

September 2023

## Prologue

Patrick J. Clipsham  
*Winona State University*, [pclipsham@winona.edu](mailto:pclipsham@winona.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://openriver.winona.edu/jaep>



Part of the [Adult and Continuing Education Commons](#), [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Educational Leadership Commons](#), [Online and Distance Education Commons](#), and the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Clipsham, P. J. (2023). Prologue. *The Journal of Advancing Education Practice*, 4(2).  
<https://openriver.winona.edu/jaep/vol4/iss2/1>

This Reflection Paper is brought to you for free and open access by OpenRiver. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Journal of Advancing Education Practice by an authorized editor of OpenRiver. For more information, please contact [klarson@winona.edu](mailto:klarson@winona.edu).

---

## Prologue

### Author Acknowledgement

A brief prologue outlining some of the reasons why public institutions of higher education and public employee unions must strive to elevate diverse voices.

Mentoring Faculty of Color

Prologue

Patrick Clipsham

“We have an obligation to educate, emulate, and lead with actions towards becoming model stewards for equity and inclusion.”

- *The Inter Faculty Organization’s Equity and Inclusion Plan*

The Inter Faculty Organization (IFO) is the labor union that represents the faculty at Winona State University. The IFO’s Equity and Inclusion plan declares that “...we have an obligation to educate, emulate, and lead with actions towards becoming model stewards for equity and inclusion.” This statement is admirably clear and direct. It tells us that the IFO accepts that it has a moral obligation to support and empower faculty who are people of color, black, indigenous, queer, trans, disabled, or have any other marginalized identities. The IFO acknowledges that the promotion of equity and inclusion is a moral imperative – it is simply the right thing to do. But as a union that represents the faculty at public institutions of higher education, the IFO has especially powerful reasons to create equitable, inclusive, and diverse educational environments.

If public institutions of higher education are to survive and thrive into the future, these institutions must acknowledge that educating *everyone* is critical to achieving their mission. For too long, the systemic oppression of people from marginalized communities has made it difficult for anyone but the most privileged to access higher education. This inequality in access serves to deepen and further exacerbate the harms done to marginalized communities. This social injustice cannot be remedied until marginalized groups are welcomed to our university communities and empowered to fully participate. Unions must become powerful catalysts in advocating for faculty, in elevating diverse voices and promoting equity and inclusion.

Students learn best from representative role models who share similar experiences and who mirror the identities of the student body. This is why *emulation* is mentioned in the Inter Faculty Organization’s Equity and Inclusion Plan. The only way to effectively educate a diverse body of students in an equitable fashion is to create an environment that emulates or represents the richness of a vibrant and diverse community.

Becoming model stewards for equity and inclusion is a moral imperative – it’s just the right thing to do. Everyone should aspire towards this noble goal and has an obligation to resist the systemic oppression of those with marginalized identities. But the obligations declared in the IFO’s Equity and Inclusion plan go beyond this moral imperative. All public higher educators must respond to the call to transform higher education for the better. Each educator must take steps to create equitable, inclusive, and just institutions of higher education.