**Intersectionality** - “Intersectionality allows us to analyze how race, gender, class, sexuality and location, interact to strengthen or undermine each other while not losing sight of their historical and geographical variability.” - A Black Studies Manifesto, Clark Hine

The term Intersectionality is often used in conversation around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion because it applies to all of us, as we are the intersection of gender, race, class, geography, etc. all of what it takes to create unique individuals. Intersectionality can also be a barrier for some if their uniqueness is not easily accepted and are confronted with biases. Kimberle Crenshaw, full-time professor at UCLA School of Law and Columbia Law School, and Ohio native, coined the term “Intersectionality” and defines it as: “Intersectionality is a metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality and disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and how they create obstacles that are not understood within conventional ways of thinking.”

**How to identify Intersectionality in ourselves and in others**

**Identity**

- **Intersectionality can be to a person’s advantage or disadvantage like when Intersectionality is tied to a person’s identity.**
  - For example, a white male living in a suburban white neighborhood, he can rely on gender, race, and geography (class) to maintain his place in a hierarchal power structure.
  - If for example a female, first generation college student is choosing to pursue a career in STEM but needs help in Math or Chemistry because she had not received the support in K-12, this identity contends with what is culturally accepted in academia and will encounter biases advisors and professors need to overcome to support the female student’s academic career.
• *Intersectionality is also defined by how the dominant power structure decides a person’s identity within the structure.*
  o Advisors and professors are considered participants within the dominant power structure of a college or university and can wittingly or unwittingly decide a student’s identity within the structure based on their personal biases.

Understanding and identifying our own biases can help with building a rapport with students and break down any barriers to academic success.

  ▪ Connecting and reaching out to students and not waiting for them to reach out to us can mitigate the image of a dominant power structure.
  ▪ Exploring all options in a major or related major for the student and making initial connections with professors or advisors for the student, as she may not be aware of how to make those connections, or how to begin to explore what options in other majors are available.

**How to support students**

• When advising students at ATI we can support them wholistically by learning how the complexities of intersectionality work while becoming more aware of our own biases, overcoming them, and help students with discovering their identity.

• Be aware that students entering college typically fall within Erik Erickson’s Stage Five: *Identity Versus Diffusion (Confusion)*, which represents a transition between childhood and adulthood that signals a call to define oneself and understanding that central to this stage is “the sense of ego identity” (Nancy Evans 48-52). By reflecting and removing our biases we can support a student’s exploration of ego identity.

**References**


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViDtnfO9FHc&trk=organization-update-content_share-video-embed_share-article_title Kimberle Crenshaw: What is Intersectionality

White Privilege: https://warren.osu.edu/sites/warren/files/imce/Knapsack_plus_Notes-Peggy_McIntosh.pdf