

## **AGOSTO DIVERSITY CENTER - GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

### **Ableism**

A system of oppression based on social construction of superior and inferior physicality, which is expressed in individual, institutional as well as cultural forms and functions for the benefit of those deemed able-bodied at the expense of those deemed disabled.

### **Achievement Gap**

The achievement gap is commonly used shorthand for the racial achievement gap and refers to the widespread disparities that exist between majority individuals and minoritized groups, including African Americans, Latinos, and Asian students in educational outcomes such as test scores; retention, completion, and college attendance rates; and placement in special education, gifted, and advanced placement courses.

### **Adverse Impact**

Under the “Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures” of the Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinating Council. “Adverse Impact may be found when a selection process for a particular job or group of jobs results in the selection of members of any racial, ethnic, or sex group at a lower rate than members of other groups. The enforcement agencies will generally regard a selection rate for any group which is less than four-fifths or eighty percent of the rate for the group with the highest selection rate as constituting evidence of adverse impact.”

### **Affected Class**

Any group which continues to suffer the effects of past discriminatory practices. Affected class status must be determined by analysis or court decision.

### **Affirmative Action**

A federal agenda initiated in the 1960s that is designed to counteract historic discrimination faced by ethnic minorities, women, and other underrepresented groups. Institutions with affirmative action programs prioritize inclusion of minority groups in employment, retention, and promotion.

### **Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)**

The 1967 act prohibits employment discrimination against persons 40 years of age or older.

## **Ageism**

A system of oppression based on the social construction of age superiority and inferiority, which is expressed in individual, institutional as well as cultural forms and functions for the benefit of some at the expense of others.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

Passed by Congress in 1990, this act requires that “reasonable accommodations” be made in public accommodations, including the workplace, for individuals with disabilities.

## **Anti-Racism**

The Practice of identifying, challenging, preventing, eliminating, and changing the values, structures, policies, programs, practices, and behaviors that perpetrate racism.

## **Assimilation**

The policy and practice of repression, domination, and erasure by which marginalized cultures are merged into the dominant or mainstream culture.

## **Bias**

A preference for or tendency toward a particular viewpoint or outcome. Bias stems from the internalization and institutionalization of particular values, beliefs, and assumptions. Not to be confused with bigotry, which is motivated by ill-intent, bias can co-exist unconsciously with good intentions, but nevertheless result in outcomes that are inclined to favor specific groups over others.

## **Bicultural**

A person who is bicultural effectively navigates within and between two cultures.

## **Biracial**

Often used to describe a person whose parents belong to two different racial categories. Critics argue that this usage promotes biologicistic concept of race based on blood quantum that denies the socially constructed nature of race. The term should not be used interchangeably with bicultural.

## **Civil Rights**

The legal rights guaranteed equally to all citizens.

## **Civil Rights Act of 1964**

Prohibits discrimination in programs receiving federal funds. Title VI prohibits discrimination based on race or national origin in federally-financially assisted programs. Title VII prohibits discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, national origin, or sex (including pregnancy).

## **Civil Rights Act of 1991**

Amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by adding the protected category of “disability” and provides for appropriate remedies for intentional discrimination and unlawful harassment in the workplace. The 1991 Act does not affect court-ordered remedies, affirmative action, or conciliation agreements, which are in accordance with the law.

## **Class**

Definitions of class vary across disciplines. A comprehensive working definition by Yeskel and Leondar-Wright is that “class is a relative social ranking based on income, wealth, status, and/or power.”

## **Classism**

A system of oppression based on the social construction of superiority and inferiority based on class, which is expressed in individual, institutional as well as cultural forms and functions for the benefit of the dominant class at the expense to the rest.

## **Color-Blindness**

The claim not to see racial distinctions. Critics of this ideology argue that in the U.S. context, the refusal to see race denies an often important aspect of personal and collective identity as well as the socio-historical forces that structure disparate outcomes based on race. Accordingly, one must see race and understand its impact to correct the effects of past and present racial oppression.

