

Social Justice and Inclusion Competency Reflection

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The Social Justice and Inclusion Competency Area (SJI) created by NASPA and ACPA contains many outcomes that are crucial for success as an equitable student affairs practitioner. The SJI competency is perfectly summed up by stating “Student affairs educators may incorporate social justice and inclusion competencies into their practice through seeking to meet the needs of all groups, equitably distributing resources, raising social consciousness, and repairing past and current harms on campus communities” (NASPA & ACPA, 2015, p. 30). Social justice and inclusion outcomes impact every program and service that students, staff, and faculty participate in or create.

As a student affairs practitioner and scholar, I would self-assess my Social Justice and Inclusion proficiency as intermediate. This is a competency that I have been very thoughtful about in my experience in higher education and there are many outcomes in each competency level that I have strived to incorporate in my daily work.

The first outcome that I chose to reflect on is “advocate for the development of a more inclusive and socially conscious department, institution, and profession” (NASPA & ACPA, 2015, p. 31). I demonstrated this outcome in my time at the University of California Merced. In my role, I created a division-wide professional development seminar focused on embedding equity and justice in assessment. The seminar was well attended and led to ongoing conversations about social justice and inclusion in many departments in the student affairs division. Sharing topics including disaggregating data by identity, including students in the survey creation process, and using data to disrupt systems of oppression provided terminology and talking points to further the development of social justice and inclusion throughout the division and institution.

The second intermediate outcome I selected was “Design programs and events that are inclusive, promote social consciousness and challenge current institutional, national, global, and sociopolitical systems of oppression” (NASPA & ACPA, 2015, p. 31). This outcome I explored as a student in the Intersectionality and Gender in Higher Education course at Buffalo State College. One assignment led me to research the development of identity-based centers and create a proposal for a student affairs intersectionality office. This assignment opened my eyes to the many approaches that institutions take to include students from every background and foster opportunities to build community. As I completed the proposal assignment, I analyzed the programs that I currently oversee to determine the extent to which social justice and inclusion are embedded. I was surprised by the positive results and am encouraged to further explore how to embed these important topics in my praxis as a professional.

In conclusion, I believe that the Social Justice and Inclusion competency is a cornerstone of being a successful and equitable student affairs professional. I hope to further develop this competency by frequently reviewing the outcomes and determining ways to ensure parity for every student. I believe that the Social Justice and Inclusion competency is not an end goal, but rather, an ongoing process to improve and innovate programs and services. By reading the SJI outcomes, I am encouraged to further explore how to embed the topics of social justice and inclusion into my professional praxis.

References

American College Personnel Association & Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education

(2015). Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators.

https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/ACPA_NASPA_Professional_Competencies_FINAL.pdf