Diversity

Since the late 1700s, the term “melting pot” has been used to describe America. A country largely built on immigration from other countries, America has long boasted in its reputation for being a place where freedom-seekers could live without fear of persecution.

While we stand as one country, we do not desire to lose track of the separate histories, cultures and ideas that make up our national identity. Learning how to respect all those who make up our country is foundational to an understanding of where we came from as well as to a fuller ability to participate as a citizen.

The nation is seeing a resurgence of interest in this concept, something that is commonly called diversity, and institutions of higher education are becoming particularly key players in this focus. As a student, you should be aware of this concept and of its benefits, both to you and to others.

What is Diversity?

Many use the word diversity as a synonym to the word multiculturalism, and this is definitely a big part of its definition. But the word diversity actually has broader implications too. A diverse population is one that consists of individuals from different genders, ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds, religious preferences, ranges of physical and intellectual ability, and sexual orientations. A diverse educational experience, then, is one that seeks to accommodate and to understand the differences in ideas represented by each group and to create an educational experience that incorporates various perspectives into the curriculum.

Why is Diversity Important for Higher Education?

A diverse educational experience is important for many reasons. We experience learning at a higher level when we learn from those whose beliefs differ from our own. Education does not take place when our biases and assumptions are reinforced. Rather, we learn best when our stereotypes are challenged, when we learn to truly listen to other perspectives, and when we understand that our sense of community is much broader than our own narrow experiences. This doesn’t mean that we all leave college agreeing; rather it means we strive to leave college having a better understanding of others. This kind of experience assists students outside of college as well. More businesses are increasingly emphasizing diversity in their job descriptions, so embracing the diverseness of the student population here at TCC can better prepare you for the job market ahead. More generally, understanding and embracing diversity will prepare you for the complexities of this world in the increasingly pluralistic society in which we live.

Ways you can experience diversity here at TCC

There are many ways you can directly enhance the diversity of your educational experience here at TCC. Here are just a few of them:

- Participate in a study abroad course
- Take a foreign language course
- Participate in or attend a minority group parade like the MLK day parade
- Enroll in a Service-Learning Course
- Volunteer in the Community
- Attend an international festival
- Make an effort to truly listen to others in class discussions