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Chapter

Social Justice as a Dimension of University Social Responsibility

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Abstract

This chapter examines social justice as an element of university social responsibility (USR). In the face of persistent structural inequality, I discuss strategies for promoting social justice as intentional university platforms. I then explore institutional philosophies on empowering agents of change for a socially just society. This includes the university supporting inclusive and equitable action for people who have been historically underserved by higher education. I posit “start at home” as a new perspective on social responsibility related to campus climate and environment for faculty, students, and staff from diverse backgrounds. Finally, I propose a university social responsibility (USR) typology for universities with a social justice dimension their mission. The method includes a literature review and a thematic analysis of diverse universities’ social justice stances and statements. Accordingly, the paper addresses three research questions. (a) How can social justice be explicitly included in Universities’ third mission policies and activities (processes and outcomes)? (b) How can universities, as change agents, help produce socially responsible students and citizens? (c) Is there a typology for social justice as social responsibility for universities to self-diagnose their position relating to the intersection of social justice, community engagement, and the shaping of fair and just future practitioners?

Keywords: social justice, inequality, University Social Responsibility

1. Introduction

1.1 Social justice

Social justice is one of contemporary society’s most complex, broad, and mediating social-political concepts. Social justice hinges on equality, equity, diversity, fairness, and human rights. Broadly interpreted, social justice allows people what is duly and rightfully theirs. It is a process that promotes, supports, and ensures equal opportunities for all, irrespective of their social identities and context. Rawls [1] argues for justice as fairness and provokes consideration of the “rightness of fairness” p. 17. He further propagates justice as the basic structure of society, how major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation [1]. For Rawls, justice involves the proper distribution of societal benefits and burdens. His idea of justice speaks to how the rules for a fair

distribution of meaningful social goods can be determined and how much or how little inequality is permissible in a socially just society [2].

Miller-Farrar [3] argues that social justice is an action-oriented value grounded in humanistic principles and enacted through an ethic of care. “Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole” ([4], p. 3). Social justice renders a belief in promoting egalitarianism, where rights, resources, and opportunities are fairly and equitably allocated. The allocation principle involves effecting societal change so that every member of society enjoys similar levels of benefits, opportunities, and human rights [5]. Moreover, Miller [6] argues that “justice fundamentally requires us to treat people as equals, or we should understand justice as what people would agree to in advance of knowing their own stake in the decision to be reached” ([6], p. 87). Jost and Kay [7] sum the foundational social justice concept into three criteria. “(a) benefits and burdens in society are dispersed in accordance with some allocation principle (or set of principles); (b) procedures, norms, and rules that govern political and other forms of decision making preserve the basic rights, liberties, and entitlements of individuals and groups; and (c) human beings (and perhaps other species) are treated with dignity and respect not only by authorities but also by other relevant social actors, including fellow citizens” ([7], p. 1122). The intellectual foundation of social justice lies in the ideals of equality and is provoked by the realities of injustice.

1.2 Social inequality and higher education

Inequality, or the unequal distribution of resources in the United States, has been increasing for decades in seasons of recession and recovery. Income and wealth inequality is higher in the United States than in most countries in the industrialized world; an unprecedented rise in social and economic inequality shows no signs of abating [8–11]. Siripurapu [11] notes that in 2021, the top 10 percent of Americans held nearly 70 percent of U.S. wealth, up from about 61 percent at the end of 1989. He further notes that the share held by the next 40 percent fell correspondingly over that period. The bottom 50 percent (roughly sixty-three million families) owned about 2.5 percent of the wealth in 2021. Unequal access to higher education is an outgrowth of income and wealth inequality. Yet the higher education system has the potential to respond to pervasive inequality systematically. Income and wealth inequality is reflected in a system of stratification in HEIs. A college degree can lead to social mobility among low-income students and is an avenue to accrue wealth and increase intergenerational equality. But low-income students have unequal chances of completing a degree. On the other hand, a legacy of wealth inequality gives wealthy students an advantage at the financial aid bargaining table over low-income and minority students [12, 13].

Rauscher & Elliott [13] posit that education can increase opportunity, but how much education one attains depends strongly on their socioeconomic standing. They argue that education both reduces and reproduces inequality, transmitting advantages from one generation to the next. “Assets beget educational advantage, and educational advantage begets assets, reproducing inequality across generations” ([13], p. 292; [14]). French sociologist Bourdieu argued that educational inequalities transform social inequalities and reproduce the social status quo [14].

Higher education credentials are increasingly necessary for economic attainment. This is one way to address education inequality. However, low-income individuals do

not have the opportunity to improve their educational preparation as effectively as more advantaged groups [15]. Existing disparities are due to unequal opportunities [16]. For example, children from families in the top 1% are 77 times more likely to attend an Ivy-Plus college than those from families in the bottom quintile [12]. A New York Times study found a prevalence of economic segregation in Higher Education. Their study of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill shows little social mobility among low-income students; only 1.2 percent become affluent adults. In contrast to the 60 percent of UNC students who come from the top 20% of the family's median income of \$135,000 [17].

Rehbein [18] argues that social inequality limits the scientific learning process. If the social sciences, for example, do not deal with the problem of inequality concerning society itself, they contribute to its persistence. The main problem with inequality is not its distorting impact on science but its impact on real people's lives. In this regard, Dupree and Boykin [19] contend that systemic racism is ingrained in the origins of academia in America. They further argue that racial inequality is entrenched in current academic patterns and practices with psychological, interpersonal, and structural dimensions. They suggest that on a more macro level, structural and institutional challenges enhance racial disparities in academia. Numerous institutions of higher education reflect systemic inequities and were built on inequitable social, economic, and political structures. Rehbein [18] suggests that inequality is entrenched in social structures, creating a system of "domination" that generates differences in power and access to societal resources. For example, if actors in the academy do not acknowledge racism, they will not be motivated to address it. If university leaders want to draw on innovative, comprehensive, and applicable science to impact a broader spectrum of humanity, in that case, they should regard the impact of racial inequality within academic institutions [19].

Ellsworth et al. contend that faculty diversity is positively correlated with completion rates of underrepresented students, which makes representative equity among faculty a significant factor in achieving equity for students. However, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, in the fall of 2020, among full-time faculty, approximately three-quarters of them were White. Asian/Pacific Islander faculty was 7 percent, and 7 percent of full-time faculty were Black [20]. Thus, 64 percent of White students graduate from four-year institutions within six years, compared with 40 percent Black, 54 percent Hispanic, and 39 percent Indigenous students [21].

While Bourdieu gives credence to human capital development, "he is skeptical of its narrow social meaning as it becomes a property of ruling class and used as a mechanism to maintain their power and tacitly reproduce social inequalities" ([14], p. 4). Those with the best access may be so influential that they strongly inform what less privileged people perceive as 'reality'; they enshrine what Gramsci described as the 'only sensible worldview' into laws, rules, norms, and habits ([22], p. 2). The result is hegemony, Zaidi et al. argue, where the most influential members of society determine what is 'real' within a culture. They define 'educational, cultural hegemony' as educational practices where instructors assume that the content and task are 'culture free' and implicitly discourage bringing in personal cultural context. Zaidi et al. suggest that students' engagement can replicate cultural hegemony rather than challenge the interactional patterns between dominant and subordinate communities. In higher education, social hegemony appears in the curriculum, course assignments, hiring practices, and even in claims to expand opportunity and civil rights [23].

