

# Adaptive Strategic Planning for Inclusive Excellence Guidance and Toolkit



**Oregon State University**  
Office of Institutional  
Diversity

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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 success and ongoing resilience of colleges and universities is dependent on their ability to advance inclusive excellence. Oregon State serves an increasingly diverse community of learners. Challenges facing the communities we serve are increasingly 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 also confront historical inequities in higher education and Oregon State that are persistent and, in some cases, widening.

Advancing inclusive excellence is a key strategic priority at Oregon State. At the core of this priority is an acknowledgment that we each have a role to play, and 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. 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 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 framework developed by the Office of Institutional Diversity to allow organizations to engage in a deliberative and iterative process to envision and create sustainable 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 local 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, and tools to move the process forward.

By unit, we mean any sub-unit 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 to 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 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 that recognizes 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 responding 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 or ASP) is drawn from an operational framework – *adaptive management* – known widely in the natural resources 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 for 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.

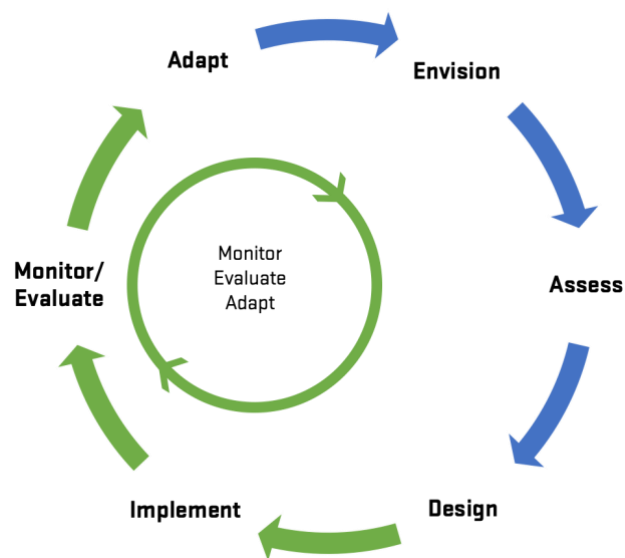
Finally, while every organization experiences challenge in implementing strategic plans, plans aimed at advancing inclusive excellence can be challenging to implement. Structural oppression, power and hierarchy, deeply embedded biases, and differences in individual and organizational capacity to evolve all contribute to a challenging landscape for sustainable change towards equity. The Adaptive Strategic Planning Framework responds to this challenge by embracing it and 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; and
- An **iterative phase** involving implementation, monitoring/evaluation, and adaptation.

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



In the **deliberative phase**, organizations:

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

In the **iterative phase**, organizations:

- Implement actions to realize objectives while recording learning;
- Monitor and evaluate progress to determine adaptations to the objectives and actions, and
- Adapt objectives and actions based on lessons learned and progress tracked.

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



By continually engaging the diversity strategic planning process, whether in deliberation or iteration, the adaptative strategic planning model also seeks to integrate inclusive excellence into the everyday work of every member of the organization, which is necessary to create change that is both responsive to context and sustainable.

## 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 adaptive strategic planning process. Key to this team's success is setting a strong team foundation through establishing clear expectations and metrics for success, and building team orientation through group learning and dialogue.

#### Process

#### 1. Select adaptive diversity strategic planning team leaders and establish a budget for planning

- The adaptive strategic planning team should have capacity – in terms of time, organizational authority, support of unit leadership – to lead the planning process
- The diversity strategic planning budget should account for opportunities to communicate and gather input from stakeholders throughout the planning process
- *Guiding questions:*
  - What will diversity strategic planning team leaders need to be successful?
  - How will unit leadership support the adaptive diversity strategic planning 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 diversity strategic planning team charge and work plan

- The diversity strategic planning team leads and unit leadership should jointly draft the diversity strategic planning team charge and work plan to include:
  - Diversity strategic planning team members
  - Clear articulation of the relationship between the diversity strategic planning process and advancing the mission, vision, values and strategic objectives of the unit and university
  - Outcomes for the team
  - Timeline and milestones 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 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

- Diversity strategic planning team members should be diverse stakeholders affiliated with all *functions* of the organization including 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 diversity strategic planning process to mission, values and strategic plans of unit and university
  - Include commitment to creating opportunities for stakeholders to contribute throughout 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 beginning and end of every major juncture in diversity strategic deliberative phase: visioning, assessment, and design
- *Guiding questions:*
  - Who are the unit's stakeholders in the broadest sense?

