# Slide 1

Bridget Turner Kelly, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Loyola University Chicago

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# Slide 2

What Does Diversity mean?

Examining Diversity and The Mythical Norm

# Slide 3

Overview of Session

* ***What Diversity Means to Me***
* ***Defining Diversity Through the Mythical Norm***
* ***Mythical Norm in Higher Education***
* ***Mythical Norm in Faculty Study***
* ***What Diversity Means to Students***

# Slide 4

What Diversity Means to Me

Diversity is defined as difference. It is how I see myself, how others see me, and experiences that inform how I interpret the world.

University Wordmarks including UT Knoxville, University of Maryland, Virginia Tech, The University of Vermont, Seattle University and Loyola University Chicago.

# Slide 5

What Diversity Means to Me

RACE: African American; 15%

SEX: Female; 71%

RELIGION: Christian; 31%

CLASS: Middle-upper class; 79%

Gender: Cisgender; 65%

Nationality: U.S. citizen; 96%

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: Heterosexual; 85%

Ability: Temporarily mind and able-bodied; 89%

# Slide 6

The Mythical Norm

* + Diversity is often defined by divergence from the Mythical Norm (Tatum, 2003)
  + Mythical (idealized)
  + Norm (typical)
  + White, male, cisgender, U.S. citizen, heterosexual, English as first language, Christian, upper class, older individuals without a disability

# Slide 7

The Mythical Norm

Accrue unearned…

* Benefits
* Power
* Advantages
* Access to Resources

# Slide 8

The Mythical Norm

Four Photos depicting student life. One shows a student wearing a shirt that reads “College” on the front and he’s holding an empty whiskey bottle. The second shows a female and male student working together reading a map. The third is a photo of students in a large class and the first student in the photo is asleep. The last photo is a group of students sitting a table working on what appears to be schoolwork.

# Slide 9

Diverse

“Diverse” individuals may experience…

* Limitations
* Discrimination
* Oppression
* Restrictions
* Lack of Access
* Lack of Resources

# Slide 10

Diverse

Four photos. The first photo is of a student in a library reading a large book. The second is a graduating student hugging a friend. The third photo is of a smiling individual in a large room filled with children in a foreign country, such as Tibet. The last photo is of a group standing around a large cloth, some are holding the cloth, others are gazing at the cloth – the cloth could be a flag or banner of some sort.

# Slide 11

Higher Education & Diversity

* Diversity is defined as different from mythical norm in higher education
* The mythical norm holds privilege and power in higher education
* Higher education was designed and still operates largely for students, faculty and administrators who most closely resemble mythical norm

# Slide 12

Faculty: Mythical Norm

* Faculty who teach diversity courses

1. What are the experiences of faculty who teach diversity courses?
2. How do faculty approach teaching diversity courses?

# Slide 13

Faculty: Mythical Norm

* Students deferred power and authority to him in class as he is “a person who identifies with a great many privileged categories” and “can’t be assured that my students are always gonna challenge me.”

# Slide 14

Faculty: The Mythical Norm

* Students defer power to her in that they “take you on faith that you’re trying to do the right thing and then will forgive you if you screw up even in ways that possibly they shouldn’t forgive me.”

# Slide 15

Faculty: The Mythical Norm

“Usually students tell me if they have to leave early and so on, but for some reason she just left. So later I received an e-mail from her and she says to me that she did not enjoy the class because she didn’t feel like talking about White privilege had anything to do with a diversity class. . . . I felt disrespected also because I started to think again on my position as a woman of color teaching this class—there’s perceptions that people hold of me and I wondered how this would have been perceived by this woman had I been maybe a White professor who’s male.”

# Slide 16

Faculty: The Mythical Norm

* Expose mythical norm of faculty as falsehood
* Dialogue about power and privilege coming to those thought of as “norm” and not to those labeled “diverse”

# Slide 17

Students: The Mythical Norm

* Students volunteered to share aspects of their identity and answer the question… what does diversity mean?

Link to a YouTube video showing the students who shared aspects of their identity and answered the question…what does diversity mean? <https://youtu.be/vknsn4PM_3I>

# Slide 18

Race/Nationality: The Mythical Norm

* Hmong American
* Nigerian American
* Sudanese American
* Japanese American
* Bi-Racial American
* Mexican American
* Black
* White
* Multiracial

# Slide 19

Ethnicity/Nationality: The Mythical Norm

* Indian
* Bulgarian
* Hapa (partial Asian descent)
* Peruvian
* Latina/o
* Puerto-Rican
* Chicana
* Brown

# Slide 20

Sex/Gender: The Mythical Norm

* Proud Female
* Woman who is more than her Body Mass Index
* Plus-Size Woman
* Confident Woman Leader
* Cisgender
* Woman
* Male

# Slide 21

Belief System: The Mythical Norm

Orthodox Christian

Woman of Faith

Catholic

Agnostic

Spiritual

Christian

# Slide 22

Sexuality: The Mythical Norm

* Queer
* Pansexual
* Gay woman
* Gay
* Bisexual
* Heterosexual
* Married

# Slide 23

Ability & Class: The Mythical Norm

* Dyslexic
* disABLED
* Able-bodied
* Low Socioeconomic Status
* Middle Class
* Raised Low Income
* Lower-middle class

# Slide 24

What does diversity mean?

* Intersectional (woman of color; gay woman)
* Visible (race, gender)
* Invisible (sexuality)
* Vulnerability
* Not a quota
* Not a statistic
* Not a photo op
* Space for every story
* Ensuring one is heard
* Equality
* Empowerment
* Courage
* Compassion
* Love of human variance

# Slide 25

Equity Rather than Labels

* Examine oppression of “diverse” students, faculty and administrators
* Acknowledge power and privilege in maintaining “mythical norm”

# Slide 26

Guest in Someone Else’s House

* Those who uphold and most closely resemble the “mythical norm” have power and privilege to call higher education home
* Those who experience and are labeled “diverse” are treated as guests in someone else’s house (Turner, 2015)

# Slide 27

From Guests to Homeowners

* Interrupt notions of mythical norm
* Interrogate label and experience of diverse
* Actively disrupt system of power and privilege

# Slide 28

Take-Away

* What did you learn?
* What will you take back to your campus?
* Who will you contact to partner/collaborate?

# Slide 29

Contacts & Resources

* Bridget Kelly, Ph.D.; [bkelly4@luc.edu](mailto:bkelly4@luc.edu)
* **Kelly, B. T.,** & Gayles, J. G. (forthcoming). Confronting systems of privilege and power through classroom discussion: Uses of power. In S. Watt (Ed.), *Designing transformative multicultural initiatives: Theoretical foundations, practical applications, and facilitator considerations*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
* Gayles, J.G., **Kelly, B.T.,** Grays, S., Zhang, J. & Porter, K. (accepted). Difficult dialogues: Faculty experiences teaching diversity in graduate preparation programs. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*.