

APA Policy Statement on the Benefits of Inclusivity to Psychology and Higher Education

AUGUST 2025

Consistent with the American Psychological Association's mission to promote the advancement, communication, and application of psychological science and knowledge to benefit society and improve lives (APA, 2025), this Policy Statement supports APA's commitment to justice, human rights, fairness, and dignity for all, recognizing these values as central to psychology. Recent policy changes and actions targeting institutions of higher education across the United States hinder psychologists' abilities to provide care, deliver services, support educational advancement, and conduct research, particularly for underserved and vulnerable populations.

Psychological science consistently demonstrates the numerous benefits derived from integrating inclusivity into higher education curricula. Such integration enhances educational outcomes, fosters innovation, and prepares future psychologists to competently serve diverse populations (Jayakumar, 2008; Attari et al., 2023). As psychologists, we have an ethical obligation to prevent harm, challenge systemic injustices, and advocate for policies that promote human welfare (APA, 2017; APA, 2021). These values are essential for the advancement of both psychology and society.

Psychological and health research consistently underscores the importance of addressing disparities. According to the National Academy of Medicine, systemic inequities significantly undermine population health, making it critical to sustain scientific and educational efforts aimed at reducing inequities through research and interventions (National Academy of Medicine, 2025). The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) further emphasizes that addressing social determinants of health, such as healthcare access, education, income and wealth gaps, and workplace conditions, is essential to improving mental and physical health outcomes (NIMHD, 2025; CDC, 2025). Advancing equitable and inclusive research supports efforts to address health disparities. It also benefits psychological research, clinical practice and mental health care, and teaching and training in psychology (Attari et al., 2023; Avery & Ruggs 2020; Jayakumar, 2008; Ruggs & Avery, 2025; Sue et al., 2022; Tipton et al., 2023).

Recommendations

BE IT RESOLVED we promote efforts to expand educational access and opportunity for all qualified students and to foster inclusive learning environments that support student success and professional growth in psychology and mental health.

BE IT RESOLVED we support increases in federal investments to public service loan forgiveness, financial aid, and other student loan

programs that will provide greater access to higher education and incentivize more people to pursue behavioral health and mental health fields.

BE IT RESOLVED we support education, teaching, and training that promotes evidence-based practices in addressing complex social issues, while affirming our commitment to human rights, dignity, fairness, and justice for all.

BE IT RESOLVED we support academic freedom and believe in the shared commitment of colleges and universities and their faculty to serve open inquiry, the pursuit of truth, and the free exchange of ideas and opinions across a full range of viewpoints.

BE IT RESOLVED we advocate for increased federal investments in psychological science and increased funding for basic, clinical, and applied psychological research that investigates links between physical and mental health disparities, including cancer research, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and many other health conditions that also impact mental and behavioral health.

BE IT RESOLVED we support efforts to strengthen psychological science and research that explores the various facets of human experience and perspectives.

BE IT RESOLVED we support fair policies and practices to attract qualified individuals of all backgrounds to meet the urgent need to increase the behavioral health workforce.

BE IT RESOLVED we support policies to incentivize those with higher education degrees to provide clinical practice and mental health care in low resource settings, such as rural areas, and to meet the unique mental health needs of veterans, older Americans, and rural populations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we support initiatives to address increased higher education enrollment, better educate K-12 students about psychology, support transitions from 2-year to 4-year colleges and reduce financial barriers to pursuing psychology careers.

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