## **Culture**

While the definition of culture varies within and among academic disciplines, a comprehensive definition is that it denotes the way of life of a people, encompassing their ideas, values, beliefs, norms, language, traditions, and artifacts. Intuitional cultures reflect the dominant culture of the society of which they are a part.

## **Disability**

Disability is socially constructed, defined by the social and functional criteria of a particular society. People are not born “disabled,” but rather labeled so. This understanding is reflected in the definition established by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990: “The term ‘disability’ means with respect to an individual (a) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of said individual; (b) a record of such an impairment; (c) being regarded as having such an impairment.”

## **Discrimination**

The practice or act of making distinctions between people based on prejudicial attitudes and beliefs, leading to the inequitable treatment of individuals or groups.

## **Disparate Treatment**

Refers to the intentional different treatment of individuals and groups prohibited by law. A term of law, disparate treatment triggers punitive liability. Not all different treatment is illegal. The law permits different treatment designed to advance equal opportunity and meets specific legal standards. Disparate treatment is only one cause of disparities across social groups, which can often result from unintentional or unconscious bias.

## **Disparities**

Disparities commonly refer to group differences in educational, health, economic, legal, and other outcomes. Disparities highlight the salience of social group membership in structuring privilege and inequality. Disparities stem from intentional discrimination as well as from unconscious bias.

## **Diversity**

The variety of characteristics that all people possess, that distinguish them as individuals, and that identify them as belonging to a group or groups. Diversity is a concept that includes notions of age, class, culture, disability, ethnicity, family, sex, language, place of origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation as well as other characteristics that vary among people and groups within society.

## **Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)**

The absence of illegal employment discrimination based on race, class, gender, religion, and nationality, as prohibited by a number of legislative acts, and enforced by the courts.

## **The Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA)**

The EPA provides employers may not pay unequal wages to men and women who perform jobs that require substantially equal skill, effort, and responsibility, and that are performed under similar working conditions within the same establishment.

## **Equality**

Equal treatment that may or may not result in equitable outcomes.

## **Equity**

Equity is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to provide effective opportunities to all groups.

## **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity is a social and political construct individuals and communities use to define themselves and others. Specifically, ethnicity refers to a person's cultural background, including his or her language, origin, faith, and heritage. Ethnicity comprises the ideas, beliefs, values, and behaviors we transmit from one generation to the next. People tend to perceive ethnicity in terms of common culture, history, language, or nationality. Ethnicity and ethnic identity are interchangeable terms.

## **Ethnocentrism**

Prejudicial views and different treatment of ethnic groups different from one's own. Ethnocentrism should not be confused with racism, which is structure based on race and not ethnicity.

## **Executive Order 11246 and 11375**

Issued by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 requires that, as a condition for receiving federal contracts, employers must create written affirmative action plans, with utilization, analysis, goals, and timetables, for assuring equal opportunity in employment for minorities. In 1967 President Johnson's Executive Order 11375 amended 11246 to include women.

### **Executive Order 11478**

Issued by President Nixon in 1969, forbids discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in federal employment.

### **Executive Order 11914**

Signed by President Ford in 1976, requires HEW's Office of Civil Rights to coordinate government-wide enforcement of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

### **The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)**

The U.S. Department of Labor's basic requirements are payment of minimum wage; overtime pay for time worked over 40 hours in a workweek; restrictions on the employment of children.

### **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

The FMLA of 1993 intends to allow employees to balance their work and family life by taking reasonable unpaid leave for medical reasons, for the birth or adoption of a child; the care of a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition or for the qualifying exigency leave of a child, spouse, or parent in the military.

### **Feminism**

Refers broadly to an ideology and movement advancing full gender equity. According to scholar/activist Angela Davis, there is general agreement "that feminism in its many versions acknowledges the social impact of gender and involves opposition to misogyny." While differing in names they call themselves, many who are committed to the ideal of gender equity believe, like Davis, that "the most effective versions of feminism acknowledge the various ways gender, class, race, and sexual orientation inform each other."

