

# How faculty can help to advance the LATINX/CHICANX ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE



Faculty support is essential to student success and this initiative. Here are some ways you can promote institutional excellence.

## Understand Latinx/Chicanx

“Latino” and “Chicano” are gendered words. The “x” makes them more inclusive for men, women, people who are nonbinary, and those who are gender nonconforming.

**Latinx** recognizes those whose roots stem from Latin America.

**Chicanx** originates from a social justice movement to empower Mexican American and Latinx communities.

## Diversify your instruction

All students benefit from a diversified education, and students who encounter work by people with whom they identify feel validated. Highlight the work of Latinx/Chicanx scholars in your discipline. Design experiences that expose students to the local community context and the transborder community. Include in your syllabus the text of the [Principles of Community](#) and add an [Inclusion Statement](#) regarding your beliefs on the value of diversity and diverse learning experiences.

## Set clear expectations

Be transparent about competencies and skills that are valued and necessary to succeed in a course. Develop low-stakes assignments or quizzes for you and students to assess learning and guide instruction throughout your course.

## Demystify the profession

Tell your students when they are doing what scientists and other professionals do. Provide them with formal and informal opportunities to practice academic language. Discuss professional failures in addition to successes. Connect core concepts to their everyday life, their world, and their experiences.

## Engage your Latinx/Chicanx students

Recognition from faculty is important for students to feel accepted and engaged. This is especially true for students from underrepresented minority (URM) groups who may not see themselves reflected amongst the university’s academic personnel as much as others. To help, you can:

- Recognize and rectify situations where URM students may be hesitant to contribute to discussions, lab sessions, or other learning experiences.
- Create spaces and opportunities for diverse perspectives.
- Invite students to office hours.
- Reach out to those who may be in need of academic and/or professional mentorship.
- Participate in Dine/Coffee with a Prof Programs.
- Promote/participate in [First Gen](#) initiatives.
- Agree to supervise undergraduate research.

## Enlist broad support

Structure a community of support for diverse students, enlisting other faculty, teaching assistants, mentors, and peer tutors, as well as personnel from Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and the Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Include in your syllabus a list of academic resources, as found in the [syllabus template](#) on the Teaching + Learning Commons website.

## Promote interdependence

Emphasize strengths and interdependence. Be explicit about the cultural wealth of diverse students and experiences. Normalize the need for support and encourage individual and group office hour visits. Use language in your syllabus and elsewhere that communicates a welcoming and supportive tone and fosters a sense of belonging. Encourage study groups, peer learning, and intentional support communities. Consider collaborative learning as part of your overall pedagogy.

## Develop an Equity Mindset

Students may face institutional barriers to success due to their gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or other minoritized characteristics. Developing an equity mindset involves assessing how students experience the learning environment as a whole, as well as considering policies and practices that support student success. It also requires recognizing that our students are capable and challenging assumptions that suggest otherwise. Finally, it involves removing obstacles and providing support.