Every Learner Everywhere Network Releases Guide to Introduce Postsecondary Academic Leaders to Equity
Guide is in response to request for actionable educational equity resource

Boulder, CO (June 1, 2021) – A new resource from the Every Learner Everywhere network, *Getting Started with Equity: A Guide for Academic Department Leaders*, introduces academic department leaders to the principles, strategies, and teaching practices of educational equity. *Getting Started with Equity* is a direct response to calls from department chairs and other academic leaders for practical advice in establishing classroom environments where students are empowered, encouraged, and equipped to succeed academically.

"Equity needs to be embedded into every step of our planning," said Jessica Rowland Williams, Ph.D., Director of Every Learner Everywhere. "Racially-minoritized students, who are now in the majority at most higher ed institutions, cannot afford for equity to be an afterthought. This guide was designed to help departments take those first steps."

The guide is not intended to serve as a comprehensive handbook, but as a resource that sparks conversations around how academic departments can work toward equity and justice in their curricula and teaching.

The guide outlines how department chairs must work to foster a culture in which:

- An intersectional analysis of race, gender, power, capital, etc., is championed;
- Critical practices that are equity-advancing, liberatory, and justice-centered are implemented; and
- Educators are encouraged to enter into, or go deeper in, work that holds the potential to disrupt deeply entrenched macrostructural inequity in higher education.

"Academic departments can be champions in eliminating opportunity gaps for racially and socioeconomically minoritized students," said Tia Holiday, M.Ed., Postsecondary Education Project Lead for Intentional Futures. "For departments that have decades of practices, norms, and traditions established, operationalizing equity can be complex, and it will require a long-term commitment. However, it is necessary, and departments must acknowledge the need to take a critical review and take action in removing the policies and practices that are exacerbating inequitable outcomes for students who identify as Black, Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander, Southern East Asian, Asian, or who may be experiencing poverty."

Holiday collaborated on the guide with Tynan Gable, M.B.A., Senior Strategist, Intentional Futures; Patricia O'Sullivan, M.A., Content Manager, Every Learner Everywhere and Project

Coordinator in Academic Innovation and Instructor at the University of Mississippi; and Jeremiah J. Sims, Ph.D. Director of Equity, College of San Mateo.

The guide has three parts:

- Part I: The Departmental Equity Audit, where chairs are encouraged to collect and interpret data to inform a departmental plan
- Part II: Teaching Practices for Educational Equity, which delves into how to create a welcoming and supportive classroom culture
- Part III: Equitable Teaching Practices in Specific Disciplines, which includes resources specific to biology, chemistry, mathematics, psychology, and writing

"The work of equity can be uncomfortable and exhausting, especially when the work is relegated to a handful of champions, and when the work calls into question long-standing traditions, policies, and practices," said Patricia O'Sullivan. "Not every strategy will be actionable right away, but we have to do something. There is no safe middle ground in this work. Doing nothing is as much of a choice as taking action. We encourage department chairs to use this guide as a means for taking the difficult but important first steps."

"We cannot continue to teach the way we have always taught if racially-minoritized and poverty-affected students continue to fail," said Dr. Jeremiah Sims. "Educators need to shift from gatekeepers or disseminators of content-level expertise toward facilitators of learning, knowledge creation, and meaningful co-construction. It is urgent that we take action."

To download the guide or learn more about Every Learner Everywhere and its collaborative approach to advance equity in higher education through digital learning, visit everylearnereverywhere.org. To contact Every Learner Everywhere, email everylearner@wiche.edu, or call (303) 541-0206. Follow Every Learner on Twitter @EveryLearnerNet.

Every Learner Everywhere (Every Learner) is a network of twelve partner organizations with expertise in evaluating, implementing, scaling, and measuring the efficacy of education technologies, curriculum and course design strategies, teaching practices, and support services that personalize instruction for students in blended and online learning environments. Our mission is to help institutions use new technology to innovate teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students. Our collaborative work to advance equity in higher education centers on the transformation of postsecondary teaching and learning. We build capacity in colleges and universities to improve student outcomes with

digital learning through direct technical assistance, timely resources and toolkits, and ongoing analysis of institution practices and market trends. For more information about Every Learner Everywhere and its collaborative approach to equitize higher education through digital learning, visit everylearnereverywhere.org.

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