantaged directly or indirectly by existing policies and social practices, or having little power or representation relative to other groups within a society. (For example, even if women constitute a numerical majority in an organization or classroom, men may still exercise greater power in that space as a result of male privilege.) Under certain laws, "minority" is defined with reference to specific racial/ethnic groups: black, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native.

### **Multicultural**

The multidimensionality of people based on different cultural attributes. In diversity work it means valuing the differences of others and creating an environment that does not require assimilation. Like "diverse," this term should ideally not be used to single out those individuals who are different from a perceived "norm" (e.g. "multicultural students" as a synonym for "students of color"). However, "multicultural" may be used to refer to organizations or groups that explicitly embrace the values of multiculturalism in their work.

### **Oppression**

The systematic subjugation (prolonged rather than single-instance) of one social group by another, usually sanctioned by cultural beliefs and institutions. Examples are racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, ableism. Oppression = prejudice + power.

### **Personal gender pronoun**

A personal gender pronoun, or PGP, is simply the pronoun or set of pronouns that an individual would like others to use when talking to or about that individual (i.e. she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, zie/zim/zir, etc...) One way to be more inclusive and welcoming for all genders is to incorporate PGPs into regular intro activities.

### **Prejudice**

Attitudes and beliefs, without basis in facts or just grounds, held toward a particular group of people. Prejudgment on inadequate information. Can be unconscious or intentional.

### **Privilege**

A right, advantage, or immunity granted to or enjoyed by members of a given category of people (based on race, color, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.) that is not available to people outside that category; an exemption in many cases from certain burdens or liabilities.

### **Race**

A local, geographic or global human population distinguished as a more or less distinct group by physical and cultural characteristics that are perceived to be similar. Race is a social construction with no basis in biology, but which nonetheless has real social and cultural impact on the lives of people. Has also been defined as a group of people united or classified together on the basis of common history, nationality or geographic distribution.



## **Racism**

The systematic discrimination and exploitation of human beings on the basis of race.

## **Sex**

Sex is a social category that is assigned based on a series of perceived and/or actual physical characteristics that include chromosomes, genitalia, and hormone levels. Sex includes categories such as female, male, and intersex. Within the United States, there exist varying criteria between different state and administrative agencies on determining an individual's sex.

## **Sexism**

Sexism is prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender. It's a system of attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes, and other types of bias that discriminate on the basis of real or perceived sex.

## **Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation is a way to describe who a person may be sexually attracted to, or to describe a lack of sexual desire.

## **Social justice**

Social justice generally refers to the idea of creating an equitable and egalitarian society or institution that is based on the principles of justice, equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being.

## **Stereotyping**

A preconceived or oversimplified generalization usually resulting in negative beliefs about a particular group. We may pick this up from what we hear other people say, what we read, and what people around us believe.

## **Title IX**

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 is a federal law that states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

## **Tolerance**

The capacity for or the practice of recognizing and respecting the beliefs or practices of others. The ability or willingness to tolerate something, in particular the existence of opinions or behavior that one does not necessarily agree with. Tolerance is one step on the progression from ignorance/rejection to acceptance/embrace.

## **Transphobia**

Transphobia is the interpersonal and institutional devaluing and dehumanizing of transgender, non-binary, and/or gender non-conforming people.