

## The Top 5 Ways That Diversity in Education Benefits Student Success

The benefits of diversity in education, especially higher education, stretch far and wide — affecting students’ academic and social experiences, as well as having a direct impact on their future. The positive effects of diversity enable students to work with people from other races, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds and challenges the views they are accustomed to. This leads to greater awareness, understanding, and acceptance of differing beliefs and customs.

### *The Importance of Diversity in Higher Education*

Why is diversity important in college? According to an article from the Center for American Progress, “More than half of all U.S. babies today are people of color, and by 2050 our nation will have no clear racial or ethnic majority. Our nation is changing, and our higher education institutions need to reflect this diversity.”

Whether you’re searching for a diverse campus community, or interested in learning how diversity can further enhance your college experience, here are the top five benefits of diversity on campus for students.

### *Benefits of Diversity in Education for College Students*

#### **1. Campus cultural diversity enriches the educational experience**

Through culturally diverse classroom and social interactions, students have the opportunity to learn from people with different backgrounds and upbringings, leading to increased innovation and collaboration.

As the Center for American Progress notes, “Research shows that the overall academic and social effects of increased racial diversity on campus are likely to be positive, ranging from higher levels of academic achievement to the improvement of near- and long-term intergroup relations.”

#### **2. Diversity on campus improves communication and thought processing skills**

Through a diverse campus, students are presented with daily opportunities to interact with people of various backgrounds, which enables them to learn to communicate more effectively and often differently than they are previously accustomed to.

According to an article from The Century Foundation, “Students who interacted with racially and ethnically diverse peers showed significant gains in cognitive skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving.”

#### **3. Campus diversity challenges stereotypes**

Students are often raised around people of similar socioeconomic, racial, or cultural characteristics. For many students, regardless of whether or not they identify as part of a minority or culturally diverse population, the college will challenge predisposed stereotypes or norms that may have been developed during adolescence. When presented with opportunities to

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critically explore these experiences, students can become more accepting, tolerant, and thoughtful members of society.

#### **4. Students can see themselves in their leaders**

Having culturally diverse peers isn't the only way students benefit from diversity on campus. They also get the chance to see and experience various leadership styles from faculty, staff, administrators, and community members. For many students, it's a chance to see someone from a similar background that they can emulate. This is especially impactful for students from historically underrepresented communities. In considering those that we employ within our campus communities, it is critical to ensure that the demographics of representation are compatible with our student body— both our current students and those we hope to enroll.

#### **5. Diversity better prepares students for the workforce**

According to the American Council on Education, “Education within a diverse setting prepares students to become good citizens in an increasingly complex, pluralistic society; it fosters mutual respect and teamwork, and it helps build communities whose members are judged by the quality of their character and their contributions.”

### ***Why Is Diversity Important in College?***

Ultimately, studies show that diversity in education, particularly on college campuses, improve the “intellectual engagement, self-motivation, citizenship, and cultural engagement, and academic skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and writing – for students of all races. Interacting with diverse peers outside a classroom setting directly benefits students, making them better scholars, thinkers, and citizens.”

What do you think are some additional benefits of diversity on campus?