Heath and Waymer [24] argue that with increasing moral and functional impairment, universities possess tools to make society more fully functioning. How well universities meet such challenges depends on whether they affirm hegemony or seek societal change. By extension, they contend that academic voices are indeed proclaimed into the public sphere inciting whether to support or change hegemony [24].

Researchers in the academy are implored to use the critical race theory framework to explain and illustrate how structural racism produces racial inequity and inequality within social, economic, political, legal, and educational systems ([25], p. 713). Heath and Waymer [24] argue that the mapping of university responsibility should question whether engagement in such arenas justifies hegemony or seeks changes that lead to positive social impact. Critical race theory provides the tools to expose hegemonic devices, procedures, and practices and help explain persistent inequities in educational systems [23].

1.3 Universities and social justice

In contemporary society, justice inheres in a range of social factors, racial and gender inequities, earnings inequality, discrimination, human rights, health and healthcare inequalities, human dignity, voting rights, pandemic disparities, food and energy security, and the effects of covert racism in the criminal justice system. It embodies peoples'/groups' immutable rights of freedom of ideas and speech, the right to be free from exploitation, discrimination, and impoverishment. We must garner "... the courage to examine leadership failures in order to re-envision leadership and followership through the lens of inclusion, diversity, and civility as a matter of social justice." ([26], p. 139). "Justice is the virtue of social institutions as truth is the system of thought" [1], p. 3). Rawls's "difference principle" states: "social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged" (p. 302). Social justice will not exist if social institutions like the government, the economy, and the education system operate unfairly. Undeniably, significant institutions such as universities help define people's rights and duties and influence their life prospects, expectations, trajectories, and how well they can hope to do. What role should universities play in combatting social inequality in the broader community?

I posit social justice as a core value of the university's first, second, and, particularly, third mission (T.M.). Universities can focus on social justice-driven action as knowledge-building spaces through liberating pedagogies, freedom of inquiry, and community engagements to connect more deeply with stakeholders and their local communities. Thus, transforming the university mission beyond the expected teaching and learning (first mission) and research (second mission). I argue that universities' evolving mission and strategic management can intentionally facilitate stakeholders' needs, execute action toward a more inclusive, just, and informed society, and receive higher returns on their investments. Social transformation and interrogation of social injustices in their locale are measurable university outcomes.

T.M. refers to a range of activities performed by higher education institutions that transfer knowledge to the broader society and promote entrepreneurial skills, innovation, social welfare, and human capital development [27]. T.M. contributes to society by engaging with social, ethical, economic, political, and environmental problems of local communities and the broader society [27-29]. T.M. includes inculcating

civic value and conscience through intentional social justice learning and action outcomes - where social responsibility becomes a vital part of strategic visioning and core goals.

Universities' social justice and social responsibility mission and goal statements serve as public declarations of their values, stance, and philosophies. The idea that universities should be drivers of social justice and community engagement has infiltrated the mission of an increasing number of universities. Adler University is an exemplar where social justice and social responsibilities are entrenched in the university's vision, mission, and principal values. "The moment you decide to join us here at Adler University and deepen your resolve to create a more just society, the path to who you are destined to become will be clear" Translated, it means their health resides within our community life and connections. It is an idea that demands action that is needed now more than ever. Their annual Social Justice Summit allows all staff, students, and faculty to reflect on socially responsible practices and uphold and enact their mission.

At Adler University, they shine a light on injustice and drive the work that leads to a much-needed change in some of our most challenged communities. Their mission is to prepare practitioners to address the world's alarming health inequities and social injustices. Adler University puts boots on the ground where they are needed most – as scholars, activists, practitioners, and mentors. Adlerian practitioners bring needed change to the communities they call home. Socially responsible practice remains the central Adlerian approach to achieving social justice. At Adler University, their mission remains to graduate socially responsible practitioners, which is accomplished through instruction, collective reflection, collaboration, skill development, and activism for social justice [30].

In a shift from traditional to socially responsible education, social justice is increasingly materializing in University goals elsewhere. Northwestern University's social responsibility learning domain explicitly fosters a shared commitment to social justice. (see **Table 1**) They implement social responsibility as one of four learning domains, "Students who participate in Student Affairs programs, activities and services will demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to social justice and

Social justice	Civic engagement
Applies awareness, understanding, and appreciation of cultural and human differences to personal and professional situations	Identifies and addresses needs of community members
Creates and fosters inclusive communities	Develops an awareness of social problems
Identifies and seeks to remove systemic barriers to equality and inclusiveness	Recognizes and upholds shared ethical values and standards
Challenges oppressive systems and behaviors and works to create change	Exercises ethical leadership to meet group, organization or community goals
	Actively engages in civic, political, and community activities
	Develops global awareness
	Demonstrates effective stewardship of human, economic and environmental resources

Table 1.
 Northwestern University learning domain—social responsibility descriptors.

apply that knowledge to create safe, healthy, equitable, and thriving communities.” (Northwestern, 2021).

The Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs at the University of California uses social justice practice as the foundation for their work. Scholars are active agents of social change. They view social justice as a process and a goal. “The goal of Social Justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social Justice includes a vision of society that is equitable, and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. The process of attaining the goal of social justice, we believe, should also be democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capabilities for working collaboratively to create change” [31].

The University of Southern Indiana interprets social justice as the equal and fair allocation of rights, privileges, resources, information, service, decision-making, and opportunities for all people [32]. The University of Southern Indiana Center for Social Justice Education promotes social justice and empowerment through education, research, and collaboration. The Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A & M University now offers a certificate in Social Justice Leadership.

New Mexico State University declares, “The Office of Sustainability has social justice and social responsibility as an initiative to remind people that sustainability isn’t just about lowering our energy bills or recycling. We can take it a step further to take care of our fellow citizens to sustain us on many levels. We become caring people, we work lovingly with others, we share, we volunteer, and we purchase things from companies that take care of their employees. It’s a continuous circle of care. The layers of social responsibility are deep and varied. We are a very diverse campus, and we are obligated to treat everyone equally and be ethical members of our campus culture and the greater society. As HEI, we have promised to teach students and send them out into the world with knowledge. Let’s make sure that the knowledge we imbue includes kindness and opening our hearts to others.” [33].

There is much heterogeneity in mission and scope among universities; some present bold declarations to undertake work on social justice. I argue that TM efforts can deliberately build stakeholder trust, prosocial behaviors, and community and mutual interactions in unequal spaces. USR strategic goals are TM -oriented and should be attached to a practical system of organizational identities, practices, structures, and procedures surrounding social responsibility. A content analysis of such declarations from a purposive sample of 40 US universities reveals their commitment to advancing social justice and improving local stakeholders’ quality of life. Universities were divided by type of institution. Different types of universities differ in capacity and access to resources (see Appendix A). For example, public research institutions differ from regional colleges and private universities in their capacity and focus. This current research does not do an in-depth analysis of differences based on university type. The social justice and social responsibility, mission, goals, and action statements for each university in our sample were analyzed by Voyant Tools. This descriptive analysis does not purport causal effects on university efforts, social justice outcomes, or their constructive social impact.

All institutions have language in their strategic plans demonstrating work in justice and social responsibility activities. The most frequent words isolated were social, justice, center, community, communities, students, racism, service, advocacy, education, leaders, leadership, opportunities, equity, research, faculty, change, programs,

and development. Community/communities, followed by justice, were the most frequently occurring terminologies, which are essential avenues to social responsibility.

