

**INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE STRATEGIC PLAN**

**FOR CLAS UNITS**

**College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

August 2022

**Drafted by**

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Overview

The University of Colorado Denver’s 2030 Strategic Plan sets as its number one goal to become the nation’s first equity-serving institution: “We aim to put our diversity in action by becoming an equity-serving institution—one that provides a racially and culturally enhancing educational and work environment and a sense of belonging for all. We will sustain a culture of belonging for all and provide the necessary resources and support to help everyone succeed.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

As part of university-wide discussions about equity, the administration asked the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) units to develop Strategic Plans for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Instead of requiring units to create their own individual plans from the ground up, the CLAS Dean and chairs charged a summer working group to develop a college-wide EDI Strategic Plan (now called the Inclusive Excellence Strategic Plan [IESP] per the Inclusive Excellence Council) to provide a framework with which departments could work.[[2]](#footnote-3)

\*We provide a template so that units are not starting from scratch.

\*Units will receive resources to help them create plans that make sense in their fields and disciplines, but everyone will work from the same starting point.

\*This is an opportunity to interrogate assumptions about the ways we have always done things.

This IESP framework concentrates on change at the unit level. It provides goals and objectives like most strategic plans, but it also provides unit-specific data, questions for units to consider as they assess their data and consider the goals and objectives, and examples and resources from which to draw. We recognize that individual units will have different ways of implementing the goals and objectives articulated in this IESP, based on their disciplines, fields, and professional associations, but we intend that this document will provide an equivalent starting point, a template even. We also see this document as an opportunity for units to question disciplinary assumptions about research, teaching, and service in relation to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This is not another administrative exercise but should instead result in an actionable plan that will guide our units toward being places where everyone belongs.

CLAS units’ faculty, staff, and students should construct our plans collaboratively. As the CU Denver Equity Task Force recognized in their Goal 2, “CU Denver’s faculty, staff, and students share the responsibility for creating and sustaining a just, safe, and inclusive campus, workplace, and community. Sharing this responsibility lessens the burdens of those harmed by social inequality, promotes a spirit of solidarity, and engages the entire community to ensure transformative justice.”[[3]](#footnote-4) This will require department leadership, faculty, staff, and students to work together to identify policies and practices that uphold institutional oppression and commit to new policies and practices that remove barriers to success and recognize and value the contributions of minoritized groups.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Statement of Purpose

CLAS seeks to build and nurture a culture where inclusiveness is the norm and where difference is valued and recognized as a strength. We strive purposefully to create an anti-oppressive, equitable, and just campus, city, and world. We acknowledge that systems of inequality exist and harm our faculty, staff, and students. In order to grow, we engage with resources that help us better understand the impact of systemic bias and learn to challenge existing policies, practices, and discourses that marginalize different communities of students, faculty, and staff. Our goal is to create a workplace where all persons feel valued and respected and where everyone contributes to a culture of equity, justice, and belonging.

**“This is a legitimate opportunity for all of us to participate in creating an ambitious, yet attainable, strategic plan dedicated to Inclusive Excellence that will unite our new, and existing, efforts in CLAS.”**

CLAS and each unit will intentionally work to identify and remove inequitable policies, non-inclusive curricula, and inhospitable cultures that are barriers to faculty, staff, and student success. This process of changing the status quo is not easy or quick, but CLAS is dedicated to being a leader in supporting the university’s efforts in becoming an equity-serving institution.

These shared commitments will be implemented in an important way through this unit-level IESP that will remain a “living document” and will be updated as objectives are met and new objectives are created. If done well, the IESP will involve difficult decisions among faculty, staff, and students and, from the start, should never be thought of as just “words” or “window-dressing.” This is a legitimate opportunity for all of us to participate in creating an ambitious, yet attainable, strategic plan dedicated to Inclusive Excellence that will unite our new, and existing, efforts in CLAS.

The IESP will follow a timeline leading up to the year 2030 in coordination with the 2030 CU Denver Strategic Plan, but we should start thinking in smaller time frames, like three or five years, to make objectives achievable.

