Creating Inclusive Environments

Ways of creating inclusive environments for individuals with disabilities include the following recommendations:

**Structural**
- Encourage universal design and differences in modality.
- Do an environmental scan to ensure that facilities are truly accessible rather than “compliant.”
- When designing and modifying facilities, consult with individuals with disabilities as well as architects.
- Look for ways to make accommodations inclusive, instead of “easy.” Remember that separate almost always means unequal.
- Ensure that transportation available for use by student groups is accessible.
- Ensure that policies as well as facilities are accommodating.

**Programmatic**
- Assume that students with disabilities will attend events and plan accordingly. Be proactive in providing accommodations.
- Advertise how you’ve planned for accessibility at your event/venue.
- Consider whether planned activities will enable everyone to participate.
- Provide involvement and leadership opportunities for students with disabilities.

**Behavioral**
- Actively encourage students with disabilities to attend events (while also respecting their agency and ability to take care of themselves by choosing not to do something).
- Allow students to discover or express their limitations.
- Educate your community on disability issues.
- Use inclusive language (e.g., ask students what language a person prefers; it may not always be person first).
- Interact with individuals as individuals rather than as members of a specific population.

**Attitudinal**
- Make disability “visible” by openly discussing differences in how things are done.
- Recognize that some individuals with a diagnosis identify as a person with a disability and some don’t.
- Respect individual agency – don’t assume that you know what is best.
- Be aware that disability is only one aspect of identity and that it may be more or less salient in different contexts and at different times.
- Recognize that multiple systems of oppression may affect individuals with disabilities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class).

(Evans, 2010)