

SDC 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts

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Title: How University Equity and Diversity Initiatives can Bridge Inequalities between Global North and South: The case study of Kansas State University



Under the Sustainable Development Goal 4, the Goal targets include ensuring that women and men have to equal access to affordable post-secondary education, including university. Globally, there is a growing recognition for the need to introduce gender equity and diversity policy and practice in higher education institutions.

The culture of an organization is gendered in a range of formal and informal values, practices and relationships. Gender discrimination can take place at the formal, structural level, and include barriers for women to access resources and receive support for professional development, as well as informally through exclusion in networks and daily interactions. In higher education, these barriers have negative consequences for both academics and students. These unequal outcomes are not limited to gender. Socio-economic markers, including ethnicity, class, race, age, sexual orientation and gender identity also intersect with gender.

With globalization, there is an increase of international students and academics from the Global South situated within Global North universities. Their experiences of equity and diversity in the higher education system is pertinent, because unequitable practices can marginalize and discriminate against university experiences, thus further entrenching the North/South divide, as well as disrupting the equity targets of the SDGs aiming at higher education.

This paper will draw on a Fulbright-funded research (<http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/news-events/all-stories/anu-gender-expert-wins-fulbright-senior-scholar-award>) of the efforts made by the Kansas State University (which has higher overall diversity scores on ethnic and gender measures than the US university national average) to integrate equity and diversity into the context of teaching, learning and research. K-State is unique, in that it has both top-down policies and practices that come from the senior leadership level, as well as student and staff-led initiatives to promote change. The paper will explore how the intersectionality (such as gender and sexualities, race, ethnicity, class, nationalities and so on) interact with the K-State Gender and Diversity Initiative, as well as the successes and lessons learned. The research finds that achieving Goal 4 of the SDG also requires an examination of Global South students and academics fare within Global South universities and what are the transferable practices of equity and diversity.