- How to unit stakeholders best receive and process information (email, videos, social media)?
- How can unit leadership communicate most broadly and inclusively with unit member and stakeholders (i.e. multiple communication modalities, translation, etc.)

### **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 is essential part of the diversity strategic planning process. Without creating team agreements or shared knowledge about 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 diversity strategic planning process.

### Process

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

- Introduce team members to describe roles within the committee and in 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 work together, particularly through points of conflict or disagreement
- Review the committee charge and work plan to determine where is additional clarification needed
- Review the planning budget, time-commitment, and recognition for work
- *Guiding questions:*
  - Given stakeholder locations and positions, what is the best modality to launch the diversity strategic planning process?
  - What level of facilitation is necessary to successful launch the diversity strategic planning process and develop team agreements?
  - What will team members need from leads and each other to be successful?

#### 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 experience inside and outside of the university
  - 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 wider community
  - Exploring the connections between unit-level diversity strategic planning and successfully advancing unit and university’s mission, vision, values and strategic objectives
  - Growing capacity to work with each other across difference
  - Other areas identified by committee members

- Consult with the Office of Institutional Diversity to outline needs and establish plan for shared learning
- *Guiding questions:*
  - What level of facilitation is necessary to successfully engage in group learning?
  - What do we need from committee members need from each other to be successful in reaching the committee's goals?
  - How will committee members use their knowledge and orientation towards diversity, equity and inclusion, and organizational change, to inform the diversity strategic planning process?

## **Tools**

- Team agreements template
- Team agreements exercise
- OID curriculum to explore team orientations to diversity, equity and inclusion, and organizational change

## Initiate the Deliberative Phase

The deliberative phase of 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 an adaptive 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 in the functions of the organization and the processes supporting these functions. The visioning process should involve all stakeholders, whose insight and ongoing commitment 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 by determining 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

- Using this process, develop an organizational vision that articulates what *change* is necessary to embed equity in each function and process, and within the unit as a whole
- *Guiding Questions:*
  - How can the unit's functions and processes center the needs of the most marginalized stakeholders?
  - Unburdened by resource and time constraints, how would equity be centered in each function and process of the unit?
  - What will an observer notice about the organization in ten years if the organizational vision is realized?

## 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
- *Guiding questions:*
  - Whose voices need to be heard in the diversity strategic planning process? Whose voices do we typically miss?
  - How do we identify and address barriers faced by community members to provide input to the planning process?
  - How do we convey the importance and value of community participation in the planning process?

## 3. Gather and summarize vision data

- 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 to advance the vision for inclusive excellence
- In a document, summarize the visioning process and outcomes
- *Guiding questions*
  - Is the input received inclusive of unit stakeholders? If not, how can additional input be gathered?
  - In which areas is there the most team and stakeholder agreement? The most disagreement? How is this agreement/disagreement reconciled in the vision?

## **Tools**

Organizational inclusive excellence visioning template  
 Inclusive excellence visioning workshop models



## 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 metrics used to measure “success” reflect their own 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 discussed 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 the offices of Student Affairs Assessment, Human Resources, Equal Opportunity and Access, the Office of Institution Research, and the Office of Research – 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
- *Guiding questions:*
  - What data is most necessary to contextualize the strategic vision articulated by the team?
  - How should data be disaggregated in order to provide value to the assessment process?
  - How much data is “enough” to proceed with the analysis?

