Adaptive Strategic Planning for Inclusive Excellence

Guidance and Toolkit

Oregon State
University

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What Is Inclusive Excellence and Why Does It Matter?

Inclusive excellence describes an organization's capacity to thrive as a function of its ability to value and engage the rich diversity of its community members. Sustainably advancing inclusive excellence means embedding equity and inclusion in every operational aspect of an organization.

The landscape of higher education is rapidly changing. The ongoing resilience of colleges and universities depends on their ability to advance inclusive excellence. Oregon State serves an increasingly diverse community of learners. Challenges facing the communities we serve are complex and interconnected. Our research and outreach missions are linked globally and locally in new and promising ways. And while we constantly seek to evolve and improve, we must always confront persistent historical inequities in higher education and at Oregon State.

Advancing inclusive excellence is a key strategic priority at Oregon State. And at the core of this work is an acknowledgment that we each have a role to play. Progress must involve every Oregon State community member — students, faculty, staff, alumni and community partners alike — working within their spheres of influence to create change.

Strategic Planning Drives Inclusive Excellence

The project of organizational transformation to advance inclusive excellence is ongoing, iterative and at times uncomfortable.

Anti-racist, liberatory organizational transformation means changing practices and systems that were not created to serve marginalized and minoritized community members. However, when organizations adapt to center marginalized and minoritized community members, benefits accrue to everybody and to the entire organization. Organizations become better at what they do, for more people. This principle, long understood by activists and scholars, is now properly framed as necessary to the creation of healthy, resilient and accountable organizations that operate successfully in contemporary, complex environments.

Developing a strategic plan drives organizational transformation. Research suggests that sustainable organizational change occurs when inclusive excellence is embedded in the priorities of the university, actualized at the institutional level, and catalyzed by local, unit-level strategies and actions responding to local contexts and needs. Without these interconnected strategies, success is less likely.

Over the last two years, Oregon State has embedded inclusive excellence in its central strategic plan (Transformation, Excellence and Impact: SP 4.0) and adopted its first diversity strategic plan (Innovate and Integrate: A Plan for Inclusive Excellence) to guide the institution's overall efforts. Now, developing strategies and driving action at the local, unit-level is the focus of this guidance.

Adaptive Strategic Planning for Inclusive Excellence

Adaptive Strategic Planning for Inclusive Excellence is a research-based framework developed by the Office of Institutional Diversity to allow organizations to engage in a deliberative and iterative process to envision and create sustainable anti-racist and liberatory organizational transformation.

The framework, animated by this guidance and toolkit, is not a prescription. Many units have made great progress by adopting unit-level diversity strategic plans or by incorporating diversity-related goals into unit-level strategic plans. The components of this framework can be adopted and modified as appropriate and as context requires. This can include incorporating aspects of this framework into existing diversity strategic plans or utilizing the framework to inform diversity goals embedded in larger organizational strategic plans. However, we suggest that organizations begin by considering the framework as a whole to best understand its use and purpose.

Finally, while the process of change is difficult, it should also be joyful. Realizing an organization motivated by inclusive excellence means thinking creatively and developing systems that are healthy and resilient. When inclusive excellence is realized, people working within organizations know they belong and feel supported. Organizations motivated by inclusive excellence are better able to live out their mission, vision and values. And a successful process of organizational transformation resists a deficit mindset by continually reinforcing that every member of an organization plays an important role in creating change.

How To Use this Guidance and Toolkit

This guidance and toolkit provides a process to implement the Adaptive Strategic Planning for Inclusive Excellence Framework at the unit level along with tools to move the process forward.

By unit, we mean any subunit of a larger institutional whole. This includes colleges, divisions, departments, schools and so forth. The flexibility of this strategic planning model allows for plans to nest within each other and within Oregon State's larger strategic planning effort and priorities.

Some important points to keep in mind when using this guidance and toolkit include:

- The guidance and toolkit is organized into steps within each part of the framework. These steps may be followed in order or engaged in an order appropriate to local context. Each step also includes a set of guiding questions to support the planning process.

