Strategies to Demonstrate Prioritization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Scholarship and Initiatives

# Once you set an institutional goal to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion, here are actions the institution can take:

Set goals, and figure out what you want to accomplish related to DEI Scholarship Initiatives

* Figure out the goals. Consult with various levels of administration, as well as faculty, staff, and students to understand where and how the university should prioritize research, funding, and curriculum related to DEI.

❏ Establish a DEI team to spearhead this work and allocate time and budget to get

these initiatives going.

❏ Assist the DEI team in developing a long-term strategic plan that holds the institutional leadership and departments accountable for furthering diversity work.

❏ Develop a climate survey for the entire campus community to determine areas of improvement.

❏ Provide robust training for leadership and staff.

❏ Send out information to the campus community concerning DEI work, as a way to show the commitment and prioritization of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

❏ Host workshops, trainings, and forums concerning budgets, funding, and faculty engagement in DEI scholarship and programs.

❏ Evaluate staffing, faculty, fiscal, and other resources invested in centers and departments focused on diversity, inclusion, and equity. Are the areas supported and positioned to meet the needs of the campus community?

Carve out time and budget

* It can be challenging to find time to move your DEI initiative forward. We all have other projects and priorities on our plates, but we’ve committed to giving time to DEI efforts each week.
  + *Action Steps*
    - *To help build an effective working team, engage planners and leaders in team-building experiences, and provide educational materials about diversity and institutional change. Consult identity center staff and faculty with research interests in DEI subject matter.*
    - *Identify various individuals including board members, senior or front-line managers.*
    - *Clarify time commitments and expectations for all participants.*
    - *Establish a calendar of regularly scheduled meetings for diversity planners.*
    - *Consider hiring a consultant to assist with planning and implementation.*
* Be sure to allocate a specific budget for training, time, travel, or related expenses needed for getting any new initiative off the ground.
* DEI initiatives must be consciously prioritized.. It needs to be given the same amount of thought and care that you give the rest of institutions important work.Get buy-in from the top. The governing board and leadership of the institution need to understand and appreciate how important DEI is, and why it should be prioritized. Ensure that institutional leaders have a clear sense of the value inclusive excellence brings to the university.

# Funding Research Priorities Related to DEI

**Here are some questions to ask when offering research opportunities as a way to prioritize DEI research:**

* What are the systemic barriers faced by individuals from underrepresented groups (e.g., women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, racialized minorities, individuals from LGBTQ+ communities) that have led to their underrepresentation in research?
* How might systemic barriers be different or worse for individuals who identify with more than one underrepresented group (e.g., race, gender and/or sexuality)? How could using an intersectional approach/lens help to better identify and address their systemic barriers?
* What impact does/could facing these persistent systemic barriers over the long term have on the lived experiences of individuals as students, trainees, faculty, researchers, administrators, etc.?
* What are the current employment equity gaps at your institution (i.e., which groups face barriers in employment at your institution and are thus underrepresented)?
* Are the opportunities within the team communicated to all potential candidates in an open and transparent way (i.e., made publicly available, as transparency is a best practice and is more likely to generate a diverse pool of potential candidates)?
* How or where are opportunities within the team communicated/advertised? Are there special interest groups or venues that could be targeted?
* Do the timelines in the posting/advertisement provide enough time for all interested candidates to apply?
* What proactive measures have been/could be put in place to ensure there is a wide diversity in the pool of applicants?
* Has the language of the posting/communication (if applicable) been carefully reviewed to ensure that it is unbiased and inclusive and avoids gendered language and stereotypes? Does the posting recognize that some applicants may need accommodation during the selection process (e.g., to address hearing impairments, mobility issues)?

# As you consider the above questions, here are some best practices to address a more inclusive research funding and prioritization of DEI opportunities:

* Carefully consider what role a committee can play to help identify and mitigate potential barriers within research and research teams.
* Provide training for teams that oversee research focuses and proposals, to ensure they understand why equity, diversity and inclusion are important and that there is a clear link between increased diversity and increased research excellence.
* Implement measures to ensure there is a large diversity in the pool of candidates (e.g., ensure advertisements are publicly posted and widely circulated; circulate them to special interest groups; work with your HR department to collect self-identification data on the diversity of the applicant pool using best practices; implement preferential hiring of underrepresented groups in pools of qualified candidates following your institution’s policies; etc.).
* Use non-gendered, inclusive, and unbiased language in the job posting.
* Use targeted hiring to address potential gaps within the team (in coordination with your HR department /Identity centers and ODI staff).
* Ask your HR department what your institution’s accommodation practices are.

Within the selection process:

* + Actively challenge the notion of rewarding or overvaluing the familiar, such as traditional, westernized approaches to research;
  + Consider whether the interview questions allow candidates to speak to different ways of knowing, methods and/or experiences (e.g., how will space be given to candidates to speak about, and be evaluated on, research-based in Indigenous ways of knowing);
  + Evaluate the candidates’ demonstrated commitments to EDI.

Resources:

Adapted from the University of Denver Inclusive Excellence Tool Kit and Resources.

Jeste, D. V., Twamley, E. W., Cardenas, V., Lebowitz, B., & Reynolds, C. F. (2009). A call for training the trainers: Focus on mentoring to enhance diversity in mental health research. *American Journal of Public Health*, *99*(S1), S31–S37. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2008.154633