

# Table 5.1: Socially Just Practices for Supporting Students with Multiple Identities

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Place the DRO in the same location as offices for students with additional or other minoritized identities.	At Penn State, Student Disability Services is part of the larger Educational Equity unit, which includes veteran, multicultural, and TRIO programs. It is located in the same building as the LGBTQA center and Center for Women Students.	The title, physical placement, and institutional alignment of the office all send messages regarding the philosophy of the campus in supporting students, faculty, and staff with disabilities. Placing the DRO in the student health center can increase stigma and perpetuate the consideration of disability as solely a medical problem.
Enhance affordable disability-related services (e.g., disability testing, academic coaching, assistive technology) for students with disabilities with minimal financial support.	<p>Develop a relationship with the local vocational rehabilitation office and state Medicaid to help connect students with off-campus resources that may provide health care and auxiliary aids.</p> <p>Develop a relationship with a learning disability testing center that accepts the campus student insurance.</p> <p>Explore options for financial aid to cover the cost of necessary assistive technology or supplemental campus academic coaching.</p>	Students with disabilities from low-socioeconomic-status backgrounds are at risk for receiving less diagnostic, academic, and adaptive help. Access to these resources can greatly improve the outcomes for these students.
Develop close working relationships with affinity- or identity-based offices.	<p>Partner with offices supporting students with other underrepresented identities at the institution (e.g., multicultural student affairs, international student affairs, religious life, women's center).</p> <p>Encourage inclusion and representation of disability-related student groups on multicultural or diversity leadership councils.</p>	Students with multiple identities need culturally competent support from the DRO. Close working relationships with other offices and ongoing training between the offices will improve the experience and supports for students with multiple targeted identities.
Analyze existing policies, practices, and procedures to remove cultural bias.	<p>Use a regression-based model for reviewing learning disability documentation rather than a discrepancy model.</p> <p>Remove the use of pronouns from letters to faculty or incorporate a student's preferred pronoun and name into letters. Or use <i>they/them/their</i> universally in letters.</p> <p>Review imagery and materials provided by the DRO, and ensure that a wide variety of visible identities and experiences are represented.</p>	Some current practices of DROs and colleges/universities likely have higher negative effects on students from multiple targeted identities. Implementing processes to remove cultural bias will improve the rates of students who access services.

Practice	Examples	Rationale
Encourage socially just research with underrepresented populations to better understand the needs of diverse learners.	<p>Gather internal data on the matriculation, persistence, and experiences of students with disabilities. Ensure these internal data include intragroup differences based on other identity factors (e.g., socioeconomic status, race, gender).</p> <p>Include individuals with disabilities in the research process.</p> <p>Hire faculty with disability-related research interests, provide incentives for research on multiple aspects of identity in underrepresented populations, and provide funding for such research.</p>	Best practices for supporting students with disabilities are based on research that primarily has looked at the needs of White, upper-class, cisgender men. In order to improve best practices, research must represent the diverse learners entering postsecondary education.
Implement universal design for learning (UDL), and incentivize its use by faculty.	<p>Provide training during new faculty orientation.</p> <p>Include the use of UDL in faculty reviews and reward its use in the promotion and tenure process.</p>	Implementing universal design for learning will provide support to all learners and will have especially large gains for students from multiple underrepresented identities, including those with disabilities (Pliner & Johnson, 2004; Edyburn, 2010)
Ensure culturally relevant programming and spaces are accessible to all participants.	<p>Provisions for universal design and accommodations should be built into programming and spaces that support cultural programming, including access to religious holiday celebrations, worship spaces, cultural centers, LGBTQ center, multicultural programming, and women's centers.</p> <p>Training on accessibility should be provided for staff of these events, and spaces and accessibility should be considered an essential requirement when allocating space for identity-based groups or organizations.</p>	Access to culturally relevant programming will increase support for and decrease isolation among students, increasing the retention of minoritized students.