



# ACCREDITATION EVIDENCE

**Title:** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Overview and Board Report

**Evidence Type:** Clear

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**PII:**

**Redacted:** No



## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Overview and Report

8/12/2021

### Key Definitions:

Before we start talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion at Western, it's important to establish what we mean by these terms.

*DIVERSITY: all the ways in which people differ; all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another*

*EQUITY: Fair treatment and access. All can participate and prosper. Resources that fit the circumstances.*

*INCLUSION: Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.*

### Background/Need for Committee:

Formal DEI efforts have been needed at Western for some time. In practical terms, we have students, employees, and a service area that are all diverse in many ways, and we have an institutional responsibility to acknowledge and serve that diversity. Further, as our world becomes both more diverse and more aware of diversity, DEI issues are frequently in the forefront on other campuses; this is something that other institutions are way ahead of us on. In very practical terms, working on DEI issues can lead to concrete institutional gains in crucial areas such as enrollment and retention.

Past these reasons, HLC requires concrete DEI efforts from institutions. HLC's Criteria for Accreditation reference these issues in the following ways:

*The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. (HLC 1.C.2)*

*The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives. (HLC 1.C.3)*

*The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world. (3.B.3)*

*The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves. (3.C.1)*

Western's lack of formal work on these areas has previously been noted by the HLC.

For these and other reasons, President Dale started pulling together interested personnel from across the institution in Fall 2019, and we started meeting in Spring 2020. Working with a mix of faculty, professionals, paraprofessionals, students, and alumni, we examined these issues at Western and then came up with a mission and purpose to guide our work moving forward.

**Mission:**

*Western Wyoming Community College believes in the importance of seeing things from multiple perspectives. We work to reflect and support the diverse campus and area communities we serve. We are invested in cultivating a climate where equity and inclusion are both intrinsic and explicit by valuing individuals and groups of all backgrounds, demographics, and experiences. In doing so, we foster an atmosphere of diversity, equity, and inclusion for our students, our employees, and our community.*

**Purpose:**

*To better reflect the communities we serve, Western's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee works to break down barriers to inclusion, influence policies to foster equity, increase both awareness and presence of diversity, and empower underrepresented members of our community. We seek to heighten awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues throughout campus at all levels; further, we work to partner with and assist those seeking improvement in these areas.*

**Committee Work Thus Far & Future Plans:**

We've done a number of things thus far. Some of the most noticeable have been our in-service sessions, for which the Spring 2021 information is attached. We've also worked with BeLeGiT, our campus LGBTQ+ organization, to do a number of Safe Zone trainings for faculty, staff, and students on LGBTQ+ issues. We've trained well over a hundred people at this point. DEI representatives have done a well-attended colloquium talk for the campus community. We've contributed questions for interviews, and we've helped promote other DEI-focused events on campus.

In the future, we plan to keep all of the above going, and we plan to add on some other work as well. A high priority for us is data gathering, both using existing tools and through focus groups targeting underrepresented members of the campus and area community. We're also interested in the ways that diversity, equity, and inclusion are currently represented in such areas as library collections and coursework. We definitely want to promote and help with other efforts and events relevant to our focus across campus as well.

**DEI Committee Members:**

This report would not be complete without listing our current and previous members. Even though several of these people are no longer with the college and/or have had to leave the committee, everyone listed has played a vital role in these efforts at Western.

*Founding Co-Chairs:* Jessica Dean and Heather Pristash

*Committee Members, Past and Present:* Eric DeLora, Amy Galley, Trista Gordon, Janice Grover-Roosa, Justin Hardman, Hank Ketelsen, Alex Nelson, Dana Pertermann, Rosa Pugh, Burt Reynolds, Caleb Sellers, Dragan Skropanic