- We suggest initially reviewing this guidance to reflect, make notes and pose questions to inform your unit's strategic planning process. When you are ready, we recommend contacting the Office of Institutional Diversity to discuss the process and any questions, acquire additional information and outline a work plan.

- The Office of Institutional Diversity will remain available throughout the diversity strategic planning process to provide technical assistance and facilitation where helpful.

When your unit's diversity strategic plan is complete, please provide it to the Office of Institutional Diversity. This will support ongoing diversity strategic planning implementation and assessment efforts at the university level.

Definitions

We will use the following definitions throughout this guidance:

- **INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE** describes a state in which an organization's ability to thrive and grow is tied to its ability to value, engage and include the rich diversity of its community members, including its students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends and affiliates.

- **DIVERSITY** reflects the many ways in which individuals and communities are unique, contributing distinct and valuable experiences and perspectives to the mission and vision of an organization.

- **EQUITY** reflects justice in the distribution of and access to opportunity for all individuals, recognizing the influence of historical and contemporary oppression and injustice in the inequitable distribution of and access to opportunity.

- **INCLUSION** reflects the manner in which individuals of diverse backgrounds are not only included but valued as necessary voices within an organization.

- **UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES** consist of individuals holding identities broadly underrepresented, minoritized or marginalized within academic or administrative areas at Oregon State, within the state of Oregon and nationally in higher education.

- The **OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY** includes current students and employees of Oregon State University and the OSU Foundation, emeriti employees, alumni, affiliates and non-OSU affiliated community partners and collaborators.

- **CLIMATE** refers to the way that an organization is perceived and experienced by its individual members. Climate influences whether individuals feel valued, listened to, personally safe and treated with fairness and dignity within an organization.

- **ENGAGEMENT** reflects an organization's commitment to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion internally and externally.

- **INNOVATION** refers to the creation and introduction of a new, improved and transformative idea, initiative, practice or structure.

- **INTEGRATION** refers to the sustainable incorporation of an idea, initiative, practice or structure into an organization.

The terms included here have many definitions. We provide these definitions to ground this strategic planning framework. They should not prevent an organization from exploring additional or alternative definitions that respond to local contexts or needs.

Adaptive Strategic Planning Framework

Overview

The Adaptive Strategic Planning for Inclusive Excellence Framework (which we'll refer to as Adaptive Strategic Planning) is drawn from an operational framework — *adaptive management* — known widely in the ecology and conservation fields.

Adaptive management is a flexible decision-making process "that can be adjusted in the face of uncertainties as outcomes become better understood," characterized by "an evolving process that includes learning (the accumulation of understanding over time) and adaptation (the adjustment of management over time)." (Williams and Brown, 2014). Adaptive management is well-suited for complex, dynamic systems involving multiple stakeholders, significant variation in potential outcomes and a need for adaptability to reach desired outcomes.

The features that make adaptive management appropriate for complex decisions in the natural world make it applicable to strategic planning for inclusive excellence, where conditions, variables and stakeholder needs are consistently changing. Indeed, the benefits of this framework include the ability to:

- Respond to complexity in organizational systems.
- Respond to rapidly changing conditions and stakeholder needs.
- Emphasize organizational and individual learning and capacity building.
- Emphasize iteration and adaptation as necessary for change.
- Emphasize measurement and communication of progress and challenges.
- Emphasize accountability through learning.

The emphasis on iteration and adaptation aims to solve the most frequent challenge to diversity strategic plans — the inability to account for challenges experienced when transforming organizations. Too frequently, diversity strategic plans articulate meaningful goals without a plan to measure progress, learn from experience and adapt to changing conditions.

