
**Summaries of Presentations
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Actively Caring for Inclusive Excellence: Fostering a Culture of Civility and Inclusion

Taris G. Mullins, Shane M. McCarty, Deepu V. George, & Frank S. Shushok

In the aftermath of the April 16, 2007 tragedy, a group of Virginia Tech students and psychology professor E. Scott Geller initiated a movement, *Actively Caring for People* (AC4P), designed to create a more compassionate culture at Virginia Tech. As one story from the movement sparked another, the tenets of Actively Caring have spread via the “AC4P wristbands” to notice, thank, and recognize the interpersonal compassion of others. Students would notice caring behavior, thank someone for caring, and recognize the interpersonal compassion by passing on a green AC4P wristband. Since its inception, thousands of wristband stories have emerged from student leaders, resident advisors, family members, school-age children, faculty, friends, and strangers from 76 countries and all fifty states, spreading the movement far beyond the Virginia Tech community (www.ac4p.org). The AC4P Movement uses the Actively Caring for Inclusive Excellence (AC4IE) framework as a model for an institutional culture shift that aims to cultivate a sense of community, compassion, interdependence, and appreciation of differences.

Inclusive practices serve essential roles in fostering excellence of education, discovery, and innovation. Indeed, while the effective recruitment, integration, and retention of non-majority students (e.g., minority students, women, historically underrepresented populations) is still facing difficulties, higher education administrators are launching a strong response to address concerns of diversity on their campus. Consequently, the tenets of Inclusive Excellence (AAC&U, 2005) provide a comprehensive approach to inclusion on the American college campus. In tandem, the Actively Caring for People movement mobilizes and fosters grassroots student involvement intent on improving institutional culture.

The session explored the AC4IE model and its application to engage students both in the educational and social contexts. Throughout the discussion, educators were encouraged to connect with the AC4IE model and recognize its applicability to their campus community. True stories taken from students and campus administrators displayed the scope and breadth of the movement while illuminating its impact on the campus community. Concurrently emerging research results were explained and discussed to convey actualized results from the initial efforts into the movement.

Pike, Kuh, and Gonyea (2003) highlight that transforming the institutional mission into a tangible representation for students is critical to the success of our colleges and universities.

This shift extends far beyond the reaches of the classroom, and must be acknowledged in all aspects (i.e., residence halls, student activities, etc.) of the institution. AC4IE accomplishes this by reimagining how our institutions address issues of incivility and exclusive practices. By shifting the university's culture to reinforce positive tenets among students, the university creates an environment that celebrates inclusion at all levels. Bauman, Bustillos, and Bensimon (2005) furthered this belief by concluding the critical role the institution serves within the student experience and the university's ability to influence inclusive practices by directly engaging students in the educational process. Ultimately, the AC4P movement and AC4IE model provide a tangible representation of an institution's commitment to Inclusive Excellence by actively engaging students to perform inclusive behavior and recognize the caring behavior of others with an AC4P wristband.