Several themes of social responsibility emerged from the analysis of the mission, goals, and action statements by the sample of universities:

- Explicit focus on addressing social justice and human rights work
- Concrete actions to tackle inequality.
- Advancing social justice, environmental, anti-racist, social, and community advocacy
- Systemic social injustice equality
- Work and conversation on racial equity

From the content analysis of social justice and social responsibility: mission, goals, and action statements, social justice is observed by the sample universities for (a) its action-oriented value, (b) as a process, (c) as an advocacy tool, (d) as an institutional imperative.

Blatantly missing from the textual assessment of the sample of university initiatives are efforts to strengthen democratic governance in an era of rising polarization and inequality in the United States. Nevertheless, social justice as a component of USR is essential since universities are drivers of social and cultural change and are at the apex of democratic societal institutions. Universities are social architects of fairness and justice. Rawls [1] stresses the importance of social justice through institutional transformation rather than through the uncoordinated efforts of individuals. Murphy [34] argues, “When we think institutionally, we naturally think collectively. We think justice is something for all of us as a group rather than for each of us individually. In the ideal case of full compliance, we are all doing our share, and, we might think, there is no issue about whether the demands, on all of us, are reasonable (p. 290).” Given intergenerational equity imperatives, universities can “co-create” a just society by “co-obligation,” integrating social responsibility into teaching, translational research, innovation, and discovery - ultimately, shattering equality barriers in locale and even in the most distant geographies.

Unequal access to knowledge is a fundamental social injustice and inequality imperative. Rehbein [18] contends that unequal access to science is a major issue connected with inequality. Numerous universities are equipped to catalyze and address barriers and processes perpetuating inequities. Injustice is entrenched in the historical and institutional edifices of inequities, prejudice, racial biases, discrimination, and blocked opportunity structures that continue disconnecting people and their communities from fundamental human and constitutional rights. Thus, lived experiences of the multiple marginalized are created and interceded by structural forces of classism, racism, sexism, ableism, and hegemonic controls. All disciplines, natural sciences, engineering, information technology, medicine, creative arts, humanities, and social sciences, have curricular civic engagement opportunities to challenge social injustices. Social justice is revealed here as a discourse, inquiry, praxis, resource allocation, community engagement, and leadership construct whose tenets guide various USR endeavors. All of these should enhance understanding of stakeholder

expectations of the university as universities systematically refine those expectations of social justice engagement.

1.4 University Social Responsibility (USR)

USR encompasses the development and promotion of principles and values to help solve societal social, economic, and environmental dilemmas through four processes, management, teaching, translational research, and community engagement [24, 35]. USR encompasses public and community services and the broader impacts of institutions of higher learning. It is the responsibility of universities to contribute to social welfare, and quality of life by integrating “social responsibility policies into institutional management, teaching, research, services, and public activities” ([36], p. 13).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) addresses the affairs and issues of companies’ respective communities and shoulders the responsibility for their activities impact on customers, partners, employees, the environment, and society [35]. USR promotes people’s welfare and quality of life, especially among marginalized and vulnerable populations.

USR differs from CSR because it considers specific impacts related to higher educational institutions. The social implications of USR encompass rallying communities for mutual learning toward social development, while educational impact refers to the development of responsible, engaged, and active citizens [37]. These impacts are classified as organizational [related to the university, its environment, and community, including all stakeholders], educational [academic foundation, teaching, learning, and the development of curriculum], cognitive (building, production, and diffusion of knowledge and fair practice), and social [affecting society, development of local communities and social capital [38, 39].

USR is an interactive dialog with society and its communities [40]. For this chapter, a central portion of USR is teaching, studying, researching, and practical community activities that mitigate social injustices and ignite respect for human rights and a just society. Arguably, USR is a strategic process established on place-based action between the university and stakeholders. Strategic social responsibility is holistic. Haski-Leventhal [41] notes that it involves working with stakeholders to integrate them into the university and its work and adopting a broad view of university responsibilities.

USR is increasingly expected by the broader community and can help the university build public and social recognition. USR can differentiate universities from their competitors. A socially responsible image benefits universities in recruiting students, faculty, and staff. See **Figure 1** [42].

Rawls’s [1] institutional approach to social justice informs the concept of “social justice as university social responsibility.” Numerous universities are increasingly mindful of their social responsibility. USR improves the nature of universities by converging learning with tackling their communities’ blatant social injustice and inequality issues. As a component of USR, social justice signals a dynamic contribution to the public good. Public good is the social responsibility universities inherit as part of their obligation to the societies in which they operate [43]. Fonseca [44] argues that higher education institutions (HEIs) are agents of social change. Thus, they should be encouraged to respond to social challenges, opportunities, and changes and lead the charge in building new forms of interventions in communities.

The social engagement of HEIs has become one of the fundamental pillars of universities [29]. Much of what universities practice as USR is within the boundaries

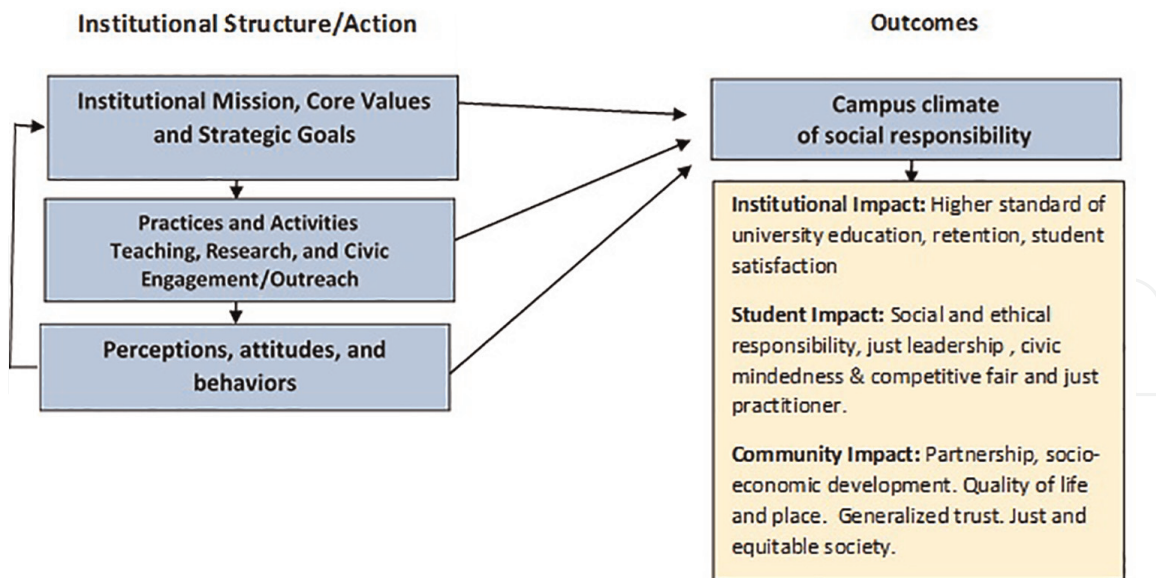


Figure 1.
Intrinsic USR.

of quality management and accreditation [45]. HEIs are apparent catalysts, with rich and diverse human capital (students, faculty, staff, and alums), social acuity, and technological and information infrastructure. These drivers are fundamentally the prerogative of universities as the catalyst of knowledge building, information sharing, innovation, and ideas permeated by social justice [46].

