

Multicultural Center

Pillars

Standing commitment to social justice, education, coalition building, and collective healing

Objective of Space

We want this to be a space in which historically and continually marginalized students of color, which include their intersectional identities as womxn, income-insecure, LGBTQ+, non-binary, gender non-conforming, differently abled-bodied, international, immigrant, non-traditional students, etc. can feel safe expressing themselves, their lived experiences, knowledges, without being the target the oppression.

We commit to remaining conscious of our own positionality in this space.

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Section A: Guidelines for Community Agreements:

We want this to be a space in which historically and continually marginalized students of color, which include their intersectional identities as womxn, income-insecure, LGBTQ+, non-binary, gender non-conforming, differently abled-bodied, international, immigrant, non-traditional students, etc. can feel safe expressing themselves, their lived experiences, knowledges, without being the target of oppression. We commit to remaining conscious of our own positionality in this space.

1. Any behavior- physical or verbal- that demeans, marginalizes, excludes, or dominates others, and/or perpetuates hierarches, is not welcome.
2. Be aware of the range of different identities (race, gender, class, sexuality, age, ability, place of origin, citizenship status, etc.) that people may identify with, and avoid generalizations or assumptions about people
3. Always seek active consent and agreement of all peoples prior to verbal, emotional, spiritual, physical, sexual and personal contact
4. Always engage in the space as you feel comfortable. Do not feel pressured to interact or involved more than you feel willingful to do so. Personal care is also about personal consent with yourself.
5. While ground rules are a collective responsibility, everyone is personally responsible for their own behavior
6. Any form of Media, Photography, Video, and/or audio recording of individuals without their prior written, free, and informed consent, is not permitted in this room, as it is a safe space.

Section B: Guidelines for Nonviolence:

We want this to be a space in which historically and continually marginalized student of color, which include their intersectional identities as womxn, income-insecure, LGBTQ+, non-binary, gender non-conforming, differently abled-bodied, international, immigrant, non-traditional students, etc. can feel safe expressing themselves, their lived experiences, knowledges, without being the target of oppression. We commit to remaining conscious of our own positionality in this space.

1. A commitment to no weapons and no violence in this space. This is a hate free zone
2. A safe space for students of color, and their intersectional identities
3. We recognize that all of us make use of and benefits from some forms of privilege, and oppressive structures, such as being a part of the neoliberal university.
4. A commitment not to engage in physical violence, verbal, emotional, spiritual, financial, and/or sexual abuse and/or discrimination to anyone we encounter.
5. We acknowledge that all of us have experienced some form of oppression and other expressions of inequality and injustice that originate from institutional and systemic structures of white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and neoliberal capitalism.
6. We recognize that we all make use of and benefit from speciesism. Our human privileges always benefit us and place us at the top of the species hierarchy. Thus, we cannot stand outside of the oppression chain of the non-human, post-human, plant and animal/object theory. We must remember that our interaction with the world must come from a place of dignity and respect to all things.

Section C. Guidelines for Trigger Warnings

We want this to be a space in which historically and continually marginalized student of color, which include their intersectional identities as womxn, income-insecure, LGBTQ+, non-binary, gender non-conforming, differently abled-bodied, international, immigrant, non-traditional students, etc. can feel safe expressing themselves, their lived experiences, knowledges, without being the target of oppression. We commit to remaining conscious of our own positionality in this space.

1. Always honor the need for 'trigger warnings' in this safe space.
2. Be aware of our own privileges and the power dynamics within the group, by continually assessing how much space we each take up with gestures and voices and pay attention to others who might take up less space but have something to contribute, too.
3. Do not make assumptions about other people's experiences; listen to them and give them the space to articulate their point of view if they would like to; do not assume that they owe us a justification of their person, do not dismiss or overshadow their experience
4. Be sensitive towards discussion topics that might deal with traumatic themes. Mostly, understand that what is not traumatic to you, may trigger others. Always ask for consent.
5. Invite questions rather than speak in an absolute manner
6. Forster a culture in this space that uses accessible and inclusive language: do not assume pronouns or identities.
7. Use "I" statements to avoid generalizations of an experience other than your own
8. Refrain from body shaming, slut shaming, and discrimination against sex work.
9. Refrain from outing people, for instance, who identify as LGBTQ+ spectrum, disabled, as well as survivors of gender-based violence, status, etc
10. Treat all information discusses in the space as confidential. Do not discuss it outside this space without the person's consent. Do not share other people's narratives without their explicit permission

Section D: Guidelines to Avoid Re-victimizing

We want this to be a space in which historically and continually marginalized student of color, which include their intersectional identities as womxn, income-insecure, LGBTQ+, non-binary, gender non-conforming, differently abled-bodied, international, immigrant, non-traditional students, etc. can feel safe expressing themselves, their lived experiences, knowledges, without being the target of oppression. We commit to remaining conscious of our own positionality in this space.