### **Gender Identity**

Gender identity is how people think about their own gender, whether they think of themselves as men, women, or other personal designations, and to what degree they identify with the arbitrary gender roles placed on them by society.

### **Gender Roles**

Society places arbitrary rules and roles, how one is supposed to act, dress, feel, think, relate to others, *etc.*, on each of us based on a person's sex.

## **Genocide**

The 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide defines genocide “as any of a number of acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measure intended to prevent births within the group, and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.”

## **Harassment**

Harassment is a form of illegal discrimination defined as unwelcome conduct based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, and/or age. Harassment becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. Anti-discrimination laws also prohibit harassment against individuals in retaliation who file a discrimination charge, testify, or participate in any way during an investigation, proceeding, or lawsuit under these laws; or opposing employment practices that they believe discriminate against individuals, in violation of these laws.

## **Hate**

An intense dislike of, and contempt for, another person or group of people.

## **Hate/Bias crime**

A hate/bias crime is an offence committed against a person or property which is motivated by the suspect’s hate, prejudice, or bias against an identifiable group based on race, national, or ethnic origin, language, color, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor. Verbal intimidation, assault, and vandalism are the most reported types of hate crimes.

## **Hegemony**

A form of oppression by which those in power naturalize and legitimate their dominance. In contrast to physical force, hegemony flows through the power of taken-for-granted ideas and cultural values, which, when internalized by the masses of people, render them unconscious of the forces that structure their powerlessness.

## **Human Rights**

Human Rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status.

## **Inclusion**

Expanding upon efforts that promote diversity based on demographic differences, in organizational management, inclusion refers to intentional policies and practices that promote the full participation and sense of belonging of every employee, student, customer, or client.

## **Integration**

Integration usually refers to active efforts to foster the representation and participation of groups that have historically faced institutional and social exclusion. Their presence in an environment, however, is not necessarily followed by transformation of its culture, norms, or values to reflect their own. Hence, integration should not be confused with empowerment or with equitable outcomes.

## **Internalized oppression**

The process by which a member of a systematically oppressed group internalizes and acts out the negative characteristics attributed to the group.

## **Investigation**

A detailed inquiry or systematic examination of allegations of discrimination filed under STCLH's Discrimination and/or Title IX Policy and Procedures. The purpose of the investigation is to determine whether STCLH's Policies, and/or federal law have been violated, and whether corrective action is necessary.

The Agosto Diversity Center is not an advocate for the complainant or respondent. The Office of Institutional Compliance is the investigating body operating as a fact finder charged with the responsibility of ensuring compliance with STCLH's Policies and federal and/or state law.

## **Investigative Summary**

A written summary of the outcome of the investigation conducted by the Office of Institutional Compliance pursuant to the allegation(s) of discrimination made by a complainant. The investigative summary includes the Office of Institutional Compliance's finding of fact, a determination of whether there has been a violation of the STCLH's Policies, and/or federal and state law, and whether corrective action is appropriate.



## **Marginalization**

The experience of groups who are denied political, economic, and social equality in society, and hence, relegated to its margins. It can also refer to an individual who is rendered voiceless or irrelevant in particular social context.

## **Microaggression**

Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color.

## **Minority**

In the social sciences the term minority may be applied to those groups that are considered protected classes based on historical exclusion and discrimination. For EEO official reporting purposes and for purposes of the work force analysis required in revised Executive Order No. 4, the term “minority” refers to Blacks, Hispanics, Alaskan Natives or American Indians, and Asian or Pacific Islanders. In general usage, it is commonly used to refer to people of color as in “minority community” and “minority students.” Society increasingly disfavors these labels believed to naturalize the “minor” political, economic, and social status to which people of color have been subjected.