History of this Project

In Spring 2022, the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion asked that all colleges, schools, and departments have EDI strategic plans drafted by early Fall 2022. The Associate Dean for Diversity, Outreach, and Initiatives (ADDOI) in CLAS was approached by a group of faculty members who suggested that the College convene a committee to work on the plan rather than asking each department to create its own plan without a template. The ADDOI presented this idea to the Dean and the VCDEI, who both approved, as did CLAS chairs and directors. A compensated summer working group, the Inclusive Excellence Working Group (IEWG), was formed, which included a representative from each division (Physical and Natural Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Integrated Sciences), the ADDOI, and the incoming AD for Faculty and Staff Affairs.[[5]](#footnote-6) This committee worked in conjunction with a structure and timeline suggested by the VCDEI’s Inclusive Excellence Council, which required the document be ready for dissemination by September 1, 2022.

Baseline Data

As part of the strategic planning process, the Inclusive Excellence Council would like each unit to assess its own data from the Campus Workplace Climate Survey, student success dashboards, employee demographic trends, and faculty hiring processes. The IEWG will provide some of those data, and units will search out some of those data themselves. You will receive unit-specific demographic data from the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness on the composition of your department by race and ethnicity and by URM (underrepresented minorities) and non-URM, as well as specific climate data from the Campus Workplace Climate Survey.

**The Use of URM:** For the purpose of this section, we use the term “underrepresented minorities” (URM) to discuss CLAS-related data. Our usage of the term reflects how CU Denver collected and represented the Equity Gap data in some tables that follow. We recognize the limitations of these data, which do not include persons who identify as Asian American. We also acknowledge that the term URM is a racialized label that masks inequities within groups on campus through data aggregation (i.e., categorizing persons identifying as Black, Latinx, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander as one group). The term URM “can undermine frank discussions of race and racial inequity” by grouping and discussing everyone together rather than naming the specific groups experiencing inequity in outcomes.

***Demographic Data***

**Table 1. CLAS Employee Headcount and URM (%), Fall 2014.**

Table

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Data Source: <https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/institutional-research-and-effectiveness/data-analysis/faculty-staff-data/staff-counts>

**Table 2. CLAS Employee Headcount and URM (%), Fall 2021.**

Table

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Data Source: <https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/institutional-research-and-effectiveness/data-analysis/faculty-staff-data/staff-counts>

**Figure 1. CLAS URM Faculty and Staff Headcount (%), 2014 to 2021.**

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Data Source: <https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/institutional-research-and-effectiveness/data-analysis/faculty-staff-data/staff-counts>

As Table 1 indicates, 12% of CLAS Faculty and 25% of CLAS staff were underrepresented minorities (URM) in 2014. Figure 1 shows these numbers do not change much seven years later. In fact, the percentage of URM faculty decreased to 10% by 2021 (Table 2). The URM Staff percentage remained the same in 2021 as it was in 2014. These numbers demonstrate that we have a lot of work to do recruiting and retaining faculty and staff of color. How do your unit’s numbers compare to these?

**Table 3. CLAS Faculty Demographics (%) by Track, 2014 to 2020.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **IPEDS Tenure Desc.** | **Demographic** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **2019** | **2020** |
| Non-Tenure | American Indian or Alaskan Indian | 1% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 0% |  |  |
| Asian | 7% | 6% | 6% | 8% | 7% | 7% | 6% |
| Black or African American | 3% | 3% | 3% | 2% | 3% | 3% | 3% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 9% | 8% | 7% | 7% | 8% | 7% | 6% |
| International | 1% | 1% | 3% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0% | 0% |  |  |  |  |  |
| Two or More Races | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% |
| Unknown | 16% | 14% | 17% | 17% | 14% | 14% | 13% |
| White | 63% | 66% | 63% | 62% | 65% | 67% | 70% |
| Tenure/Tenure Track | American Indian or Alaskan Indian | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| Asian | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 11% | 12% | 12% |
| Black or African American | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 2% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 6% | 5% | 4% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 6% |
| International | 2% | 1% | 1% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 3% |
| Two or More Races | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |  |
| Unknown | 3% | 3% | 7% | 7% | 6% | 6% | 6% |
| White | 75% | 77% | 72% | 72% | 73% | 72% | 71% |

\**Please note that when data are not available for a particular group demographic across the time period, then it is not present in the table. For example, see Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander in the Tenure/Tenure Track descriptive data.*

Data Source: <https://www.cu.edu/diversity-report-interactive-data>

If we focus on the particular group demographics of faculty, Table 3 indicates that the percentage of non-tenure non-White faculty either decreased or did not change from 2014 to 2020, whereas the percentage of non-tenure White faculty increased from 63% to 70%. When we examine tenure/tenure track appointments, the percentages for non-White faculty (American Indian or Alaskan Indian, Black or African American, and Hispanic or Latino), except Asian, did not improve from 2014 to 2020. Although the percentage of tenure/tenure track White faculty decreased during this same time period, this group retained at least 70% of faculty positions. This means that, in general, the diversity of our faculty has not improved in the last seven years and has become less diverse in terms of non-tenure faculty.

***Climate Data***

The University of Colorado Regents, the CU Denver Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the CU Denver Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness plan to administer a Campus Workplace Climate Survey (CWC) every four years, with the first survey having been administered in Fall 2021 (see Table 4 for CLAS results). Additionally, smaller surveys will take place in the intervening years to assess progress on particular issues.

We should use the CWC data to assess belonging in our units generally and in relation to more specific questions like the ones below in Table 5. The CWC is limited, however, since when response numbers are too small to retain anonymity on certain questions (n<10), we will be unable to gauge workplace climate based on the survey. We recommend also using other sources to evaluate climate, such as informal surveys, FCQs comments, and departmental discussions. Additionally, CWC data are available for the division your specific unit belongs to, so you can at least see a broader picture of workplace belonging for disciplines close to your own.

***The first objective of our strategic planning process – due early Spring 2023 – will be to analyze our climate data and develop a plan to address areas where faculty, staff, or students do not find purpose, belonging, safety, and opportunities to advance in our units***.

**Table 4. The Campus Workplace Climate Survey demonstrates the following overall belonging scores for CLAS.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Overall Belonging** | **Academic or Professional Belonging** | **Social Belonging** |
| Faculty | 4.5 (out of 6) | 4.5 | 4.4 |
| Staff | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.2 |
| Undergrads | 4.8 | 4.9 | 4.8 |
| Graduate Students | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4.7 |

Data Source: <https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/institutional-research-and-effectiveness/surveys/cwc-survey-results>

**Table 5. Faculty, Staff, and Student Results from the CWC Campus Workplace Climate Survey for CLAS.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **From CWC Campus Workplace Climate Survey for CLAS** |  |  |
| 216 faculty (46%) and 81 staff (66%) responses overall; combined responses below | Areas that need work (out of 6) in CLAS |  |
| I am provided opportunities to advance in my career | 3.7 |  |
| I receive adequate support/mentoring to advance my career/professional development | 3.8 |  |
| Supervisors/department leaders/senior faculty effectively address problematic behaviors that undermine the work environment | 3.8 |  |
| I have been offered opportunities to learn and grow. | 3.8 |  |
| I feel excluded from informal networks in my department. | 4 |  |
| The flow of communication within my office/department clearly defines expectations so I know how to effectively do my job. | 3.9 |  |
| I have a sense of community. | 4 |  |
| One or more colleagues say things or behave in ways that humiliate or intimidate people. | 3.9 |  |
| Overall, the workplace culture is positive. | 4.5 This is BETTER, but still needs work. |  |
|  |  |  |
| 53% of employees (146) reported an incivility |  |  |
| People who reported impactful incivilities had much lower belonging scores, some that fell into the 2s |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| 2% of employees reported being sexually harassed |  |  |
| 20% reported experiencing discrimination |  |  |
| 57% considered leaving in the past year |  |  |
| 89% said they would redo their time at CU Denver if they could |  |  |
| 89% said their department would take identity-based discrimination seriously |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Students: Undergrad 787 (16%)/ Grad 171 (31%) | Undergrad | Grad |
| I have a sense of community. | 3.8 | 4 |
| I have made friends here. | 3.9 |  |
| I feel left out. | 4.1 |  |
| Department resources are allocated transparently. |  | 3.7 |
|  |  |  |
| 37%/47% reported an incivility |  |  |
| Students who reported impactful incivilities had belonging scores that fell into the 3s/2s |  |  |
| 5%/3% of students reported being sexually harassed |  |  |
| 15%/15% of students reported experiencing discrimination |  |  |
| 36%/35% considered leaving in the past year |  |  |
| 85%/84% said they would redo their time at CU Denver if they could |  |  |
| 49% said they don't have a close friend at CU Denver | Didn't ask grad students? |  |
| 78%/85% said their department would take identity-based discrimination seriously |  |  |

Data Source: <https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/institutional-research-and-effectiveness/surveys/cwc-survey-results>

***Student Success Data***

Equity gaps across the university (Table 6) show that in the last five years, CLAS instructors have given a high rate of DFWS and have also produced a significant equity gap. Given the data available, equity gaps are measured as the difference in the rates of non-URM students and URM students receiving “D” and “F” grades and withdrawing from courses “W” (“DFW”). As part of the strategic planning process, units should evaluate equity gaps specific to our courses and curriculum and develop strategies to reduce these gaps.

Timeline

Description automatically generated**Table 6. Student Equity Gaps by School/College and Course Format Modality.**

Data Source: <https://www.cu.edu/diversity-report-interactive-data>

One of the ways to improve our enrollment is to retain our students. Table 7 shows our retention rates of first-time degree-seeking students since 2013. It can help us understand who our students are and their success rates when they declare your major in their first year.

**Table 7. Student Retention Rates by Ethnicity and Cohort Major.**

Table

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Data Source: <https://www.cu.edu/diversity-report-interactive-data>

CLAS Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Goals

The following CLAS Mission and Vision Statements are integral to our EDI goals :

(DRAFT) Mission: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences fosters community that enables innovative research and creative work and empowers faculty, staff, and students with the knowledge and skills to think holistically about all aspects of their lives. Our mission is guided by a commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion that recognizes the wide spectrum of voices and abilities that enable excellence in education, research, creative work, and public engagement.

(DRAFT) Vision: We strive to create a community committed to a liberal arts education and the breadth of thought it engenders. Our students will be intellectually as well as civically engaged global citizens who flexibly adapt to change and are ready to make a positive impact as life-long learners. Our faculty will be leaders in advancing knowledge and creativity and in educating students to be innovative, empathic, and inclusive members of society.

CLAS also holds the following values, which are closely related to our EDI goals:

1. Diversity, Respect, and Inclusiveness
2. Equity and Social Justice
3. Learning and Scholarship
4. Discovery and Innovation
5. Health and Care of Mind, Body, and Community
6. Resilience and Innovation
7. Citizenship and Leadership

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has dedicated itself to the following priorities related to EDI in its College Strategic Plan:

**College Strategic Priorities and Objectives Related to EDI:**

**Priority 1: To cultivate and institutionalize an inclusive and just culture within CLAS.**

* Objective 1.1. To expect that all faculty and staff will substantively contribute to an inclusive and just culture.
* Objective 1.2. To improve mechanisms of reporting, investigating, and resolving HR and equity cases of discrimination, sexual misconduct, and abuses of power in relation to the college.
* Objective 1.3. To implement Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion across the curriculum in the college that embeds inclusive excellence in all student learning.
* Objective 1.4. To collaborate with units outside of CLAS that are working towards a just and inclusive culture for the University.

**Priority 2: To combat the historical inequalities and existing power dynamics that affect all members of the college**.

* Objective 2.1. To engage with and be responsive to traditionally underserved communities in Colorado and beyond by creating mutually beneficial partnerships.
* Objective 2.2. To strengthen the recruitment and improve the retention of faculty and staff so as not to reproduce historical inequalities.
* Objective 2.3 To improve retention rates of our increasingly diverse student body.
* Objective 2.4. To improve practices related to recruitment and retention of international faculty, students, and staff.
* Objective 2.5. To create programming that educates the community about privilege, power, and inequality.

**Priority 3: To strengthen the college to take a position of moral leadership on issues of social injustice.**

* Objective 3.1. To create a fundraising priority for issues of justice and inclusion.
* Objective 3.2. To empower and support CLAS members in their pursuit of social justice and inclusion.

The IEWG developed the following Strategic Goals and Objectives related to EDI for units. These goals focus broadly on department climate, student success, faculty diversification, minoritized faculty success, and evaluation processes. They tightly intersect with the existing College EDI Priorities and Objectives in a number of ways and should provide the framework for your IESP.