The university is an institution of ideas and innovation that can buoyantly challenge the historical roots of injustice, sever the very tentacles of its divisions, sowing seeds of fairness for intergenerational legacy. Thus, bequeathing a safe, secure, fair, and just society to the next generation. Social justice as a component of university social responsibility requires collaborative, cooperative, strategic, and intentional solutions. It is conceivable that diverse universities should have philosophical, shared values, empirical, and practical conceptions of justice in their master plans. For example, Washburn University posits, “We believe that libraries and learning are public goods crucial to the present and future of democracy and for a just society. We are committed to producing educated, informed, and socially responsible students who are prepared to succeed in the unknown economies of tomorrow and lead the transformation of our/their communities” [47].

1.4.1 Global Thread in USR

With a mission to uncover solutions for a more just, inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable world and the philosophy that universities should work together to address society’s economic, social, cultural, and environmental challenges, the University Social Responsibility Network (USRN) was established in 2015. USRN is a global alliance of universities designed to promote social responsibility in higher education by exchanging ideas, resources, and activities to foster global discussion and development of USR in higher education [36]. To further raise awareness of USR, increase the visibility of its members’ achievements and social impacts, and promote effective strategies for designing and implementing the universities’ civic

engagements, USRN created a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) collaborative. MOOCs are a relatively new model of free online learning offered mainly through video lectures and with growing global access by many diverse learners [48].

1.5 The Merits of USR

Social inequality and polarization threaten democracy in the United States [49], compounded by race and class as powerful political forces [50]. This dilemma should stimulate intellectual and moral conscience across the academy and spark social action. Through their first, second, and third missions, HEIs can radically address inequality and advance democracy and social change. USR policies can widen the channel for vulnerable people's access to employment, healthcare, and other resources necessary to meet basic needs, improve their life chances, and function fully in society. USR positively and significantly impacts stakeholder loyalty and the institution's reputation [51]. USR has reciprocity in its merits for universities and their internal and external stakeholders. Universities that increase social justice and inclusion competencies among stakeholders are likely to be more competitive. Competitive and global advantages accrue from the intertwining of the labor market returns traditions and social justice responsibilities of higher education. Higher education is *the great equalizer*, yet many will not afford it. Until disparities are suppressed, some universities share the obligation to respond to the ideals of social justice issues on behalf of the underprivileged who will not make it to the classrooms on university campuses [52].

Beyond human capital development and traditional teaching, learning, and research models, university policy and immersion activities boost their competitive advantages by engaging with communities helping them shape their welfare and improve their quality of life. Fair, just, and ethical university programs enhance the efficacy of students who are the next generations of just leaders and practitioners. While pursuing university careers, students can simultaneously improve their awareness of local inequalities and contribute to the welfare of others in active service. This corollary parallels Paulo Freire's idea of praxis in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which denotes critical reflection and action in higher education [53]. Indeed, Coelho and Menezes [54] postulate that USR prepares students for their future professional activities and lives as critical and engaged citizens.

Universities are equipped with human capital, tools and technology, and research infrastructure to measure the cost of inequality, raise awareness among their stakeholders, partners, and communities, and act socially responsibly. They are potentially significant contributors to the social justice architecture for the advancement of local communities by establishing meaningful relationships with stakeholders and community partners [55].

It is argued that core social justice competencies among university stakeholders require prosocial conscientiousness and behaviors, changing attitudes, and policies toward becoming the catalyst of a socially just and knowledge-based society. University education is challenged to have broader social meaning and capitalized efficiencies to reduce social inequalities as part of assimilated skills in dynamic learning environments. Students' intellectual progress is heightened with consideration for the vulnerable, justice, and human rights. Students are the primary consumers of university information, hence the brainpower for social change.

Arguably socially just institutions can produce just practitioners. Students who solve community problems are en route to becoming socially just practitioners

through community-based learning. The former precedes the latter. University leaders can influence the values and perspectives of students as practitioners and the desired future for their local communities. They also have the authority to define social responsibility goals and implement them, thus setting the boundaries of a just society. Therefore, a sound social justice perspective calls for inclusiveness and the mitigation of inequalities by preparing students for contemporary workplaces in the instrumental sense and cultivating propensities for a just society. Such dispositions are ingrained in personal and institutional philosophies and individual consciousness that challenge social inequities in everyday life. I envision equitable and accountable systems of social justice pedagogies and curriculum [56–59].

1.6 University response to social justice

The social upheavals of 2020 across the United States stimulated responses by numerous university presidents pledging anti-racist and just campuses. University presidents pledged to dismantle the legacy of systemic racism and injustices. They refocused the need for intentional foci on social justice in higher education [60]. When it comes to the issue of social justice, the relationship between persons and society has institutional and structural dimensions [61]. Thus, in this chapter, I postulate social justice as a conceptual tool for graduating cohorts of diverse and just students.

We have arrived in a new era of tension between social justice and social movement. Socially responsible institutions obligate a commitment to social justice. Since 2017, the Association of American Colleges and Universities has helped universities advance racial and social justice on campuses and in their communities through Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Campus Centers on 25 campuses. Are universities ready to make social justice a part of their organizational identity and mission?

Some universities historically have social justice embedded in their philosophies and action. For example, Adler University weaves social justice into the very fabric of its institution; a key strategy is to advance socially responsible practice in the university's activity and reach. They promulgate, "socially responsible practitioners are educated to be effective personal and social change agents in the pursuit of justice" ([62], pg. 26). The socially responsible practitioner respects people in these circumstances and advocates for an end to social injustice. The courage shown by marginalized people should be met with the courage of practitioners who work to improve themselves and change society [62].

The University and its prolific platform of human capital, practical infrastructures, and tools can indeed unlock a well-educated and equipped society to lead justly, building social and cultural understanding and writing into policy change strategies. T.M. implies notions of justice and observing institutional readiness for systemic change. Irrefutably, a platform for halting the propagation of racial and gender disparities and other forms of social inequities [63]. Framing and responding to the question, how are we advancing our communities' social, environmental, and economic well-being through learning objectives, research, and community engagement? Since the broader public subsidizes universities, to what extent should they be held accountable for social responsibility and social justice knowledge-building, dissemination, and action?

University missions and programs are intrinsically about advancing humanity, social welfare, and quality of life while building a civic and equitable society. Social justice can be inherently woven into such aspirations as universities shape norms,

beliefs, values, behaviors, and attitudes, and influence community responsibility to create a just society. Not all universities explicitly share this direction as their civic mission. Roland [64] argues that educational institutions are arenas where inequities and injustices can be produced and reproduced by privileging some social identities while marginalizing others. But she further contends that “educational leadership can create equitable and just educational systems by influencing policy, educational culture, instruction, and day-to-day operations that affect identities, opportunities, histories, and characterizations of people and issues that further affect how they are considered and treated across contexts” (pg. 3).

Findings indicate that sustainable impact occurs when universities deliberately integrate social responsibility initiatives in their administrative policies and management processes [65]. Intrinsic USR goals and outcomes can help enhance human well-being, promote social justice enlarge university influence, and engender positive individual and community outcomes.

1.7 Social justice as USR

As the pace of change continues to accelerate, higher education leaders are now under constant pressure to respond to social justice issues within their campuses and surrounding communities, notes Christine Johnson McPhail, President of St Augustine’s University, North Carolina. She further states as demands to address social justice inequities are increasingly likely to become a part of the new normal in American higher education, institutions must become more intentional with their approaches to address social justice issues within the academy [66].

