Diversifying the Curriculum

Departmental viewpoint

Specific areas of inquiry for your department to consider:

• Do you have any scholars of color/BAME scholars in your department?
  o If yes, what supports do you have in place to ensure their success and retention at your institution?
  o If yes, are they taking on extra burdens, particularly around mentoring students of color/BAME students or doing diversity work? If yes, are these extra burdens recognized via pay or tenure/promotion benefits?
  o If yes, have you asked them (in a way that protects them from retaliation) about their experiences in your program? (Things that are going well, things that could improve)
  o If no, what proactive steps are you taking to recruit scholars of color?

• What theories are taught in your department?
  o Do they include contributions from scholars of color/BAME scholars?
  o Are traditional theories examined from multiple perspectives?
    ▪ If yes to the above two, do your course descriptions acknowledge this?
  o Do you have any scholars of color teaching your theory courses?

• What methods/methodologies are taught in your department?
  o Are the colonial historic and present-day impacts of these methodologies discussed?
  o Are participant-centric, ethical methodologies taught?
  o Do methods courses include contributions from scholars of color/BAME scholars?
    ▪ If yes to the above three, do your course descriptions acknowledge this?
  o Do you have any scholars of color teaching your methods courses?

• Does your department offer any courses explicitly about race or gender?
  o Are these classes electives or required?
  o Are any of them taught by scholars of color?
  o If they are taught by scholars of color, what supports do you have in place to support them from potential complaints from students?
  o How frequently are these courses offered?

• Do you offer pedagogical training around teaching race or gender to your scholars? Key areas for training include:
  o Cultural sensitivity/humility
  o Implicit bias
  o How to create an inclusive classroom space
  o Specific teaching strategies that neither exoticism nor minoritize your students
  o Suggestions for assessment practices
Diversifying the Curriculum

Individual academic viewpoint

Getting started with diversifying your own courses:

- **Self-Assessment:**
  - Why do you want to diversify your curriculum?
  - Set short-term and long-term goals (you do not have to overhaul your entire syllabus and teaching practice in one go)
  - What seems the easiest to do to meet your goal?
  - What seems the most daunting?
  - Do you know of texts, scholars, etc. related to your course topic?
  - How do you feel about teaching race or gender?
    - Do you feel ready to deal with potential controversy?
    - Do you feel confident you can create a space where minoritized students feel safe in your classroom when these topics come up?
  - Have you examined your own biases/cultural sensitivity?

- **Course Assessment:** start with the smallest chunk and work your way out
  - Course description: What does it say? Is it accurate?
  - Syllabi: Consider the following areas
    - Theories
    - Methods
    - Authors of articles
    - Who are the knowledge makers in your field? Which ones do you acknowledge?
    - What perspectives do you acknowledge?
    - What issues do you consider vital or important? Whose issues are they? How are they framed?
    - Do you spend time unpacking race and gender, and how these constructs relate to your course topic? Hint: From biology to ballet, there are few areas where race and gender do not relate.
  - Assignments:
    - How much weight do you give to “standard” English usage? Is it appropriate, given what you teach?
    - Do your assignments expect minoritized students to expose their trauma? Is it necessary?
    - Do your assignments ever allow students to bring their experiential and cultural knowledge to bear on the subject at hand? Many social sciences consider those areas worthy of research by white scholars, but somehow not appropriate for scholars of color to investigate.
  - Teaching practices:
    - Track who you call on most, who you question, who you agree with, who is silent, who speaks, etc.
    - Do you ever expect students of color to represent their entire group when teaching?
    - Do you expect women to do classroom clerical work?