

Statement on Woodring College of Education's "Inclusion" Priorities

Woodring College of Education professes to "pursue practices that honor diversities and promote social justice to and for equity." Furthermore, the Inclusive Education Department claims that Inclusive Education "involves valuing and facilitating the full participation and belonging of everyone in all aspects of our education communities and systems." Although the values that Woodring and the Inclusive Education Department state to hold dear sound good on paper, they do not apply any further than on paper. Although Woodring claims that its "ultimate goal is to equip [its students] with the skills and confidence to create inclusive and engaging learning environments," it fails to create this kind of environment within the walls of its own building or within the confines of the program that it administrates. There are several examples of this. Elizabeth Coleman, an Inclusive Education student who has a life-threatening latex allergy, was forced to take PE online because Woodring refused to make accommodations for her condition. There are floors in Miller Hall that are entirely inaccessible for disabled students, faculty and visitors because the elevator simply does not go there. Despite having a professor who uses a wheelchair, Woodring has not managed to make even a majority of its rooms accessible, instead electing to make all of three rooms convenient for his usage.

How are students supposed to be inspired to make change in the outside world if our own department doesn't bother to make simple and logical inclusive changes within its own walls? Woodring can say all that it wants about inclusivity and belonging, but those words are simply that- just words- if Woodring cannot reinforce these words with the appropriate (and truly bare-minimum) inclusive actions. The ASWWU Student Senate strongly urges Woodring College of Education and the Department of Inclusive Education to take a hard look at their words surrounding inclusion and their corresponding actions... or lack thereof.