

# Tips for Department Inclusivity



CSTeachingTips.org/Tips-for-Department-Inclusivity

**1 Survey students regularly**  
to identify institution-specific growth opportunities.

We want to improve our department based upon your feedback!

**2 Optimize the intro course**  
to be welcoming regardless of CS exposure.

You don't need prior CS experience to succeed!

**3 Monitor performance patterns**  
to identify structures or culture with differential impact.

We should investigate why some groups have higher rates of attrition!

**4 Support new pedagogies**  
to improve students' learning and experience.

Teachers are encouraged to adopt effective teaching practices!

**5 Train faculty to respond to bias**  
to address toxic culture in and out of the classroom.

We are all responsible for creating a positive dept. culture!

**6 Foster student community**  
to create effective peer mentoring programs.

Funding for snacks can be helpful for building community!

**7 Show students the breadth of CS**  
to engage beginning students with varied interests.

CS is a broad field with connections to many other disciplines!

**csteachingtips**



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## **Survey students regularly**

Participating in the Computing Research Association's annual student survey (Data Buddies Project: [cra.org/cerp/data-buddies/](http://cra.org/cerp/data-buddies/)) provides the opportunity to see how your students' experiences compare to peer institutions and to identify opportunities to improve students' experience in your department.

2

## **Optimize the intro course**

Have experienced and effective educators teach the introductory courses. This can lead to students finding the department welcoming and supportive. To address differences in preparation, you can encourage students with prior CS experience to skip the first course or offering multiple introductory courses. In addition to providing curriculum customized to their level of experience, students might be less intimidated if everyone in the classroom shares their background. You can find more advice for creating an inclusive classroom culture here: [tinyurl.com/inroadsCulture](http://tinyurl.com/inroadsCulture)

3

## **Monitor performance patterns**

Analyzing participation rates and performance by demographic group can help identify barriers that are preventing students from persisting and succeeding in your department. If you find performance gaps between demographic groups, investigate what might be causing the gaps because a student's race and/or gender isn't a reasonable explanatory variable.

4

## **Support new pedagogies**

Encouraging faculty to adopt effective teaching practices can help all students learn. For example, UNLV's project [TILThighered.com](http://TILThighered.com) explains the importance of providing students transparency about assignment goals, evaluation criteria, and effective learning strategies. Additional teaching ideas are available at [csteachingtips.org/tips-for-lecturing](http://csteachingtips.org/tips-for-lecturing) and [csteachingtips.org/tips-for-encouraging-help-seeking](http://csteachingtips.org/tips-for-encouraging-help-seeking).

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## **Train faculty to respond to bias**

The National Center for Women and Information Technology has resources for faculty to learn to recognize and respond to bias [www.ncwit.org/biasacademic](http://www.ncwit.org/biasacademic) and you can find more tips for reducing bias at [csteachingtips.org/tips-for-reducing-bias](http://csteachingtips.org/tips-for-reducing-bias) Research has shown that practicing responding to bias can make people more likely to address it when they see it.

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## **Foster student community**

Student-led community groups can provide a sense of belonging for students. Funding for such groups can provide them the opportunity to bring students together for one-on-one mentoring, panels, or speakers. For example, student groups can help ensure wider access to information about selecting classes, applying for jobs, or studying for exams.

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## **Show students the breadth of CS**

A CS degree is relevant in a wide range of jobs, but students might only discover the breadth of CS when they start taking upper-division classes. Consider broadly disseminating information about invited talks and provide context for problems students solve in introductory CS classes to highlight interdisciplinary connections.