

WHAT IT IS

Students in the African diaspora face challenges such as racial discrimination, feelings of isolation, and a lack of representation among faculty and peers. Additionally, many encounter financial barriers, microaggressions, and pressures related to balancing cultural expectations with academic demands. Recognizing these obstacles helps institutions develop targeted resources and policies that promote equity, mental health, and academic success for Black students.

WHO TO USE IT WITH

This document is designed as a starting point for students involved in an existing process (such as student discipline, conduct, or Title IX/VI) or for those seeking to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of others on campus.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. Think about a time you felt included or excluded on campus. What contributed to that feeling?
2. What are some challenges you think Black students face that might not be immediately visible to others?
3. How do you think current political decisions and conversations are impacting students of color on campus?

TEACHING INSIGHTS

Some examples of the challenges faced by some (not all) students of color include:

- ❖ Higher rates of financial insecurity and limited access to scholarships and family resources.
- ❖ Lack of representation in the faculty, staff (counseling, academic support), and peers, leading to feelings of isolation or difficulty finding a mentor.
- ❖ Subtle or overt acts of bias that can create a hostile or unwelcoming environment
- ❖ Pressure to navigate conflicting demands between their family/community values and campus culture.
- ❖ Cultural stigmas related to accessing mental health services and attitudes towards sexual orientation.

Remember, this is NOT a comprehensive document explaining the experience of all Black students, but rather a starting place for dialogue.

Resources:

- Steele, C. M. (2010). *Whistling Vivaldi: How stereotypes affect us and what we can do*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- Pinkett, R. D., & Robinson, J. (2009). *Black faces in white places: 10 game-changing strategies to achieve success and find greatness*. HarperBusiness.
- Hodo, M., Whitfield, K., Van Brunt, B., & Fitch, K. (2023). *How to engage in difficult conversations on identity, race, and politics in higher education*. Routledge.