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Peer Facilitators as a Model for Classroom Inclusion

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PEERS EDUCATING PEERS

as a model for fostering diversity,
equity, & inclusion on campus
Dr. Heath A. Diehl, BGSU Honors College



What is a PEER EDUCATOR?

"Students who have been selected, trained, and designated by a campus authority to offer educational services to their peers . . . toward [the] attainment of educational goals"
(Newton and Ender 6).



- 1700s:
Colleges and universities begin using peer educators as academic tutors
- early 1900s:
Peer educators are integrated into co-curricular environments (e.g., residence halls)
- mid-20th c.:
University of Nebraska pilots the first peer mentoring program, improving retention and academic success

75+%
of all higher education institutions use peer educators
(Brack, et al., 2008)

What is the VALUE of employing Peer Educators?



Peer educators are cost-effective tools to assist students and institutions in achieving their goals.

(Topping, 2005)



Peer educators serve vital roles in the retention efforts of colleges and universities

(Lotkowski, et al., 2004)



Peer educators develop leadership and communication skills, and experience emotional growth.

(Boud & Sampson, eds., 2001)

What does DIVERSITY mean in the context of higher ed?

"a comprehensive collection of cultures, ideas, people, and traditions"

A commitment to providing "opportunities to learn about the intersection of all these different identities"

(Haring-Smith, 2012)



- Nearly 80% of full-time faculty are white
- Close to 90% of college Presidents are white
- Enrollments are still disproportionately white

"Our learning is impoverished when we are in a homogeneous group of like-minded individuals who share the same kinds of experiences, beliefs, and aspirations . . . [O]nly when a campus is truly inclusive can it make a claim to excellence."
--Tori Haring-Smith

What is the VALUE of fostering DIVERSITY?



PREPARES students to successfully enter real world communities
(Goode, 2016)



FOSTERS and cultivates cognitive growth
(Bowman, 2010)



INCREASES emotional and psychological development and growth
(Gurin, et al., 2004)



IMPACTS positively student educational outcomes and experiences
(Hurtado, 2001)



How do you currently use peer educators on your campus to foster diversity?

Which of these efforts are particularly successful?

How do you measure the success of these efforts?



Which of your peer educator initiatives (either current or past) have been especially ineffective at fostering diversity?

Why have they been ineffective?

What would need to happen for them to be more effective?



Brainstorm new initiatives for employing peer educators in your campus efforts to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion.