

From Classroom to Club: Creating an Equitable Learning Environment at Berklee

The totality of an environment determines how equitable it is. No list can comprehensively evaluate equity, but faculty can take these steps that promote an equitable learning environment for everyone.

- **Faculty can ensure that individuals control when they come and go in ways that are separate from their protected characteristic(s).** For example, someone with impaired mobility can access a venue.
- **Faculty can give students control regarding how others touch them in ways that are separate from their protected characteristic(s).** For example, students in dance class receive comparable physical contact from the instructor and fellow students regardless of their sex or gender expression/identity.
- **Faculty notify students before others touch them and requests not to be touched are respected and discussed appropriately.** For example, a voice instructor would say they were going to touch a student, explain why, and, if the student objected, discuss the limitations of instruction.
- **Individuals interact free from expectations based on their protected characteristic(s).** For example, students can pursue their academic and artistic goals without assumptions about how their race or national origin might influence their ability and interests.
- **Individuals contribute to creating the environment independently from their protected characteristic(s).** For example, a rehearsal schedule equitably allows members to uphold religious obligations.
- **Students determine how they are addressed,** including by what name and what pronoun. For example, a student identified on the roster as “Juan” would be addressed as “Joan,” if that person indicated such a preference. If a student has a name you do not know how to pronounce, consider asking them to clarify the pronunciation, and address them by that pronunciation or a nickname, as they prefer.
- **Students can share their identity as they choose.** For example, a professor might take attendance by passing around a roster and allowing people to sign in and edit their name.
- **Individuals know how to access resources, including how to report violations** of Berklee’s Equity Policy. For example, faculty could include the following statement on the syllabus:
“Berklee prohibits and addresses discrimination and harassment based on age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, mental illness, military/veteran status, national and ethnic origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status, or any other characteristic protected by law (collectively referred to as “protected characteristics”), whether that characteristic is actual or perceived. If you experience or witness discrimination or harassment, know that Berklee has support resources and reporting options available to you. For students, the counselors in Counseling Services are a confidential resource. You can call 617-747-2310 to make an appointment. If you wish to learn more about interim support measures (like not contact orders, adjustments to living/work/academic arrangements, etc) or if you wish to explore reporting options, contact Berklee’s chief equity officer/Title IX coordinator, Kelly Downes (equity@berklee.edu, 617-747-3156). As non-confidential employees, faculty who receive reports of violations must report them to the chief equity officer/Title IX coordinator. For more information, you can visit berklee.edu/equity.”

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