Universities are called to strengthen leaders’ resolve to engender a just society. They are called to support activities to sculpt institutional climates and structures to facilitate the full participation and advancement of all students, faculty, staff, and community members, thus, propagating social norms for a just society. It is the place for consistent, strategic, and accountable efforts. In this regard, an increasing number of universities are placing social responsibility at the core of their mission [27, 29]. Universities improve the quality of life via justice-bound education, innovation, translational research, and social activities. For example, Cardella et al. [67] note, “Students and practitioners cannot promote social justice in their engineering design work if they do not consider people’s needs and lived experiences throughout their design process.Design for social impact seeks to incite transformational change in underserved, underrepresented, and disadvantaged communities.” (pg. 11).

A modern thrust of Rawlsian theory of justice would induce socially responsible institutions to ask, what can we do? (institutional policies and action). Concerning social justice competencies and activity, students use knowledge, analysis, and skills to confront oppression and the impact of inequity in marginalized and vulnerable communities. They are concerned about inequality and inequality of opportunities - Answering questions of theoretical and real-world interest, such as who are vulnerable and marginalized? (social discovery & learning). How and why did they become vulnerable and marginalized? (research/areas of inquiry). What can we do for the vulnerable and marginalized? (*locally*-social responsibility and engagement; *globally*, cross-cultural engagement).

Critical thinking and complex problem-solving enable social progression among students and practitioners. Social advancement means liberty, which implies cultivating just citizenship in their communities. It is all about the “*privileged*” *privileging the underprivileged*. It is about the “*mentored*” *mentoring the unmentored*. It is about the

“*represented*” representing the underrepresented. In the words of the recently departed professor and social justice advocate Bell Hooks, “*If we want a beloved community, we must stand for justice, have recognition for difference without attaching difference to privilege.*”

Social responsibility projects inspire students’ personal and interpersonal achievements, understanding and applying knowledge, engagement, curiosity, reflective practice, perspective transformation, and citizenship [54]. The vision is for a culture where a just society becomes synonymous with civic rights among internal and external constituents, a system of academic excellence, innovation, inclusion, and adaptation, where learning co-exists and co-produces social justice outcomes in university milieus. When universities do third mission work with community stakeholders, social justice unfolds, systemic racism further crumbles, and inequality dismantled.

2. University social responsibility: start at home

“All of us in the academy and in the culture as a whole are called to renew our minds if we are to transform educational institutions—and society—so that the way we live, teach, and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity, our passion for justice, and our love of freedom.” ([68], p. 34). Injustice and inequality codetermine each other. The variable social class is only one of the complex factors that generate inequality structures in academia. I posit that USR-infused arguments involve addressing institutional inequities, for example, by increasing awareness of people’s exploitation and subordination and the conscious action to change and transform their situation. Social justice perspectives and activities in HEIs mean creating equity-bound milieus for faculty, students, and staff success without credence to race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, or abilities. Start at home USR involves creating an inclusive, welcoming, safe, and engaging environment for all. I argue that a core idea of USR relates to educating socially responsible students, ensuring equity among faculty and staff, promoting social justice among various stakeholder groups, and engaging communities.

Universities can start at home, identifying and reshaping institutional values and structures that impede underrepresented students, faculty, and staff’s full participation and progression. The advancement of people of color on university campuses is a path for planned social responsibility activities. I purport that racial inequality-producing processes intersect with disadvantages embedded in multiple identities and minority status. The intersectionality logic captures institutional inequality and how multiple identities overlap to form different meanings and experiences among underrepresented students, faculty, and staff. These consequences reveal themselves through multiple forms of exclusion [69–71].

Inequalities and exclusion among women faculty with multiple identities can and do interact to create disadvantages throughout their careers [72]. Nevertheless, when positively recognized, multiple social identities can induce creativity and long-term productivity and create advantages for faculty [73]. USR, start at home as proposed here, purports perspectives to understand how multiple identities shape women and underrepresented students, faculty, and staff progress. It embraces building consensus and fostering collaboration. Over time, it will engender faculty understanding of everyday challenges and diverse experiences, build advantages and promote social justice within the university and its environs.

Significant differences in the rewards for men and women scientists have been found in the Academy [72]. It is argued that multiple axes of inequality are practically and analytically inseparable. The multidimensionality and interconnected nature of race, class, and gender are especially visible to those who face oppression in specific university contexts. Structuralists view gender and race inequality as ingrained in broad institutional structures with durable material outcomes [71].

Without intervention, institutional structures and processes that create gender and racial inequalities become self-perpetuating and self-amplifying. As change agents, universities' commitment will involve a precise understanding of institutional histories and contemporary contexts, the full use and development of the underrepresented skills, and the knowledge and credentials for equity adjustment. These initiatives should engender a feeling of agency, confidence, competence, and support among individual faculty members and develop institutional policies and procedures to foster social justice, gender, and racial equity awareness, and faculty, students, and staff progress. I argue that institutional leadership's depiction of racial and gender sorting processes, and differential opportunity based on social justice, can predict job satisfaction and viable career pathways for underrepresented groups. In this context, USR also provides pertinent conceptual tools for action.

Thus, USR "start at home" further purports to isolate and address inequity in the participation and advancement of underrepresented populations, transforming university culture, climate, and structures by adapting established, socially just best practices. For example, the multi-faceted issues relating to the successful recruitment, retention, and promotion of persons of color and women. Are university community members providing preferential treatment to those who share their demographics in formal processes such as promoting, hiring, judging, and mentoring others? [19, 74]. Social justice as USR calls for measurable scrutiny of social inequality and diversity on college campuses and how efforts can materialize to create equality and close the representation gap. Universities can focus on changing culture/climate by creating systems that recognize and promote equitable participation, visibility, access to resources, and mobility opportunities among women faculty. I envision an institutional construct based on mitigating implicit bias and the retention, professional development, job satisfaction, and career advancement of faculty from underrepresented groups. This principle of USR "involves mutually reinforcing processes at the macro-structural/institutional level and the individual level" [71]. The principle of social justice as USR is grounded in intentionally building knowledge of social inequities within institutional structures and engaging with marginalized groups as part of the university's social mission.

Starting at home, therefore, means creating an environment where students from diverse backgrounds and marginalized spaces thrive. It involves addressing institutional/structural forces and individual experiences of social inequalities. Poverty, inadequate healthcare, excessive criminal justice system control, and deficient instruction often stall and even derail the success of minoritized students. To progress, young people must adopt a social justice awareness and understand how social and economic institutions, policies, and practices can either stall or promote the advancement of youth [57]. Institutional stance and definition of their role in social justice is the first step in creating social change. "We've found that educational programs that successfully retain minorities work in part because they engage students in solving problems relevant to their communities" [75]. Ellsworth et al. [21] suggest that universities respond and execute new racial and ethnic equity priorities and establish

equity in the university culture. They call on university leaders to understand their institution’s history and discuss how racial and ethnic inequities benefited the institution historically. This, they argue, could support a future of increased equity and institutional commitment.

Social justice centers play a central role in universities’ social justice work; however, more critical analysis and empirical work are needed to ascertain their impact. Indeed, “higher education institutions have the resources to archive truth, intellectual inquiry, dissent, and contestation and, therefore, must be out front in the battle for the hearts and minds of the next generation of critical thinkers” ([25], p. 713).

3. A new typology of social justice as USR

This segment presents a new typology of university social responsibility permeated with social justice action. The typology is a heuristic and practical tool for defining a university’s stance, self-diagnosis, and intervention (see **Figure 2**). Parts of the framework materialized from a purposive sample of universities in the United States. Other typology aspects emerged from the literature and content analysis of university mission and vision statements. Some concepts and assumptions that emerged from our data analysis and google search of institutional mission and social justice activities were also integrated into the typology.