### 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 surface issues that have (1) have already been assessed by other surveys (e.g. Inclusive Excellence Assessment Initiative, university climate surveys, etc.), or (2) have already surfaced during the visioning stage
- If the team believes additional organizational assessment is would be necessary and helpful to the planning process, consult OID for more information and guidance
- *Guiding questions:*
  - Which topics are necessary to assess to inform the planning process, and which topics are important, but not vital?
  - How can the visioning programming access stakeholder attitudes about “climate” without administering a climate survey?

### 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
- *Guiding questions:*
  - What questions are we seeking to answer by querying these data?
  - Compared to other units at OSU, and externally, where is the unit demonstrating strength in creating equity, and where can the unit grow?
  - Based on this analysis, what questions are unanswered by the available data?

### 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 Report (request from OID)
- Organizational Equity Data Report (request from OID)
- OID curriculum to explore team orientations to diversity, equity and inclusion, and organizational change

## Design the adaptive diversity strategic plan

Deliberation pays dividends and the team is now prepared to design an adaptive 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 to allow a broad range of stakeholder actions to advance them
- *Guiding questions:*
  - How can an objective be written to involve the most stakeholders possible?
  - Based on the analyses conducted, what changes would create the most movement towards inclusive excellence?
  - Within the analysis of equity data, what areas for growth are most significant and what objectives support growth in these areas?

#### 2. Develop actions to advance the objectives

- Once the objectives are selected, develop a set of actions for each of the objectives
- Whereas objectives may be more general, actions should be specific, articulating a step towards completing the objective
- If an action requires something be done before it 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)
  - What 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
- *Guiding questions:*
  - Will a reader without context of the planning process understand how to implement the action?
  - Is the tasking of actions equitably distributed throughout the organization? If not, how can actions be rewritten to equitably distribute responsibility?

- Does the estimated time and budget reflect a commitment of resources the unit is willing to make? If not, consider how the action could be rewritten to allow for implementation.

### 3. Develop metrics for each of the actions

- Once the actions are developed, design monitoring (short-term) and evaluation (long-term) metrics for each action
  - *Monitoring* metrics should be measurable within a 3-9 month time frame. Determine what would indicate progress for the action within this time frame.
  - *Evaluation* metrics should be measurable within a 9-18 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. can assess 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 an adaptive diversity strategic plan

- Organize the deliberative process into an adaptive diversity strategic plan describing the following:
  - Rationale for the diversity strategic planning process
  - Relationship between the diversity strategic planning process and advancing the mission, vision, values and strategic objectives of the unit and university
  - Diversity strategic planning team and charge
  - Summary of engagement with stakeholders
  - Stakeholder input and visioning
  - Data analysis and best practices assessment
  - Objectives, actions, and metrics
  - Next steps and the iterative implementation process (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 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 planning 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**

- Adaptive diversity strategic plan model
- Adaptive diversity strategic plan tracking document
- Adaptive diversity strategic plan communications templates

## Sustain the Iterative Phase

The Iterative Phase of the Adaptive Strategic Planning process 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 planning 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 planning team leads communicate implementation plan to action owners and articulate expectations for entering 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 continuing role for diversity strategic planning team
  - Within thirty days of implementation beginning, unit leadership and 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 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 committee 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 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 consisting of 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 understand the process of implementation better

### 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
- *Guiding questions:*
  - When considering potential adaptations, consider, "how would this action change to more effectively accomplish the objective?", or "how would this objective change to more effectively advance the vision?"

## Tools

- Adaptive diversity strategic plan tracking template

## **Adapt actions and objectives**

At regular intervals, unit leadership, action owners and the diversity strategic planning team should consider proposed adaptations in order to adopt and implement them. 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 next chapter as the unit continues to advance inclusive excellence.

### **1. Develop and adopt adaptations to objectives and actions**

- On a regular basis, unit leadership, 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 planning 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 being considered 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, 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
- In addition to email and the diversity strategic planning website, consider other communication modalities to reach as many stakeholders as possible
- *Guiding questions:*

- As a committed stakeholder of an organization outside of my place of work, how often would I like to hear from that organization related to important changes underway?
- How can the unit “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, based 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 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 on 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 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 template

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