Finally, while every organization experiences challenges in implementing strategic plans, plans aimed at advancing inclusive excellence can be difficult to implement. Structural oppression, power and hierarchy, deeply embedded biases and differences in individual and organizational capacity to evolve all contribute to a challenging landscape for sustainable change toward equity. The Adaptive Strategic Planning Framework responds to these challenges by centering learning, accountability and adaptation within the change process.
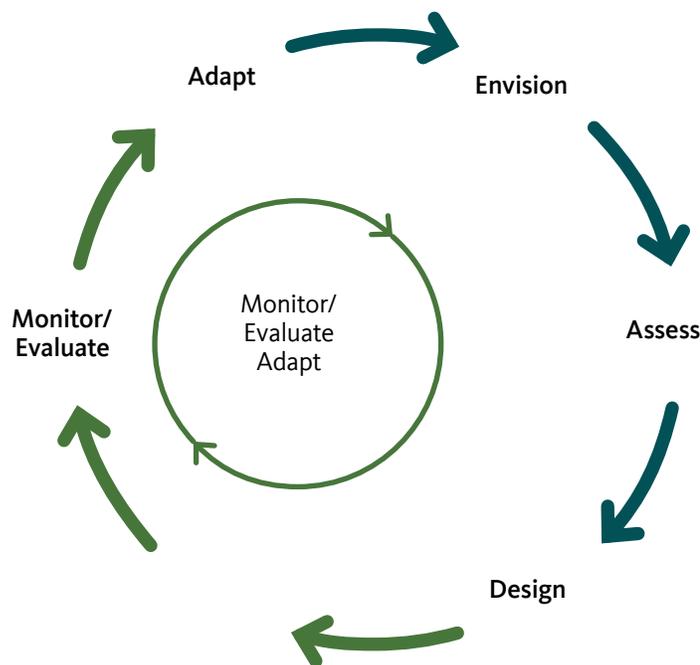
Framework

The Adaptive Strategic Planning Framework is built on a "double-learning loop" with two distinct phases:

- A **deliberative phase** involving envisioning, assessment and design.
- An **iterative phase** involving implementation, monitoring/evaluation and adaptation.

The "double-learning loop" describes an ongoing process of implementation, learning and adaptation after the adaptive strategic plan is developed and implementation is underway. This process allows for change to occur based on context, changing circumstances and other external and internal variables that inevitably impact organizational change efforts.

Adapt → Envision

Monitor/
Evaluate

Monitor/
Evaluate
Adapt

Assess

Monitor/
Evaluate

Design

In the **deliberative phase**, organizations:

- Envision an organization motivated by inclusive excellence.
- Assess opportunities for growth and change through systematic inquiry.
- Design strategic objectives and actions to drive change toward inclusive excellence.

In the **iterative phase**, organizations:

- Implement actions to realize objectives while recording learning.
- Monitor and evaluate progress on objectives and actions.
- Adapt objectives and actions based on lessons learned.

Organizations remain in the iterative phase until it is appropriate to move back into the deliberative phase and begin the planning process again.

Adaptive Strategic Planning Process

The Adaptive Strategic Planning process typically proceeds in the following order:

I. **Assemble the Adaptive Strategic Planning Team.**
   a. Establish the team, charge and work plan.
   b. Develop team agreements and explore orientations to organizational change.

II. **Initiate the Deliberative Phase.**
   a. Envision an organization animated by inclusive excellence.
   b. Assess opportunities for growth and change through systematic inquiry.
   c. Design the diversity strategic plan.

III. **Sustain the Iterative Phase.**
   a. Implement actions and record learning.
   b. Monitor, evaluate and record progress and potential adaptations.
   c. Adapt objectives and actions by assessing progress and incorporating learning.

These steps are elaborated in detail on the following pages.

Assemble the Adaptive Strategic Planning Team

Advancing inclusive excellence requires a commitment of unit leadership and a team of individuals to lead the organization through the Adaptive Strategic Planning process.

Without meaningful support from unit leaders, diversity strategic planning efforts are frequently short-lived or limited in efficacy. This framework presumes unit leadership has committed itself to supporting not only the planning process, but ongoing implementation, assessment and iteration. This includes committing the resources — human and financial — necessary to meaningfully engage in the planning process.

Establish the Adaptive Strategic Planning team, charge and work plan

The Adaptive Strategic Planning team plays a critical role in leading the unit through the diversity strategic planning process. Key to this team's success is setting a strong team foundation by establishing clear expectations and metrics for success and building team orientation through group learning and dialogue.

Process

1. Select diversity strategic planning team leaders and establish a budget for planning.
   - The team should have capacity — in terms of time, organizational authority and support of unit leadership — to lead the planning process.
   - The budget should account for opportunities to communicate and gather input from stakeholders throughout the planning process.