The typology has four social justice categories embedded in USR. It shows a continuum that isolates symbolic efforts from those that are meaningful and those that are conservative from those that are transformative. Symbolic actions are conservative and unsubstantial in depth and impact, and social justice is often separate

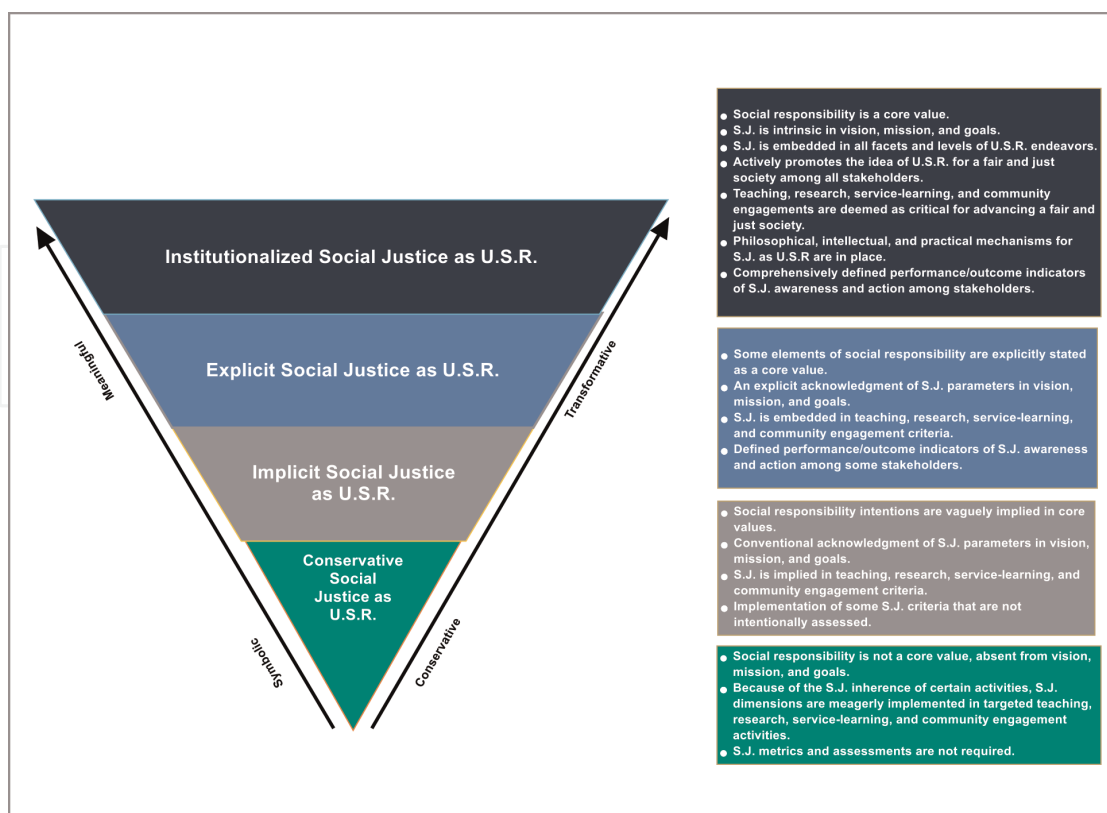


Figure 2.
 Typology-Social Justice S.J. as USR.

and not embedded in the university mission. Also, there are no clear paths for research and assessment activities to transform communities and social impact.

In contrast, meaningful efforts are distinctive social justice processes that symbolize the institutional mission, values, and concrete actions. They lead to transformational change in their communities and service regions. Efforts are long-term, and there is a clear path to assess institutional change and cultural shifts. There is a university culture of inquiry about social justice and USR. See a description of typology categories below.

3.1 Conservative social justice as USR

- Social responsibility is not a core value, absent from their vision, mission, and goals.
- Because of S.J.'s inherency in certain activities, S.J. dimensions are meagerly implemented in targeted teaching, research, service-learning, and community engagement activities.
- S.J. metrics and assessments are not required.

3.2 Implicit social justice as U.S.R.

- Social responsibility intentions are vaguely implied in core values.
- Conventional acknowledgment of S.J. parameters in vision, mission, and goals.
- S.J. is implied in teaching, research, service-learning, and community engagement criteria.
- Implementation of some S.J. criteria that are not intentionally assessed.

3.3 Explicit social justice as U.S.R.

- Some elements of social responsibility are explicitly stated as a core value.
- An explicit acknowledgment of S.J. parameters in vision, mission, and goals.
- S.J. is embedded in teaching, research, service-learning, and community engagement criteria.
- Defined performance/outcome indicators of S.J. awareness and action among some stakeholders.

3.4 Institutionalized social justice as USR

- Social responsibility is a core value.
- S.J. is intrinsic in vision, mission, and goals.
- S.J. is embedded in all facets and levels of USR endeavors.

- Actively promotes the idea of USR for a fair and just society among all stakeholders.
- Teaching, research, service-learning, and community engagements are deemed critical for advancing a fair and just society.
- Philosophical, intellectual, and practical mechanisms for S.J. as USR are in place.
- Comprehensively defined performance/outcome indicators of S.J. awareness and action among stakeholders.

4. Conclusion

By promoting social justice as a component of USR universities can engage interdisciplinary clusters of faculty, students, staff, and community members with diverse experiences and credentials to make a difference in the university service region. From a USR perspective and its action-oriented value, social justice action can engage such stakeholders to enhance the lives and livelihoods of students, the people of the wider community, the United States, and the world. Some universities have principles of social justice embedded in university intellectual roots and social responsibility knowledge formation. They systematically explore and understand the impact of various social justice issues as part of their obligations to multiple constituents. Some universities inspire personal agency and equip students to consider their role as practitioners in diverse roles in the labor market with a sense of social responsibility for a just society. Socio-political context also shapes how universities respond to social inequality; private universities are more engaged and have robust social justice-infused T.M.

In a rapidly evolving society, we continue to contemplate critical issues related to inequality structures that permeate the education sector, healthcare institutions, criminal justice systems, the economy, the environment, etc. logically then, social justice is an essential thread to be interwoven in all aspects of USR. The fundamental issue with this position is it is mediated by big business, power, politics, ideologies, and even hegemonic and contextual ambiguities. The onus is on the shoulders of strategic thought leaders in HEIs. Who should address inequality and the social welfare of including the disadvantaged? As universities evolve, they are called to equip students and faculty with adaptive competencies to scrutinize new social situations and social complications, ask new questions, and find new and apt practical solutions.

Rhetoric and narratives do not necessarily advance a sense of justice and prosocial behaviors or create structural pillars necessary to dismantle racism, inequalities, and injustices. Through systematized structures and using existing resources, some universities first acknowledge social injustices and then explore and dissect various forms of social justice issues for action as part of their T.M. obligations. Others are making explicit strides, while others are on the margins of such aspirations. Regarding aligning their resources to build a just society, some universities have policies and management procedures for meaningful and transformative impact; others are on the fringes of such influence. Thus, embedded institutional action is the bedrock of social justice and USR, highlighting pivotal practices in social Justice as USR. Institutionalized social responsibility is crucial for inspiring and equipping students to contemplate their diverse roles in helping local communities thrive. For example, approaching

social justice and inequality from a curricular angle with an intentional focus on the epistemologies and the methodologies for studying and engaging practically. Motivating a personal sense of social responsibility for a just society is a crucial angle of USR. Further, it builds personal agency. It shapes students' attitudes and prosocial behaviors while conditioning them toward justice.

