

It is hard to believe that July is almost over and we are careening toward fall and the start of another semester. As we prepare for the latest whirlwind of academic-year activity, it's important that we all intentionally strive for fairness, respect, and to build an inclusive environment where everyone feels that they matter, have value, and belong — whether in our association, our workplace, or our communities.

For those who did not attend the NACRAO conference or are otherwise unaware, the membership voted to approve changing the *Diversity & Inclusion Committee* to the *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee*. Why did the committee propose this change? Did we need more letters in our alphabet soup of acronyms? The Committee strongly believes that a focus only on diversity and inclusion is not enough in an inherently biased world. Adding equity is a great step, but sometimes still does not help underrepresented groups feel a sense of belonging. We challenge NACRAO's members to endeavor to practice cultural awareness, and to grow in their understanding of and participation in D,E,I, and B measures:

- **Diversity** is about welcoming all the ways we are different (both visible and invisible) and promoting a wide range of different people and perspectives.
- **Equity** is about recognizing that each person has different circumstances and may need different resources and opportunities to reach an equal outcome.
- **Inclusion** is about valuing people's unique ideas and lived experiences and ensuring they feel involved, respected, connected, and have their voices heard.
- **Belonging** is about creating a culture where people can be themselves, have psychological safety, appreciate each other, and feel part of something bigger.



~ ActionforHappiness.org

So, as we start a new academic and NACRAO year, we invite all of you to expand your recognition of your unconscious biases, actively listen to what your colleagues and students have to say, realize that people are never just one identity (intersectionality), and work to communicate your own challenges and/or be an ally to amplify the voice of others.

For those of you who did not sign up to be a part of the D,E,I, & B Committee at conference but who would like to join, please reach out to me directly at susan.stephenson@wncc.edu. We will start our monthly meetings soon and welcome everyone's contributions to our understanding and efforts!