   > **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
   > - What will team leaders need to be successful?
   > - How will unit leadership support the team leaders throughout the process?
   > - What resources are necessary to engage the broadest cross section of stakeholders during the planning process?

2. Draft the Adaptive Strategic Planning team charge and work plan.
   - The team leads and unit leadership should jointly draft the team charge and work plan to include:
     » Team members.
     » Clear articulation of the relationship between the Adaptive Strategic Planning process and advancing the mission, vision, values and strategic objectives of the unit and the university.
     » Outcomes for the team.
     » Timeline and milestones to meet outcomes.
     » Proposed frequency and modality of team communication and meetings (in-person, remote, etc.).
     » Recognition for team members (service credit, professional development credit, etc.).
     » Budget for the team's planning work.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- How do the outcomes for the team align with the university's vision, mission, values, strategic plan and diversity strategic plan?
- Who will be responsible for ensuring the team remains on track?
- Will the timeline provide sufficient time to meet the outcomes for the team given team members' other commitments?

3. Recruit and invite team members.
   - Team members should include diverse stakeholders affiliated with all functions of the organization (teaching, research, administration, leadership and community outreach) and roles within the organization (faculty, staff, students, administration and community stakeholders).
   - The invitation to team members should include the charge and clarify recognition provided for participation.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- Are diverse social identities and lived experiences represented within the committee?
- Are diverse community members being repeatedly asked to contribute; if so, how can their commitments be equitably balanced?
- If the unit operates in several locations, are team members from each location represented?

4. Develop and implement a communication plan to inform stakeholders about the diversity strategic planning process.
   - The communication plan should aim to provide information about the process, including the charge, the planning team, its role and timeline.
     » In communications, connect the diversity strategic planning process to the vision, mission, values and strategic plans of the unit and the university.
     » Include a commitment to creating opportunities for stakeholders to contribute throughout the planning process.
   - Develop a diversity strategic planning website to communicate information and updates about the process with stakeholders.
   - Consider communicating updates to stakeholders' feedback at the beginning and end of every major juncture in the diversity strategic planning deliberative phase: visioning, assessment and design.

Tools

- Diversity strategic planning team charge and work plan template
- Diversity strategic planning communication plan template

Develop team agreements and explore orientations to organizational change

Developing team agreements and exploring orientations to organizational change are essential parts of the diversity strategic planning process. Without creating team agreements or shared knowledge about anti-racist, liberatory organizational change, individuals often assume that everyone is "on the same page" when in fact this is frequently not the case. Spending enough time on this step leads to more informed, more inclusive outcomes within the process.

Process

1. Meet to launch, charge team and develop team agreements.

   - Introduce team members to describe roles within the committee and in the unit, connect membership to interest and connection to diversity strategic planning (e.g., research/professional area, lived experience, personal/professional interest).

   - Deliberate and develop team agreements to determine how the team will work together, particularly through points of conflict or disagreement.

   - Review the committee charge and work plan to determine where additional clarification is needed.

   - Review the planning budget, time commitment and recognition for work.

2. Explore team orientations to diversity, equity and inclusion and organizational change by engaging in shared learning.

   - Consider shared learning in the following areas:

     » Exploring orientations to diversity, equity and inclusion through lived experiences inside and outside of the university.

     » Growing capacity to work across difference.

     » Building knowledge of theories explaining organizational change to advance inclusive excellence.

     » Gaining a deeper understanding of the functions and processes of the unit and the relationship of the unit to the university and the wider community.

     » Growing capacity to analyze organizational policies and practices and design interventions to create equitable outcomes.

     » Other areas identified by team members.

   - Consult with the Office of Institutional Diversity to outline needs and establish a plan for shared learning.

   GUIDING QUESTIONS:

   - What level of facilitation is necessary to successfully engage in shared learning?
   - What do we need from team members and what do team members need from each other to be successful in reaching the team's goals?
   - How will team members use their knowledge and orientation toward diversity, equity and inclusion and organizational change to inform the diversity strategic planning process?