1. We do not engage in violence or threats towards each other. Hate speech is not tolerated
2. We respect everyone's names, pronouns, identities, expressions and experiences. We avoid making assumptions and understand that no one is required to share information about their identities or experiences or have the burden to educate others about their identities or experience(s).
3. Always seek active consent and agreement of all peoples prior to verbal, emotional, spiritual, physical, sexual and personal contact
4. We obtain explicit consent for contact, touch, or using others' belonging
5. We recognize and acknowledge that certain behaviors can be triggering for individuals, such as trivializing or dismissing someone's thoughts or experiences
6. Respect and look after the room and its objects, as physical resources for our healing
7. We commit to hearing each other and creating opportunities for all to be heard. We accept a shared responsibility to hold ourselves and one another accountable to these agreements, through intentional calling in
8. We promote inclusive learning spaces. What we learn here, can leave here. We encourage anyone who is feeling less than familiar with terminology, concepts, or context to ask questions in the spirit of personal growth
9. We agree to care for ourselves, each other, our communities and for the environment, acknowledge that we are on indigenous land (Turtle Island).

Section E: Guidelines for Supporting Queer and Trans Students

We want this to be a space in which historically and continually marginalized student of color, which include their intersectional identities as womxn, income-insecure, LGBTQ+, non-binary, gender non-conforming, differently abled-bodied, international, immigrant, non-traditional students, etc. can feel safe expressing themselves, their lived experiences, knowledges, without being the target of oppression. We commit to remaining conscious of our own positionality in this space.

1. Integrate LGBTQ+ issues into the work you are doing instead of separating it. As an ally, educate yourself, make space, and think about how you can use your privilege to support the work of LGBTQ+ students through active consent.
2. Support the lives of queer and trans* students, with various intersectionalities and identities.
3. Learn and practice proper and respectful language and vocabulary for the LGBTQ+ community
4. Challenge stereotypes that people may have about LGBTQ+ individuals in our society. Challenge derogatory remarks and jokes made about any group of people. Show your support and allyship for the LGBTQ+ community; never reinforce stereotypes, myths, prejudices, discriminatory statements.
5. Respect the privacy of students who may seek you out for support, information or resources; keep their trust in you confidential.
6. If you believe someone may hurt themselves or others, please refer them to the following resources:
 - i. Valley Crisis Center
 - ii. 24-Hour Hotline: 209-722-4357
 - iii. Merced Office: (209) 725- 7900
 - iv. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
7. Respect students' changing experiences of self as they explore their identities, acknowledge where the students are in their process

8. Respects students' rights to remain private; there can be tremendous negative consequences to coming out for many students, particularly trans* communities, and trans* students of color, including the loss of life, friends, family, financial support and safety.

Section F: Guidelines for Supporting Differently Able-Bodied Students

We want this to be a space in which historically and continually marginalized student of color, which include their intersectional identities as womxn, income-insecure, LGBTQ+, non-binary, gender non-conforming, differently abled-bodied, international, immigrant, non-traditional students, etc. can feel safe expressing themselves, their lived experiences, knowledges, without being the target of oppression. We commit to remaining conscious of our own positionality in this space.

1. Treat everyone as you would like to be treated. Think of the person first, not the ability
2. Always ask before providing assistance. Differently able-bodied students don't necessarily need or want your help. Never help someone without first asking them. Practice consent.
3. Think before you speak. Always use people-first language. Avoid using labels.
4. Ask individuals how they prefer to communicate. When interaction with someone who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, remember that some individuals may be able to hear, some may be able to lip read, while others prefer to use sign language or assistive technology.
5. When interacting with someone who uses wheelchair, do not push, lean on, or hold the person's wheelchair.
6. When interacting with someone who is blind or visually impaired, always introduce yourself and let them know when you are leaving. You may offer your arm or elbow as a guide if they request assistance but never push, pull or grab the individual. Do not pet, feed or distract a guide dog. The dog is responsible for its owner's safety and is always working.
7. When interacting with someone with a cognitive disability, speak to the person clearly. Be patient and give time to communicate.
8. When interacting with someone with a speech impairment, allow them as much time as they need to communicate. Be respectful and avoid trying to finish their sentences.

Section G: Guidelines for Allies

We want this to be a space in which historically and continually marginalized student of color, which include their intersectional identities as womxn, income-insecure, LGBTQ+, non-binary, gender non-conforming, differently abled-bodied, international, immigrant, non-traditional students, etc. can feel safe expressing themselves, their lived experiences, knowledges, without being the target of oppression. We commit to remaining conscious of our own positionality in this space.

1. Primarily remember that this space is not about you. You are not the most important aspect of the struggle. Any ally who obscures the right for students of color to feel safe in this space, is enabling and practicing white supremacy and heteropatriarchy. This space provides a hub of resistance against these and all forms of oppression. Be receptive and listen to students in the space if you are approached about these issues. You are going to have to earn trust from individuals in the space.
2. Do not overshadow students of color. Do not take up space. Do not make this in any way, shape or form about you.
3. Fundamentally, we are not talking about opinions- but about people's lives. Black and brown people are not opinions- there are NOT two sides to black and brown existence, it is not a monolith, there are multiple experiences. It is no question that black and brown people should be treated as human beings with dignity and respect, and not as property or as inferior. It is about asserting our humanity. No arguments or debates here about that.
4. Activism and advocacy should be about a cause, to uplift and empower marginalized communities, not a personal ego or a campaign to bolster yourself. Allyship and solidarity work is a proactive and lifelong commitment to learning and acting as an accomplice to historically and presently marginalized communities.
5. Do not speak for us, or over us, or about us. Do not share our narratives without our permission. Allies are not spokespersons. We are capable of empowering and speaking for ourselves

6. Learn about the legacies of and the ways we are all complicit with settler colonialism, white supremacy, capitalism and heteropatriarchy