



CULTIVATING A SENSE OF BELONGING THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER

Select 3 – 4 areas below with recommendations and/or questions for reflection. Think about the questions individually and discuss as a group how you might put these into practice in your context (Institutional, Classroom, Departmental, Cocurricular, etc.)

Positive Climate

- How might you approach setting clear expectations, offering guidelines, or reminding students of shared values (e.g., Penn State Values)?
- How might you offer transparency on decision-making such as your grading approach or rationales for assignment choices
- How might you establish positive relationships with and among students?

Relationships/Networks

- How might you communicate care? What role might emails, check-ins, or other communication tools, such as online polls, play?
- How might you use your networks of faculty and staff to support students? How might you support students' networks?
- How might you structure activities so that students have more opportunities to connect with peers?

Resources

- How might you normalize the need for resources, e.g., tutoring or counseling?
- Can you anticipate obstacles students might face in accessing resources?

Growth Mindset

- Students may say, "I'm just bad at math." How might you support a growth mindset (belief that abilities can be developed) instead of a fixed mindset (belief that qualities such as intelligence or talent cannot change/are fixed) with regard to learning and development?

Discussions about Belonging

- How might you normalize the challenges of connecting with peers or making friends and encourage more connections and interactions among peers in your learning environment?

Feedback on Performance

- How might you provide actionable and critical feedback and communicate high expectations for all students (WISE feedback)?
- What role might meta-cognitive practices play, e.g., discussions about study strategies or reflections on progress?
- How might you normalize mistakes as a critical element of learning?

Awareness of Own Implicit Biases

- Reviewing who is included as an expert/a representative of the discipline/professional area in your



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- Reflecting on your assumptions about students and student learning.
- Paying attention to patterns in your behavior, e.g., students you call on or make eye contact with.