Tools

- [Creating team agreements tool](#)
- Workshops to explore team orientations to diversity, equity and inclusion and organizational change (contact OID for more information).

Initiate the Deliberative Phase

The deliberative phase of the Adaptive Strategic Planning process consists of the following processes:

- **ENVISION** — Envision an organization animated by inclusive excellence.
- **ASSESS** — Assess opportunities for growth and change through systematic inquiry.
- **DESIGN** — Design the diversity strategic plan to catalyze inclusive excellence.

Envision an organization animated by inclusive excellence

Deliberating an organization animated by inclusive excellence requires thinking deeply about embedding equity into the functions of the organization and the processes supporting these functions. The visioning process should involve all stakeholders, whose insights and ongoing commitments will be necessary to develop a strong diversity strategic plan.

Process

1. Deliberate an organizational vision animated by inclusive excellence.
   - Create opportunities for the diversity strategic planning team to deliberate a vision for the organization animated by inclusive excellence.
   - Begin assessing the unit's functions and processes.
     » Functions may include:
       - Research
       - Teaching
       - Employee/student support
       - Administration/leadership
       - Community outreach and engagement
       - Development and fundraising
     » Processes may include:
       - Policy and decision-making (budgeting, compliance, scheduling, etc.)
       - Employee/student recruitment
       - Employee/student retention and advancement
       - Employee/student education and development
       - Communication, internal and external
   - Consider what each of the unit's functions and processes would look like, sound like and feel like when equity is embedded.
   - Consider conducting an organizational equity self-audit to contribute to the team's informed perspective (contact OID for more information).
   - Following this assessment, develop an organizational vision that articulates what change is necessary to embed equity into each function and process and within the unit as a whole.

2. Create opportunities to collect vision input from stakeholders.
   - Develop opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the vision of the unit.
   - Provide multiple modalities to contribute, including synchronous and asynchronous, in-person and remote.
   - Communicate in multiple modalities with unit stakeholders to invite participation in the visioning process.

3. Synthesize input and summarize the vision.
   - Meet as a team to synthesize input gathered from stakeholders with the vision developed by the planning team.
   - Categorize stakeholder input within the unit functions and processes to prepare the team to design objectives and actions that advance the vision for inclusive excellence.
   - Deliberate priorities within this vision to guide development of objectives and actions.
   - In a document, summarize the visioning process and outcomes.

Tools

- Inclusive excellence visioning engagement models (contact OID for more information).
- Organizational equity audit tools (contact OID for more information).
- Curriculum to develop equity policy and practice literacy (contact OID for more information).

Assess opportunities for growth and change through systematic inquiry

Engaging in systematic inquiry is essential to designing a strong diversity strategic plan. Inquiry helps teams understand where the organization has been and where it could go. This inquiry allows a team to discern possible objectives and actions to create change. Ethically engaging in this analysis helps teams articulate clear priorities among several important objectives.

Process

1. Engage in shared learning regarding equitable and ethical use of organizational equity data.
   - Equity can be difficult to assess, particularly when many "success" metrics reflect organizational biases.
   - Create opportunities for shared learning to understand equity-related organizational data and how to engage in ethical analysis of these data.
   - Deliberate principles for data analysis to guide the team's work, including how data will be accessed and deliberated within the team.

   > **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
   > - What capacity do team members have to analyze organizational equity data?
   > - If some team members have more capacity for analysis, how can their experience support this part of the process while ensuring other team members are included?
   > - What core questions will best help the team query the data?

2. Request organizational equity data from OID and partner offices.
   - OID can provide a wide array of disaggregated organizational equity data related to the functions and processes of the unit, including results from the Inclusive Excellence Assessment Initiative.
   - Partner offices — including Student Affairs Assessment, Human Resources, Equal Opportunity and Access, Institutional Research and the Research Office — may also have data specific to your unit.
   - If available, seek comparative data for similar units at Oregon State and at peer or aspirational institutions.

