



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Strategic Diversity Planning Guide



TOOLKIT

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) was created in 2018 as a culmination of a) the efforts of engaged members of our campus community advocating for diversity and inclusion leadership, b) an institutional study by nationally renowned diversity experts Halualani and Associates, c) a series of workgroups and committees identifying needs, and d) a five-year university-wide effort to address equity, diversity, and inclusion at Nebraska. There was a real interest to invest time and resources to identify the needs of the institution and the scope and role of a central office.

ODI provides vision, leadership, and advocacy in fostering an inclusive, equitable, and welcoming campus central to the land-grant mission of UNL; leads and facilitates the development of institutional policies, protocols, and practices intended to create a more equitable, and inclusive campus culture; and utilizes an inclusive excellence framework to foster an engaged, creative, and innovative learning environment for all.

Inclusive Excellence and Definitions

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln is committed to cultivating an inclusive excellence mindset across our institution. We believe in fully embracing diversity in all forms seen and unseen, making inclusion a top priority, promoting equity across our policies and practices, and ultimately ensuring that excellence is inclusive. To accomplish this, we recognize the importance of understanding exactly what we mean by inclusive excellence.

Inclusive Excellence builds on the notions of diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Diversity

Individual differences, (e.g., personality, prior knowledge, and life experiences), group and social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, indigeneity, class, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, country of origin, and [\(dis\)ability](#)), historically underrepresented populations, and cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations.

Inclusion

The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity — in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect — in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.

Equity

equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion.

Inclusive Excellence

It is designed to help colleges and universities integrate diversity, equity, and educational quality efforts into their missions and institutional operations. It calls for higher education to address diversity, inclusion, and equity as critical to the well-being of democratic culture. It is an active process through which colleges and universities achieve excellence in learning, teaching, student development, institutional functioning, and engagement in local and global communities.

Adapted from American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U)

Strategic Planning for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

A strategic plan guides and influences what an organization is, who it serves, what it does, and why.

This guide provides seven essential tasks (including best practices and resources) to help navigate the diversity strategic planning process.

While it is advisable that the tasks are completed in order, the process can be circular. Moving throughout the process can mean returning to earlier tasks to alter and/or expand original thinking.

The toolkit should be treated as a flexible resource and not a rigid process.

A strategic plan shapes and guides what an organization is, who it serves, what it does, and why. Effective strategic plans also articulate how an organization will know it is successful.

Strategic planning answers the following key questions:

- Where are we?
- Where are we going?
- How will we get there?
- Are we getting there

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Your Organization

Review your organization's current definition of equity, inclusion, and diversity.

- Are these definitions realized through the culture?
- Are there elements that are missing?
- What areas provide opportunities for growth?
- Are the definitions understood in the organization?

Checklist Details

The following checklist provides a basic (foundational) outline for developing and implementing a diversity and inclusion plan. This outline can be customized to fit the needs and culture of individual departments and units.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion can be contacted throughout the planning process at **diversity@unl.edu**.

ODI can assist with the following:

- Initial development of the strategic planning process
- Diversity reports and data analysis - workforce demographics, institutional strategic plan, campus climate, affirmative action goals
- Education and training on cross-cultural competencies
- Group facilitation
- Planning tools and resources

PHASE 1

Establish a Pre-Planning Process

1

Estimated time: 4-8 weeks

Before the planning process can begin, several items must be resolved - namely who is going to lead the planning effort, who is going to be involved, and what the planning process will look like.

The pre-planning stage provides an opportunity for the project to initiate on a strong foundation.

- Identify purpose of the planning process.
- Establish guiding principles (how will you approach the process?)
- If applicable (optional), build a process structure (leadership & committee)
- Develop a communication and engagement strategy
- Establish objectives, goals, action steps, and checkpoint targets

Foundational Processes

Consult with planning staff from Office of Diversity and Inclusion to learn more about the support offered for this process and practices that have been beneficial to other colleges/divisions/organizations.

- Review the Planning Team Guide for more information on establishing a team to coordinate the overall planning process.
- Introduce the strategic planning process to your leadership and planning teams.
 - Items to consider are:
 - Overview of the strategic planning process and timeline
 - Resources available from ODI and the campus
- Develop a workplace that will support the work of the planning team and organization sponsors' expectations. This should include ongoing assistance from ODI.

PHASE 2

Develop a Planning Process

2

Estimated time: 5-8 weeks

Processes should be conducted to ensure transparency and inclusivity, one that supports the mission.

- Establish a framework or model to serve as the foundation of your plan.
 - [Mission-Driven Domains](#) (Smith, 2015)
 - [SWOT Analysis](#)
 - [Basic Model](#)
- Identify and confirm the overarching purpose and guiding principles of the diversity planning process.
- Develop a planning timeline, form necessary subcommittees, adapt the planning process, and work with important areas to solicit objectives and goals.
- Develop a comprehensive list of areas (ex: unit leaders) to engage in the overall strategy development process.
- Develop processes to convey the importance of all stakeholders in creation and implementation of the plan.
- Identify appropriate quantitative and qualitative data methodology.
- Identify and tailor appropriate quantitative (climate assessment) and qualitative (focus groups, stakeholder interviews) data methodology for Stage 3.

