

Equity for All Arizonans

EXPLORING EQUITY THROUGH A NEW GLOBAL CLASSROOM: A COMMUNITY DIALOGUE AND PANEL

September 18, 2023 – Tucson, AZ; and Online via Zoom

OPTIMIZING EVERYONE’S POTENTIAL AND IMPROVING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EQUITABLE APPROACHES

An equitable approach is needed to optimize our potential because it is the only way to harness the power of our collective knowledge and experience. Indeed, without equity there is no power for meaningful change. Equity is not the same as equality and an equitable approach is about prioritizing those who have been underrepresented. We are not all the same and an equitable approach recognizes our differences. It empowers those whose voices have not historically been heard in the decision-making process by broadening opportunities to take part in. An equitable approach brings people along rather than leaving them behind. It shows people they have a place at the table and their perspectives are valued. An equitable approach helps us see the larger picture, conceptualize the full spectrum of ways we can enact change, and dismantles the echo chamber that might otherwise drive policy. To implement an equitable approach, we need to remove barriers that exist for those of all backgrounds, make information and opportunities more accessible, and ensure all members of our community have the support they need to participate in community institutions and activities. Failing to successfully incorporate all the members of a community excludes them. In order to achieve equity, all of the diverse sectors of a community must be adequately represented in its decision-making or the pursuit of equity will result in a mere façade.

The University of Arizona’s Cultural & Inclusive Experiential Learning Opportunities (CIELO) Program prepares students to use equitable approaches to improve the community by facilitating participation in global learning by students who have traditionally either been excluded from such activities by financial and/or social or familial constraints or by lack of awareness of the opportunities and resources that might have allowed their participation. It then instructs students about the communities they visit and supplies experiential learning opportunities that allow students to get to know the people and places they visit. These experiences teach students the importance of connecting with the people and communities in which they provide services to ensure they learn from the people they intend to help, including about what those people need and want and what their expectations and goals are. This ensures the students give aid in ways that truly are needed and wanted, but also teaches them to put aside their egos in performing service, allows them to gain humility, and encourages them to grow in ways they can take back to help their own communities and forward into their careers. CIELO programs demonstrate for students how to intentionally incorporate the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the ways they work, study, travel, and live.

NEXT STEPS AND ACTIONS

The actions identified included the following:

- Acknowledge the land in conversations, be respectful of all.
- Incorporate CIELO strategies to expand access and participation in the UA Law College’s Tribal Justice clinic and other UA programs.
- Encourage the incorporation of equity and inclusion into health care educational curriculum to teach mindfulness of people’s diversity of backgrounds and perspectives and to drive improvements in healthcare inclusivity and ensure people feel cared for.

- Students who have taken part in CIELO will share their experiences with others and bring the relationships they made through CIELO into their lives and the institutions and organizations in which they are involved.
- Educators will talk with their students about CIELO, share information with them about recruiting events, and encourage them to apply.
- Think about equity and opportunity at home in our own communities and in other places when traveling.
- Work to expand access to and awareness of CIELO's programs.
- Spread the word about the CIELO programs and global and experiential learning.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

Recognizing that the power to change the future begins with everyone, participants committed to take personal actions based on their experience and discussions during the "Exploring Equity through a New Global Classroom: A Community Dialogue and Panel" program. Below are individual actions that were shared.

I WILL...

- Continue to create experiential service-learning courses.
- Continue to advocate for classes in nursing that integrate (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) JEDI.
- Share CIELO opportunities at recruitment events and encourage my Science Ambassador students to apply for CIELO programs.
- Explore the possibility of bringing additional resources to a program like CIELO.
- Avoid reinventing the wheel and serving underrepresented students.
- Share with my UNLV 101 classes as an opportunity to take advantage of.
- Spread the word to my friends about the CIELO program and the experiential learning that it offers and bring what I've learned to my classes and discussions.