3. Gather additional data for analysis, if necessary.
   - The diversity strategic planning process can provide an opportunity for organizational assessment regarding diversity, equity and inclusion.
   - Before conducting a new survey, consider whether it may bring up issues that:
     » Have already been assessed by other surveys (e.g., Inclusive Excellence Assessment Initiative, university climate surveys, etc.).
     » Have already surfaced during the visioning stage.
   - If the team believes additional organizational assessment would be necessary and helpful to the planning process, consult OID for more information and guidance.

4. Analyze organizational equity data to determine areas of strength, areas for growth and missing data.
   - Deliberate questions based on the team's analysis principles to query the unit's equity data.
   - With the unit's previously identified functions and processes, conduct the analysis to determine areas where the unit is performing well and where the unit has opportunities for growth.
   - Determine what questions are unanswered by the available data. Consider what data would be needed to answer these questions.
   - In a document, summarize the team's analysis in terms of areas of strength, areas for growth and where additional data is needed.

5. Deliberate promising practices.
   - Consult internal and external research, reports, analyses, publications and other sources of expert knowledge to deliberate promising practices.
   - Focus analysis of these practices on the vision articulated by the team based on stakeholder input.
   - In a document, summarize promising practices the team is most interested in exploring and implementing based on the vision articulated and areas for growth identified through analysis of organizational equity data.

   > **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
   > - Where are best and promising practices in use? What allows these practices to be successful in these locations?
   > - Has the team considered best and promising practices articulated by marginalized constituencies, not just those with organizational power?
   > - Unburdened by resource constraints, what best or promising practices would create the most significant positive impact within the unit?

Tools
- Inclusive Excellence Assessment Initiative Survey Report (contact OID for more information).
- Organizational Equity Data Report (contact OID for more information).
- Curriculum to develop equity data literacy (contact OID for more information).
- Organizational self-assessment tools (contact OID for more information).

Design the diversity strategic plan

Deliberation pays dividends, and the team is now prepared to design a diversity strategic plan and communicate the plan with stakeholders. The plan is informed by an organizational vision resulting from significant stakeholder input, analysis of data and best and promising practices. Now, the team must deliberate objectives and actions to advance the vision while articulating what progress looks like and how it will be measured.

Process

1. Integrate vision and assessment to determine objectives.
   - Utilizing the vision developed by the team and the analysis of organizational equity data, develop a set of objectives to advance inclusive excellence within each of the functions and processes of the unit.
   - Objectives, also called goals, should be written broadly enough to allow a range of stakeholder actions to advance them.

2. Develop actions to advance the objectives.
   - Once the objectives are selected, develop a set of actions for each objective.
   - Whereas objectives may be more general, actions should be specific, articulating a step toward completing the objective.
   - If an action requires something be done before the action can be started, consider rewriting the action to articulate the initial step.
   - For each action, determine:
     » Who is responsible for implementation (this may be an individual or team).
     » Which stakeholders will be involved in implementation.
     » How much time the action should take to complete.
     » The estimated budget to complete the action.
   - When developing the actions, consult with unit leadership to determine time and budget; these should reflect as accurate an assessment as possible.

3. Develop metrics for each action.
   - Once actions are developed, design monitoring (short-term) and evaluation (long-term) metrics for each action.
     » Monitoring metrics should be measurable within a 3-to-9-month time frame. Determine what would indicate progress for the action within this time frame.
     » Evaluation metrics should be measurable within a 9-to-18-month time frame. Determine what would indicate progress for an action within this time frame.
     » If you are unable to articulate what progress looks like on an action within these time frames, consider re-writing the action.

- Metrics may be quantitative, qualitative or both.
- Consider whether it is presently possible to assess the metric (e.g., progress can be assessed without building a survey, etc.). If it is not, develop an action to address assessment or select a different metric.

> **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
> - How quickly can progress be made given the complexity of the action and objective?
> - Will the action owner have the capacity to assess the metric on their own, or will they need support from another team or office? Is this support accounted for in the timeline and budget?