Socially responsible leaders recognize their positions of power and privilege, acknowledging these impacts on their own biases and inequitable practices, often supported by organizational structures that maintain social inequity. They are aware of inequitable power dynamics and how they infiltrate institutions. They seek to understand and resolve community problems. They motivate environments and mechanisms for communities' holistic social, intellectual, and cultural transformation.

Social justice, as USR, is a structure of legacy building blocks in constructing a just society and intergenerational patterns for preserving human dignity. Universities are rife with stakeholders with the intellectual ability to engineer and build social justice structures and a culture of inclusion and equity. As students cultivate academic and personal growth skills, they can concurrently reinvest in the lives of those in the broader community who have never walked the halls of universities. It is not sufficient to debate and study social justice issues; the university experience should have a duality of mission (implementing and assessing).

Universities are intertwined with their service region. Therefore, students, faculty, and staff are equipped to collect and analyze data to explain their service region's current social, political, and economic dilemmas. Embedding notions of justice in USR enlarges research and community impact, thus, contesting prevailing assumptions about the underrepresented, the vulnerable, and the marginalized. To this end, I argue for specific and concrete institutional processes that enable just social and material relations with the broader community and society.

Within their mission of equality and social justice, universities are called to disseminate information, generate awareness, facilitate community engagement, and influence public policy to create more significant equity and opportunities in various corners of their service regions. This chapter draws attention to numerous examples across the academy where social justice pedagogies, translational/community-based research, and community engagement and outreach are formidable pathways for incorporating social justice and inclusion in university programming. The analysis of a sample of universities' stances shows that many adopt proven strategies to reshape institutional climate and structures to facilitate the advancement of social justice.

In an ideal world, university leadership assumes the uppermost role in socially responsible practices by designing, supporting, and evaluating organizational policies and procedures for social and place-based transformation. Those with advanced meaningful, transformative strategies create organizational values, goals, structures, and philosophies on social justice. They integrate social justice mechanisms in USR and isolate social justice and social responsibility indicators/matrices for annual assessments. Change efficacy is higher when leaders are confident that they can implement complex institutional change collectively and incorporate social justice at varying levels and stages of program planning, execution, monitoring, and assessment.

The social justice imperative in USR pleads for further work. History savors and archives social transformation; it shows the power of a justice-centered society; the world has changed, the world is changing, and the world will continue to change. USR can be social justice-centered for a just society. Facilitating systemic changes in institutional culture and climate to engender broad university social responsibility

hinges on shared beliefs, collective institutional behavior, and confidence in collective abilities.

Institutional readiness for change depends on how favorably institutional leaders appraise social justice goals and tasks, resource availability, and community factors. Systemic change is predictable when leaders and their institutions embrace Rawls's [1] difference principle by bringing the greatest benefits to the least advantaged in society.

A. Purposive Sample University Social Justice and Social Responsibility Centers

University	Social Justice and Social Responsibility: Mission, Goals, and Action
<p>Adler University Centers</p> <p>Institute on Public Safety and Social Justice</p> <p>Center for Civic Learning & Community Action</p>	<p>These Centers implement the university mission of community engagement, social justice, and socially responsible practice. They train socially responsible practitioners for this work in multiple disciplines—in academic programs that go beyond traditional practice.</p>
<p>Private University</p> <p>Antioch University-The Center for Diversity & Social Justice</p>	<p>The Center aims to combine efforts towards multicultural research and social justice advocacy in one center with a committee model. Commits to take action to advocate with individuals with marginalized identities, integrate social justice into the curriculum and clinical training.</p>
<p>Private University</p> <p>Bastyr University - Center for Social Justice and Diversity</p>	<p>The Center supports the education and training of Bastyr community members in culturally responsive practices and dismantling of health inequities and disparities. The Center, being a part of the University's overall DEI structure, focuses on the following areas: Skill Building Among Bastyr Community, Research Opportunities, and Community Events</p>
<p>Private University</p> <p>Bethune Cookman University - The Center for Law and Social Justice</p>	<p>The Center works to develop programs and activities that address historic, social, and contemporary issues which coincide with the mission of the university, while also working to establish and/or expand the academic programs for students who desire to pursue careers in the legal field.</p>
<p>Private historically black university</p> <p>Boston University - Center for Character & Social Responsibility</p>	<p>The mission of the Center is to support the professional development of individuals and institutions which seek to expand their awareness, knowledge, and skills in the areas of character development and social responsibility consistent with principles of healthy personal development.</p>

Private university	
Brown University - Swearer Center for Public Service	A community of scholars, students, practitioners, and community members who work together to build on community strengths and address challenges in the community. The values of the center include ethical and engaged student leadership, reciprocity and respect, diversity, equity, and inclusion, social justice, and intellectual rigor.
Private University	
Central Connecticut State University -John Lewis Institute for Social Justice	The Institute seeks to empower a new generation of leaders to follow his call to build a better and more just world, one that is marked by hope and focused on liberation. The Institute's goals include developing their leadership and advocacy skills, while helping them to explore public service careers. The wider goal of the Institute is to engage with the campus and the local community around social justice issues.
Publicly funded university.	
Claflin University - Center for Social Justice	Serves as a resource for all to unite, educate, and advocate against social injustices that impact the campus, as well as local, national, and global communities. The Center supports and engages students, faculty, and staff to be transformational leaders in their communities. Develops social justice curriculum and cultivates partnerships in local, state, national and global contexts
Private Historically Black Colleges/ Universities	
Columbia University - Center for Justice	The Center is committed to ending mass incarceration and criminalization, and advancing alternative approaches to justice and safety through education, research, and policy change. Its mission is to help transform approaches to justice from being driven by punishment and retribution to being centered on prevention, healing and accountability.
Ivy League research university	
Concordia University -Social Justice Centre	The Centre has a commitment to fostering research excellence on social justice issues. Additionally, it provides support for events, offers fellowships for postdoctoral researchers and graduate students and promotes dialogue and collaboration between researchers with different backgrounds and methodologies.
Private university	
CUNY School of Law - Justice Centers	The Justice Centers foster intersectional and global approaches to issues and initiatives at the heart of human rights work, environmental advocacy, law and policy, and transforming justice and representation for Latinx communities. Their collaborative work is ever-evolving and expanding, connecting students, faculty, and community partners.

