

# DEI Common Read

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **What is the DEI Common Read Program?**

DEI Common Read Experience is a voluntary, college-wide reading program. Students, faculty, and staff are invited to read the same book and participate in several engaging activities and discussions in and outside the classroom on all NOVA campuses and online. The DEI Common Read supports the college's mission of providing equitable access to high-quality teaching and student engagement. The program also supports NOVA's core value of Inclusion: "welcoming, supporting and engaging diverse people and perspectives so that sense of belonging is cultivated throughout our college community."

### **Why a Common Read?**

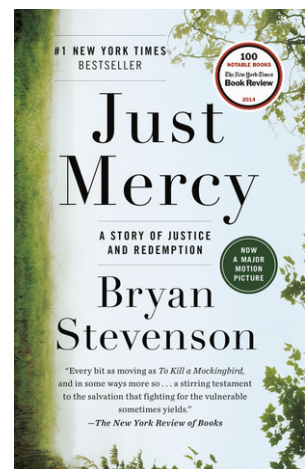
Common reads foster students' exploration of values and ethics, increase awareness of cultural diversity, deepen feelings of being part of a community, and integrate social and academic campus experiences (Boff et. al, 2007; Nadelson & Nadelson, 2012). Common reads also provide opportunities for discussions about teaching and learning (Ferguson, et. al, 2018).

### **What are our institutional goals for the DEI Common Read?**

- Members of our institution will experience a greater sense of belonging by participating in a college-wide intellectual experience.
- Participants will gain a deeper understanding of issues relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion through dialogue across disciplines.

### **Is participation required/mandatory?**

No, participation in the DEI Common Read is not required for anyone. Involvement in the DEI Common Read is completely voluntary... and encouraged!



## Why should I participate?

Participation in DEI Common Read program is expected to benefit our community in many ways. For students, having a Common Read is a great introduction to academic expectations and intellectual engagement. Common Reads provide students with a way to start or enhance their academic journey at NOVA. Generally, Common Reads are instrumental in:

- Fostering a sense of community and belonging at institutions
- Stimulating critical thinking, broadening knowledge and perspectives
- Enhancing communication
- Promoting teamwork
- Increasing academic engagement and retention



For faculty and staff, Common Reads often provide an opportunity to connect with colleagues in new ways, promoting dialogue across disciplines as well as opportunities to discuss new ways to teach and learn.

## How was the book selected?

After consulting with other community colleges and Penguin Random House, this book was chosen by the Office of DEI because of its focus on critical DEI themes, such as empathy, humanization, integrity, advocacy, hope, and resilience. Just Mercy has been named one of the top ten books to read before college by U.S. News and World Reports, and has received numerous awards for outstanding literary work. We are excited to join the hundreds of other colleges and universities who have used Just Mercy as their Common Read.

## How can I recommend a book?

Moving forward, we hope to develop a comprehensive plan for a NOVA Common Read, involving stakeholders from across our community who will develop criteria for selecting the book. If you are interested in participating in this future initiative, or would like to recommend a book, [please submit your information here](#).

## How can I learn more about the book and/or author?

To learn more about our DEI Common Read for 2023, Just Mercy, please visit: [Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption \(eji.org\)](#).



## How will the book be used?

Minimally, we encourage everyone in the NOVA community to read the book and reflect on the book together.

Beyond this, we invite faculty to incorporate the book in their courses as they see fit. This is not required.

Further, there will be several events in the Spring surrounding the book. All NOVA campuses are invited to host activities surrounding the DEI Common Read. These events could include:

- Art installations
- Spoken Word
- Open Mic Night
- Mock Trial
- Career panel- criminal justice system
- Local social justice speakers
- Community service projects

...and more!



If you are interested in participating or helping lead one of these initiatives, please contact Sherrene DeLong ([sdelong@nvcc.edu](mailto:sdelong@nvcc.edu)).

## Where can I find free supplementary course materials or get more information about the program and/or the incorporating book into the coursework?

Sample course materials, discussion guides, and other helpful resources are available via our dedicated Canvas Course. The purpose of this site is not only to provide resources and ideas for teaching with the book but also opportunities to asynchronously engage in discourse with colleagues about the issues raised in the book.

For the fall semester reading guide, supporting events calendar, and additional resources, please self-enroll in a DEI Common Read Canvas Course:

- Faculty/Staff self-enroll link: <https://learn.vccs.edu/enroll/7EDAEP>
- Students self-enroll link: <https://learn.vccs.edu/enroll/7EDAEP>

If you have any issues in the course site or need help getting started, contact Kim Grewe, Instructional Designer, [kgrewe@nvcc.edu](mailto:kgrewe@nvcc.edu).

**Hosted by the Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, Student Life, & Library Council**