4. Synthesize the vision, assessment, objectives, actions and metrics into a diversity strategic plan.
   - Organize the deliberative process into a diversity strategic plan describing the following:
     » Charge for the diversity strategic planning process.
     » Relationship between the diversity strategic planning process and advancing the vision, mission, values and strategic objectives of the unit and the university.
     » Diversity strategic planning team and charge.
     » Summary of community engagement process.
     » Summary of data analysis and promising practices assessment.
     » Unit vision for inclusive excellence.
     » Objectives, actions and metrics.
     » Next steps, the iterative implementation process and accountability (described below).
   - Create a diversity strategic plan tracking tool that allows for easy reference, progress reporting and evaluation by multiple stakeholders.

> **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
> - How will the diversity strategic plan "tell the story" of the process to ensure stakeholders can see the connections between their engagement and the final plan?
> - How will stakeholders understand that they each have a role to play in realizing the objectives articulated by the diversity strategic plan?
> - Is the diversity strategic plan written accessibly to avoid unnecessary jargon and terminology, and are technical terms defined and made clear?
> - Where will the diversity strategic plan tracking document be stored to allow for access and editing by multiple stakeholders?

5. Communicate with unit leadership and stakeholders to announce the diversity strategic plan.
    - Seek feedback from unit leadership on the diversity strategic planning document.
    - In partnership with unit leadership, announce the diversity strategic plan and provide opportunities for feedback and questions.
    - Ensure the communication includes a clear articulation of accountability for the plan's implementation.
    - Update the diversity strategic plan website to reflect the beginning of the implementation phase.
    - Provide your unit's completed diversity strategic plan to the Office of Institutional Diversity to support ongoing assessment efforts at the university level.

> **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
> - What modalities will allow unit leadership and the diversity strategic planning team to communicate to the broadest array of stakeholders?
> - How will leadership publicly recognize contributions of diversity strategic planning team members and stakeholders in developing the plan?

Tools

- Objectives, actions and metrics development guides (contact OID for more information)
- Adaptive diversity strategic plan template
- Adaptive diversity strategic plan tracking tool template

Sustain the Iterative Phase

The Iterative Phase of Adaptive Strategic Planning consists of the following processes:

- **IMPLEMENT** — Implement actions and record learning.
- **MONITOR AND EVALUATE** — Monitor, evaluate and record progress and potential adaptations.
- **ADAPT** — Adapt objectives and actions by assessing progress and incorporating learning.

Implement actions and record learning

During this phase, actions are implemented, and those responsible for implementation begin to record lessons learned. The diversity strategic planning team's role shifts initially into an accountability role and then an ongoing consulting role as stakeholders enter the implementation phase.

1. Develop and implement diversity strategic plan tracking and progress update process; communicate expectations to action owners.

   - Develop a straightforward process for action owners to record progress and learning; make instructions easily accessible and provide opportunities to ask questions.
   - Unit leaders and diversity strategic plan implementation leads should communicate the implementation plan to action owners and articulate expectations for recording progress updates and learning.
   - Action owners implement actions and enter progress updates and learning in the diversity strategic plan tracking tool.

   > **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
   > - If more than one stakeholder is responsible for implementing an action, who is responsible for recording progress and learning?
   > - How will unit leadership hold action owners accountable for tracking and reporting on implementation?
   > - Who will take responsibility for answering questions about the implementation and tracking process?

2. Articulate a continuing role for diversity strategic planning team.

   - Within 30 days of implementation beginning, unit leadership and the diversity strategic planning team should meet to debrief the planning process.
   - Consider strengths of the planning process and areas for growth.
   - Develop a plan for the diversity strategic planning team (in its entirety or certain members) to remain involved as process advisors to consult on tracking and adaptations through the iterative phase.

> **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
> - Did the diversity strategic planning process reflect the vision and outcomes provided in the charge?
> - What adaptations can be made to the diversity strategic planning process during the next deliberative phase?
> - Will the diversity strategic planning team transition to a new role moving forward or sunset its current form?
> - What role will team members have as process advisors; is this a formal or informal role?

Tools

- Adaptive diversity strategic plan tracking tool template

Monitor, evaluate and record progress and potential adaptations

The heart of the iterative phase within the Adaptive Strategic Planning Framework is the monitoring and evaluation process. This process includes recording progress and learning and proposing potential adaptations based on changing circumstances and conditions.