Example: See the Office of Diversity and Inclusion Purpose and [Guiding Priorities](#)

To operate as an effective and centralized unit, ODI has identified eight priorities. These priorities represent areas of need as identified through diversity reports, engaging with UNL community members, and following best practices for diversity and inclusion in higher education.

Communication: gather and share information on diversity and inclusion events, practices, and data in an effort to better centralize DEI occurrences and update the institution and community on UNL's opportunities and process in DEI.

Coordination: create structures and mechanisms that connect faculty, staff, students, and administrators across the institution and post professional learning, information sharing and collaboration.

Culture and Climate: assess and address campus climate. Form community among affinity groups, recognize accomplishments and service, and celebrate successes.

Leadership Development: baseline and increase competency among institutional leadership.

Learning and Education: increase institutional cultural competency and incentivize diversity education

Policy and Practice: Identify and evaluate data and address inequity and barriers in policies, processes, and other institutional structures.

Strategy: monitor and map unit-specific and institutional diversity strategies.

Branding: tell our story, making the case for inclusive excellence, and increasing our national reputation

PHASE 3

Data Collection and Analysis

3

Estimated Time: 8-10 weeks

Collect and analyze college/school/administrative unit and university data.

The following steps can be adapted to fit the needs of individual colleges, schools, and administrative units. In this stage, units will gather information related to equity and inclusion with the guidance of appropriate university offices.

Data collection is critical to the planning process, as the data will inform the committee on the current context within the college/school/administrative unit and guide their decisions as they develop the diversity plan.

- Gather and analyze quantitative data currently available from internal UT Austin sources in the form of a data packet (i.e., data from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Executive Vice Chancellor, Institutional Equity and Compliance, Human Resources, and Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, Academic Services and Enrollment Management and Information Technology Services, etc.).
 - Develop data packet in conjunction with offices across campus and include information such as current and trend data related to departmental demographics for faculty, students, and staff; faculty and staff recruitment and retention information; promotion and tenure data; student admissions statistics; student retention and graduation rates; and other relevant data informing the diversity planning process.
 - For more information on diversity planning, contact the Office for Inclusion and Equity at 402-472-0184.

- Conduct a college/school/administrative unit reflective inventory.
- Utilizing the reflective inventory tool and/or conduct a college/school/administrative unit-wide climate assessment via an online survey.
- Consider whether it is helpful to the process to inventory current college/school/administrative unit diversity and inclusion practices and initiatives.
- Utilize Curriculum and Teaching Inventory adapted from [the University of California, Berkeley Division of Equity and Inclusion Strategic Planning for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Toolkit](#) to review curriculum and teaching practices in college/school.
- Analyze data referenced above and identify overarching themes emerging from the data.
- Identify questions based on themes and conduct multiple focus groups and interviews with various stakeholders (i.e., department leadership, faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members).
- Refine themes based on the responses in the focus groups and interviews.

PHASE 4

Drafted Plans

4

Estimated Time: 4-8 weeks

Committee (or assigned subcommittees) will collect, analyze appropriate (college/school/administrative and institutional) data. This step must be adapted to fit the specific needs of individual areas. This stage includes the collection of information related to diversity, equity, and inclusion with the assistance of appropriate areas. This is a critical step in the planning process as the information collected will be used to inform the committee on the current context within the college, department, administrative unit and guide decisions as you develop the diversity plan.

- Gather and evaluate data from appropriate internal offices.
 - Examples of offices include the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Institutional Equity and Compliance, Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, and Human Resources
- Analyze data.
- Conduct an analysis of diversity strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the college/school or administrative unit.
- Seek constituent feedback on goals, objectives, action plans, and metrics
 - Possible methods include online evaluation and surveys, online focus groups with faculty/department/staff meetings, college/school/administrative unit-wide e-mails
- Write the diversity plan document – including an introduction and overview of the plan that articulates the importance of diversity to the college/school/administrative unit, as well as an overview of the college/school/administrative unit's data collection and analysis during the diversity planning process.

See Diversity Strategies and Plans at UNL:

- [College of Education and Human Sciences](#)
- [Global Nebraska](#)
- [Jeffrey S. Raikes School of Computer Science and Management](#)

PHASE 5

Finalize Diversity Plans

5

Estimated Time: 6–8 weeks

- Adopt the diversity plan.
 - Utilize existing resources such as [N2025](#) and the [Executive Memorandum No. 40](#).
- Form an implementation committee, which may include members from the diversity and inclusion committee, as well as other people from across the college/school/administrative unit.
- Set annual priorities and establish work groups, as needed.
- Develop a communications plan to articulate the implementation and progress across the college/school/administrative unit (i.e., website, newsletters, emails).
- Seek feedback from constituents at least annually, as well as connect with other relevant campus offices.
- Record progress in BaseCamp, TracDat, or another project management tool.
- Review committee membership, as needed.
- Return to Stage 1 prior to completion of the plan's implementation.

Update the Office of Diversity and Inclusion on the finalize diversity plan at diversity@unl.edu.

Contact the office for planning resources and templates.

Diversity Planning Resources from Peer Institutions

- [University of California, Berkeley Strategic Planning for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Toolkit for Academic Units](#)
- [University of California, Berkeley Strategic Planning for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Toolkit for Administrative Units](#)
- [University of California, Berkeley Campus Strategic Diversity Plan](#)
- [Ohio State University Diversity Action Plan](#)
- [University of Michigan Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan](#)
- [University of Texas at Austin, Office for Inclusion and Equity](#)