Public University	
Delaware County Community College -Center for Equity & Social Justice	The Center is committed to contributing to dismantling systems of racism and social injustices within their community by providing ongoing opportunities for meaningful dialogue that creates awareness, promotes education and understanding and leads to transformative change, equity and social justice for all people.
Public university	
Yale	Nurtures and inspires students as leaders of social change and to advance justice and service in New Haven and around the world. Values include a commitment to the common good, compassion, diversity, growth and learning, partnership, critical reflection, and student initiative.
Ivy League research university	
Dwight Hall at Yale - Center for Public Service and Social Justice	
Earlham College -The Center for Social Justice	The Center helps equip students for lifelong engagement on social justice issues through initiatives that build skills and knowledge across the disciplines in and out of the classroom. The CSJ invites students, staff, faculty and the many communities in which we all find ourselves to always consider two underlying imperatives: thinking and acting social justice.
Private liberal arts college	
Fisk University	Aims to foster and advance a social justice agenda into every sphere of contemporary society.
The John Lewis Center for Social Justice	Connect people, ideas, and communities towards the advance of social justice and racial equity strategies and initiatives
Private historically black liberal arts college	
Georgetown University - Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching and Service (CSJ)	Promote the “good trouble” that various individuals, activists, organizers, and institutions are getting into be the change we want to see. Produce collaborative high-impact equity and justice-focused scholarship, programming, initiatives
	In order to advance justice and the common good, the Center promotes and integrates community-based research, teaching and service by collaborating with diverse partners and communities.
Private university	
Holy Names University - Center for Social Justice and Civic Engagement (CSJCE)	The Center strives to enrich the understanding of social issues through personal exploration and socially responsible leadership, in an effort to create a culture of service at the University and within the local and global community.
Private university	
Humboldt State University -Social Justice, Equity, and Inclusion Center	A student-led organization that strives to create a safe space for students to engage, learn, be heard, and be inspired. The Center provides co-curricular opportunities for leadership development, social justice advocacy, identify exploration, social engagement

	opportunities, and many learning experiences that positively influence student life at the university.
Public university	
Loyola University of Chicago - Baumhart Center for Social Enterprise and Responsibility	The Center prepares leaders to tackle society's most pressing challenges through education, engagement, and research. Aligned with Loyola's strategic plan—which commits the University “to act more for transformative justice”—we support students and leaders seeking to leverage business ideas to build a more just, humane, and sustainable world.
private Jesuit research university	
Queens University of Charlotte -The Stan Greenspon Holocaust and Social Justice Education Center	The Center's mission is to create bridges of multicultural understanding and collaboration that support human rights through, education, advocacy and action at Queens and beyond.
a private university	
Rutgers -The Center for Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities	The Center provides educational and social programs, leadership development, and policy consultation for LGBTQIA and ally students, faculty, staff, and community members.
public research university	
Seton Hall University School of Law - Center for Social Justice (CSJ)	The Center trains law students to become legal professionals who effect positive and lasting change. We are committed to the pursuit of equitable treatment for all, through cases and advocacy that challenge systemic racism and seek just outcomes for our clients.
private, Catholic school	
The University of Southern Indiana - The Center for Social Justice Education	The mission of the Center for Social Justice Education was established in 2009 to foster advocacy for social justice empowerment through education, research, and collaboration. The CSJE is dedicated to individual and societal well-being in a global community. The goals of the Center for Social Justice Education are embedded in education, research, and service for social advocacy.
public university	
St. Thomas University College of Law -The Benjamin L. Crump Center for Social Justice	The Center is a place where people of conviction and courage learn the legal tools to excise racism and discrimination wherever they may dwell. The Center also does innovative programming, symposia, trainings, and curated programmatic instructional modules focused on enforcing civil rights and restoring human dignity.
private Catholic university	
The University of Alabama - Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility (CESR)	CESR is the campus service-learning resource center, implements meaningful course and community partnerships, empowers students to solve salient community issues and helps faculty members develop new service-learning courses. CESR's signature programs encourage students to engage in meaningful service while thoughtfully considering their ethical obligations towards others.

Public universities	
The University of Tennessee	The Center for the Study of Social Justice (CSSJ) facilitates interdisciplinary research in areas of inquiry that inform scholars and policy makers about what is fair, equitable, and beneficial for people. Toward that end, the Center offers a forum for faculty and graduate students to share their expertise, collaborate on research projects, and disseminate their work to a broader audience.
The Center for the Study of Social Justice	
Public land-grant research university	
UC Berkeley School of Law - Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice	The Center connects students, professors, lawyers, activists, and thinkers across and beyond campus to make relevant, vibrant conversations about law, power, equity, subordination, and privilege part of intellectual and social life at Berkeley Law. The Center focuses on building students' capacity to be effective social justice advocates for the long-haul.
Public research university	
UCLA Center for the Study of Racism, Social Justice & Health	The Center for the Study of Racism, Social Justice & Health is a multidisciplinary community of academic and non-academic affiliates working to address the root causes of racial health inequities. The center supports rigorous research, innovative teaching, and community engagement on the health implications of racial and other social inequalities. The center's priorities include:
Public research university	Targeting racism as a public health issue
	Fostering an interdisciplinary intellectual home for researchers and scholars who use cutting edge, anti-racism approaches to study racism and health equity
	Working with communities to understand, document, and respond to social injustices affecting health
	Advancing the theory and methods used to conceptualize and measure racism effects empirically
	Leading the nation in the production of evidence explaining the links between racial inequalities, social justice and health equity
University of Central Florida-Social Justice & Advocacy Center	The mission is to promote an equitable campus environment where all are assured that diversity, in its many forms is valued.
Public research university	
University of Cincinnati -The Nathaniel R. Jones Center for Race, Gender, and Social Justice	The Center trains and cultivates scholars, leaders and activists committed to social change. Our teaching scholars research and work to combat harassment, violence against women and economic inequalities that target our most vulnerable neighbors. The Center has created an international reputation by bridging theory and practice, forging relationships with local, national, and global communities and preparing students to take the lead in advancing justice.

Public research university	
University of Colorado Boulder - Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility	Collaborates with business leaders from the natural products industry, the B Corp community, clean energy, corporate social responsibility and more, to pair professionals interested in mentoring with students, develop internships in impact business, and strengthen professional networks.
Public research university	
	Support and share research in: business solutions to environmental challenges, diversity and inclusion and ethical leadership. Student opportunities enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.
University of Kentucky -Center for Equality and Social Justice	The mission of the Center is to promote equality and social justice through collaborative scholarship and education and to help advocate for social justice within our communities, public policies, and laws.
Public research university	
University of Michigan - Dearborn's Center for Social Justice and Inclusion	The mission is to value and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual. The Center seeks to remove barriers by providing programs and activities that will enable all students to meet their full potential, and experience meaningful involvement on campus and in the community.
Public research university	
University of Minnesota - Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice	The Center is dedicated to finding solutions to racial and ethnic inequality. Using an integrated model of research, dialogue, and community partnerships, the center guides and empowers policymakers and community leaders in developing and promoting solutions to the problems of racism and racial and ethnic inequality.
Public research university	
University of Missouri - Department of Social Justice Centers	The Centers strive to create environments and offer programs, services, resources and opportunities that contribute to a sense of belonging for underserved and underrepresented students, faculty and staff. The centers also contribute to the academic, social and personal development of students and provide opportunities for educational, cultural and leadership development. Staff from the social justice centers engage in advocacy, education and support for students, faculty and staff.
Public research university	
University of Southern Indiana -Center for Social Justice Education	The Center promotes social justice and empowerment through education, research, and collaboration.
Public regional university	
University of Washington, Tacoma -Center for Leadership & Social Responsibility	The Center connects our future and current leaders, guiding our students to become socially responsible leaders. One example of this work is the Milgard Women's Initiative (MWI) which focuses on empowering women, advancing equity, and building community.

Public regional university

Western New England University - Center for Social Justice

The Center advances justice through research, education, advocacy, innovation, and public engagement. The goal is to be a preeminent Center that understands and addresses the root causes of systemic social injustice and develops innovative, human-centered solutions for change. The Center strengthens collaborative efforts between the Law School and the local region to work toward a more just, equitable, and inclusive society.

Private university

William & Mary - Center for Racial & Social Justice


The Center will work to advance the cause of racial and social justice by educating students and the broader community, building students' capacity to engage in antiracist and social justice work, and engaging in legal and multidisciplinary research and advocacy aimed to inform the public, advocates, and policymakers — both in the Commonwealth of Virginia and nationwide.

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