1. Collect and record monitoring and evaluation metrics.
   - Action owners collect and record monitoring and evaluation metrics for actions.
   - Monitoring and evaluation progress should be recorded in the diversity strategic planning tracking document.
   - Learning should also be recorded to inform potential adaptations. Learning can include:
     » Encountering unforeseen obstacles.
     » Shifting conditions or priorities.
     » Additional complexity in implementation.
     » Stakeholder feedback.
     » Capacity and budget limitations.
     » Any item that helps others better understand the implementation process.
2. Propose and record potential adaptations to actions and objectives.
   - Based on changing or more complex circumstances, potential adaptations will become clear and should be recorded in the diversity strategic planning tracking document.
   - Adaptations can include:
     » Broadening or limiting the scope of an action.
     » Changing the focus of an action to account for different or more complex circumstances.
     » Creating an additional action to account for needed processes that don't yet exist.
     » Adjusting the time or budget of an action based on a clearer understanding of needed resources.
     » Including additional action owners or stakeholders to create more capacity or provide more equitable distribution of effort.

Tools

- Adaptive diversity strategic plan tracking tool template

Adapt actions and objectives

At regular intervals, unit leaders, action owners and the diversity strategic planning team should consider proposed adaptations for adopting. This provides frequent opportunities to make course corrections to actions, pursue more ambitious objectives and create a sustainable feedback loop that catalyzes consistent, accountable organizational change. Adaptations can be proposed and adopted multiple times. Eventually, based on the assessment of unit leadership, diversity strategic plan team members, action owners and stakeholders, the opportunity will emerge to re-enter the deliberative phase to deeply evaluate the unit's progress and consider the organization's next chapter as it continues to advance inclusive excellence.

1. Develop and adopt adaptations to objectives and actions.
   - On a regular basis, unit leaders, diversity strategic plan team members, action owners and stakeholders should consider and adopt proposed adaptations to actions and objectives.
   - In some cases, the adaptations will have already been implemented, but should be formally reflected in the diversity strategic plan documents.

> **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
> - Is the proposed adaptation consistent with the vision for inclusive excellence originally articulated?
> - Does the proposed adaptation advance the equitable distribution of resources and capacity among action owners and stakeholders?
> - Will the unit support the implementation of adaptations in terms of budget and time?
> - Does the adaptation consider the perspectives of communities impacted by the action or objective?
> - Are the perspectives of marginalized communities included in the consideration and adoption of adaptations?

2. Communicate progress and process to stakeholders.

   - On a regular basis, unit leadership should communicate progress and, if appropriate, challenges and setbacks on the diversity strategic plan with stakeholders and provide opportunities for feedback.
   - Feedback should be considered and implemented when developing adaptations to objectives and actions.
   - Consider multiple communication modalities to reach as many stakeholders as possible.

   > **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
   >
   > - As a committed stakeholder of an organization outside of my workplace, how often would I like to hear from that organization related to important changes underway?
   > - How can the unit candidly "tell its story" as it advances inclusive excellence?

3. Determine whether to remain in the iterative phase or return to the deliberative phase.

   - On a regular basis, depending on progress made on the current diversity strategic plan, unit leadership and diversity strategic planning team members should consider whether to return to the deliberative phase of the Adaptive Strategic Planning process.
   - In some cases, when a significant majority of actions are completed and objectives have been accomplished, the opportunity for a transition to the deliberative phase will be clear.
   - In other cases, a transition may be appropriate due to significantly changed circumstances, consistent lack of progress, disengagement of stakeholders, a transition in leadership or other event that requires the unit to reevaluate its diversity strategic plan.
   - When the transition to the deliberative phase is appropriate, return to the beginning of this guidance and start again.

   > **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
   >
   > - Has the unit made consistent, sustainable progress toward implementation of the diversity strategic plan, or has progress stalled or otherwise slowed?
   > - Has accountability for implementation created opportunities for growth and organizational change, or has it created concern and apathy?
   > - Has implementation consistently engaged a broad cross section of stakeholders or only a few members of the organization?
   > - Is the unit healthier and more resilient as a result of the diversity strategic plan? Are further unexplored areas for growth possible?

Tools

- [Adaptive diversity strategic plan tracking tool template](#)

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