

*On the Timeliness and Contemporary Relevance of DEI issues:*

Student A: “I really appreciate this class taking place when there is so much uncertainty in the government and the opinions of Americans. When I realized the first two weeks of class would be discussion about diversity, equity, and inclusion I was very confused. How could a statistics class have anything to do with these topics? The initial discussions changed the way I view statistics, it’s no longer an issue of numbers, there are people and problems that the statistics don’t cover. There are back stories that the numbers don’t show, and it is very important to realize that statistics isn’t just numbers it can and probably will affect the area the numbers were taken from. Every news article I read I question how the data was taken and whether it was inclusive and appropriate for the purpose of the article. I also question if the data that was taken was done so in an ethical matter.”

Student B: “The DEI exercises are helping me deal with my transition from military to civilian life. The two worlds are very different from each other. I have learned that there are skills that I can apply and teach while also learning from others. When cultural diversity is acknowledged we can capitalize on the different skill sets from different cultures. When everyone is understood and accepted for their different beliefs and cultural backgrounds they are more engaging and are more capable of working well the other planners and the public.”

Student C: “This class has opened my eyes up to the DEI issues that I am going to face ‘in the real world.’ For instance, in my internship tomorrow, we are having another meeting in a neighborhood that is fighting as hard as they can against public housing being erected anywhere near the community. They’ve used words in the past like “they’re going to crowd our busses and schools,” or “is there no where else in the city that you can build?” To them they may think that we don’t hear what they’re actually saying, but we hear them. They are saying to us, “they don’t look like us, they don’t act like us, we don’t want them near us.” One of my co-workers made a jarring statement, “it’s not the bus, it’s us,” and for that to even be a common saying that others have heard before is extremely disheartening and, quite frankly, has left a scar.”

Student D: “I never remember any professor or course taking the time to explain DEI issues. ... Beginning on the second day of class, my own understanding of my social identity changed. I never realized that my identity gave me privilege in some places, and marginalization in others. The culture of the small Kansas town I grew up in is conservative and patriarchal. Had I stayed, I believe I would be marginalized because of my sex, religion, and socio-economic class. In Lawrence, and in particular at the university, I do not feel marginalized for any of those things. Academia fosters a much more inclusive and diverse community, and I never fully recognized it until the social identities exercise.