## **Multiculturalism**

Multiculturalism refers to a society that recognizes values and promotes the contributions of the diverse cultural heritages and ancestries of all its people. A multicultural society is one that continually evolves and is strengthened by the contribution of its diverse peoples.

## **Nepotism**

The practice of showing favoritism to relatives or close friends of other employees over other applicants applying for positions. Nepotism has been found discriminatory to minorities because the system in crafts/apprenticeships, and so forth, resulted in keeping minorities out of the work force. On the other hand, anti-nepotism rules, *i.e.*, refusing to hire two members of the same family, has also resulted in discrimination, particularly in higher education.

## **Nonresident alien**

A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely.

## **Oppression**

A system of individual, institutional, and cultural beliefs and practices that privilege a dominant group at the expense of the subordinate groups.

## **Parity**

A condition an organization achieves where the protected class composition of its work force is equal to that in the relevant available labor force. Equality, the ultimate goal of affirmative action programming, is to achieve “parity” in a work force, *i.e.*, women and minorities are represented in every job category of a work force in the same proportion they are available in the total work force.

## **Pattern and Practice**

Repeated acts of discrimination resulting from formal or informal practices in employment and/or education that are derived from a broad context of social behavior that promotes discrimination.

## **Preferential Treatment**

To give an edge to one class of workers or applicant. Most often used today as relates to affirmative action efforts to bring about parity by including women and minorities in the workforce, or in professional schools. Title VII does not require preferential treatment, but it can be ordered under Section 703g. Preferential treatment in the form of special recruitment efforts for minorities and women, provides government contractors must give such treatment for positions in which they have been “under-utilized” or held by underrepresented groups.

## **The Pregnancy Discrimination Act**

This is an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions constitutes unlawful sex discrimination under Title VII. Women affected by pregnancy or related conditions must be treated in the same manner as other applicants or employees with similar abilities or limitations. In the hiring process an employer cannot refuse to hire a woman because of her pregnancy related condition if she is able to perform the major functions of her job. An employer cannot refuse to hire her because of its prejudices against pregnant workers or the prejudices of co-worker, clients, or customers.

## **Prejudice**

A preconceived idea or judgment toward a group, based on perceived ethnic or ancestral characteristics that result in a belief that members of that group are inferior.

## **Privilege**

Privilege encompasses the many unearned advantages of higher status, such as personal contacts with employers, good childhood health care, inherited money, and speaking the same dialect and accent as people with institutional power.

## **Probably cause**

A reasonable suspicion, supported by facts, that a law has been violated.

## **Protected Class**

A protected class is a group that has been subjected to the documented past and continuing effects of illegal discrimination and whose civil rights, consequently, require legislative and legal reiteration and re-enforcement. In the U.S. protected classes include members of certain racial and ethnic groups, women, persons over forty years of age, qualifying veterans, and persons with disabilities. The protections for which they are explicitly named frequently misconstrued as “special” rights that are unavailable to other groups. In fact, they are merely an extension of equal protection to them of rights that are guaranteed to all citizens.

## **Race**

Race represents the notion that there are biologically discrete races of human beings that can be ordered in terms of superiority of intelligence, sexuality, or morality. Today, the concept of race is a controversial one, as it is perceived to refer to the genetic, physical characteristics that allegedly are common to certain groups. However, modern science has determined that no such biological distinctions exist among humans, that the term serves no useful scientific purpose. The term is now understood as a social construct in which a group sees itself.

The term is controversial among those who assert that there is only one race, the human race, and that traditional notions of racial differences are artificial and arbitrary constructs. Proponents of this view prefer the use of the term “racialized groups” to describe people that would be traditionally referred to as visible minorities. This term reinforces the idea that race, or more properly “racialization,” is something imposed on a person by outside perception.

## **Race Discrimination**

Racial discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in political, social cultural, or public life.

## **Racialize**

To assign human worth and value and structure benefits based on racial taxonomy.

