The Diversity and Inclusion Science Initiative

Position Statement and Visioning For A New Translational Scholarship

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We present this position statement and visioning for a new translational scholarship concerning diversity and inclusion at a time when governments, communities, schools, corporations, and individuals across the globe are struggling to address the complexities associated with adapting to a diverse and rapidly changing population.

The increased attention to diversity is occurring as part of a larger set of technological, political, and structural changes that are difficult for many people to understand, much less adapt to comfortably. Not surprisingly, reactions to these changes are reflected in a panoply of conflicting (and often disturbing) messages and actions that pervade politics, policies, and popular and social media.

These reactions range from compassion and sympathy to anger and fear, and everything in between. How we address and cope with the increased diversity and the concomitant changes within societies will set the tone for the development of our children and the future of our societies.

As such, it is essential that we find ways through research, translation, and practice to better understand diversity so that we can promote inclusive practices and policies that address justice, care, empathy, and understanding without undermining the qualities that reflect pluralism and the assets that can result from diversity.

Given this duality, we propose the development of a new initiative to directly address these issues: the Diversity and Inclusion Science Initiative (DISI; http://diversityinclusionscience.org). The DISI reflects the need for scholars across disciplines to focus their work in areas that enhance the well-being of children, youth, and families in our diverse world, particularly those who are disadvantaged and underrepresented. This endeavor is more than just a call for research in areas related to diversity and inclusion.

Rather, we call for research and its translation to be at the ‘nexus’ of diversity and inclusion. We also believe it is essential to broaden our conception and understanding of diversity in ways that focus on the intersection of determinative elements of humanity: race/ethnicity, gender, family structure, sexuality, income, religion, disabilities, language, and politics to name a few.
How the dynamics of diversity and inclusion change across the life span and context also are critical components of this understanding. Thus, we need to construct information that speaks more authoritatively and precisely on how issues pertaining to diversity and inclusion may be integrated into a broader understanding of human dynamics and development. In addition, we call for attention to be focused on solutions that empower and promote justice, equity, and positive human relationships. As such, the DISI is motivated by a solutions-based focus as we work to translate scholarship into actions that address and ameliorate the challenges faced in grappling with diversity and inclusion. We further contend that the DISI perspective should be integral to the education and training of the next generation of students, scholars, policy makers, and citizens. Finally, we call for the need to raise societal consciousness about issues related to diversity and inclusion in ways that promote positive outcomes and progress for all members of society.

We believe it is time to use our scholarship to positively affect how people feel, think about, and act in regard to diversity and inclusion. The DISI aims to educate individuals about the issues while promoting compassion, concern about the conditions of others and the need to address inequities and unfairness, as well as an enhanced understanding of the benefits of diversity. We believe that only through such concerted efforts can we achieve the global change needed to elevate all.