## **Racism**

A set of mistaken assumptions, opinions, and actions resulting from the belief that one group of people categorized by color or ancestry is inherently superior to another. Racism may be present in organizational and institutional policies, programs, and practices, as well as in the attitudes and behaviors of individuals.

## **Reasonable accommodation**

A) Making existing facilities used by employees and/or students readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities; and (B) job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, appropriate adjustment or modifications of student examinations, training materials or policies, the provision of qualified readers or interpreters, and other accommodations for individuals.

## **Religious accommodation**

The requirement to accommodate sincere religious observances and practices of an employee, prospective employee or students, unless the institution can demonstrate that it is unable to do so without undue hardship on the conduct of its business.

## **Retaliation**

An employer may not fire, demote, harass, or otherwise “retaliate” against an individual for filing a charge of discrimination, participating in discrimination proceeding, or otherwise opposing discrimination. The same laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, and disability, as well as wage differences between men and women performing substantially equal work, also prohibit retaliation against individuals who oppose unlawful discrimination or participate in an employment discrimination proceeding.

## **Reverse Racism**

This term was created to imply that dominant groups could be the victims of racism. Racism includes having a certain power in society, power which non-dominant groups do not have. It is a term used consciously or unconsciously to blame and place non-dominant groups back in a targeted position. When dominant groups experience discrimination, it is simply “discrimination.”

## **Safe Space**

Safe Space is a national initiative that offers a visible message of inclusion, acceptance, and support to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. STCLH’s goal is to have lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, queer, intersex, asexual (LGBTQIA+) students, faculty, and staff feel comfortable on campus so that they can perform at their highest level.

## **Sex**

The division of a species based on reproductive organs. Sex is not interchangeable with gender, which connotes social definitions of sex role assignments.

## **Sexism**

Behavior and beliefs that rank the sexes (the physical characteristics that define male and female) and genders (cultural and psychological definitions of femininity and masculinity), placing more value on one over the other. As a group in most societies, men have more power and prestige than women.

## **Sexual harassment**

A form of illegal sex discrimination, sexual harassment is defined as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual’s employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.”

## **Sexual identity**

Sexual identity is the consistent and enduring sense of one’s own sexuality and repeated sexual thoughts, feelings, and/or behaviors. Sexual identity is how one thinks of oneself in terms of whom one is sexually and romantically attracted to.

## **Sexual orientation**

Sexual orientation is defined as a predominant erotic attraction for the same or other sex, or for both sexes in varying degrees. Few, if any, obvious identifiable mannerism exists that distinguish between individuals of different sexual orientations. Sexual orientation is only one small aspect of a person's being.

## **Social Justice**

The belief that each individual and group in a given society has a right to equal opportunity, fairness, civil liberties and participation in the social education, economic, institutional, and moral freedoms and responsibilities valued by the community.

## **Stereotypes**

A shared idea about the generalized attributes of others with respect to perceived physical or cultural characteristics. These are generalizations about all members of a group. Some stereotypes may seem positive, but they are always negative. It is harmful when individuals are judged according to the perceived norms of their group instead of personal merit.

## **Systemic racism**

This type of racism is impersonal, unconscious, unintentional, and hidden. The basis of systemic racism is the consequences (not the intent) of seemingly neutral rules, policies, or procedures.

## **Title IV**

Provides for nondiscrimination in education based on race, color, religion, and national origin.

## **Title VI**

Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin in the provision of benefits or services under federally assisted programs and activities including educational institutions. Employment is a factor under VI only where it is a primary objective of the federal assistance.

## **Title VII**

Federal law prohibiting discrimination based on race, sex, color, religion, and national origin. Federal financial assistance is not a factor.

**Title IX**

Federal law prohibiting sex discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Covers both employees and students, as well as athletics, physical education, and counseling. Does not cover curriculum materials. Requires institutional self-evaluation and appointment of Title IX coordinators.