**Unit Strategic Goals and Objectives Related to Inclusive Excellence**

**Strategic Goal 1. Create a climate to ensure that faculty, staff, and students of every background and identity find purpose, belonging, safety, and opportunities to advance in your unit.** (This Goal and the following Objectives intersect with the CLAS Strategic Plan Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 2.5, and 3.2.)

* Objective 1. Appoint an EDI Liaison to coordinate EDI activities and climate assessment within the department and meet monthly as a council with AD for Diversity, Outreach, and Initiatives.
* Objective 2. Develop a plan to address the climate issues raised in your CWC assessment concerning respect and belonging, communication and transparency, diversity and identities, and job and educational satisfaction and support.
  + Objective 2a. Create programming and professional development training that address the ways your disciplines and fields have historically been complicit in shaping and maintaining racism, colonialism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and other forms of oppression.
  + Objective 2b. Establish policies that invite staff, faculty, and students to raise concerns about their learning and working environments without retaliation and practices that support staff, faculty, and students who are targeted because of their identities and/or teaching or research areas.
  + Objective 2c. Review and improve department procedures, such as how meetings are conducted and how grievances and complaints are handled, so all people are seen and historically-silenced voices are heard.

**Strategic Goal 2. Remove inequities in courses, curricula, and teaching environments so that students of every background and identity have the opportunity to succeed.** (CLAS Objectives 1.1, 1.3, and 2.3)

* Objective 1. After your data assessment, disseminate DFW rates and equity gap numbers among all instructional faculty and use those data to revise curricular policies with a goal of reducing DFW rates and equity gaps.

* Objective 2. Develop strategies to widely adopt inclusive pedagogical practices, actively using the resources of the Inclusive Pedagogy Academy and the Student Experience Project.

* Objective 3. Review department curricular policies, including policies that were informed by deficit thinking (for example, renegotiation of transfer credits, structure of prerequisites), to identify whether there are barriers to student success.

* Objective 4. Review department curricula to ensure they are antiracist, inclusive, and representative of diverse perspectives, methods, and identities.

**Strategic Goal 3. Increase the rates of hiring, promoting, and retaining minoritized faculty and staff.** (CLAS Objectives 2.2 and 2.4)

* Objective 1. After analyzing hiring data, develop a departmental hiring plan that utilizes best practices and includes a long-term recruitment plan for how to increase diversity of faculty in future hires.
* Objective 2. Develop concrete mentoring strategies for minoritized faculty and staff, and junior and IRC faculty more broadly.
* Objective 3. Develop strategies for collaborative interdisciplinary cluster hires across departments.
* Objective 4. Create policies for transparency around faculty and staff retention offers and salary equity practices.

**Strategic Goal 4. Create RTP, merit, and performance review processes and criteria to reward equity, diversity, and inclusion in professional activities.** (CLAS Objectives 1.1, 2.2, and 2.4)

* Objective 1. Revise criteria for staff performance evaluations and faculty merit, reappointment, tenure, and promotion (including all three areas of research, teaching, and service) reviews to recognize and reward significant contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
* Objective 2. Identify barriers to re-appointment, promotion, and raises in department policies and revise policies accordingly.
* Objective 3. Fully incorporate interdisciplinary and community-based research and creative work into RTP and merit evaluations.

Unit Inclusive Excellence Strategic Planning Process

The above goals should provide the framework for our strategic planning process. We anticipate that each unit is in a different place in relationship to the goals. Some of us, for example, have already been conducting deep conversations about inclusive pedagogy and are taking action to address DFW rates and diversify your curricula. Other departments have worked hard to create search processes that will result in pools of more diverse candidates. Yet we all have a lot more work to do, as our data reveal. The goals and objectives were designed so that we can approach them in ways that make sense for each unit, but they also express a consistent vision of how our individual units can communicate who we want to be as a college.

Your strategic planning processes should contain the following steps:

1. Map out your planning process
2. Collect and assess baseline data
3. Develop an implementation plan and metrics for the goals and objectives framework
4. Implement the plan
5. Assess your work

***Step 1. Map out your planning process (suggested approach)***

1. Choose a contact person (probably the Equity Liaison we identify in Goal 1, Objective 1) who will consult with the Associate Dean for Diversity, Outreach, and Initiatives and the CLAS Council on DEI about the strategic planning process.
2. Put together a planning team to lead the process. The goal for doing this work is to engage the entire department in looking at issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, so it is important to take a team approach and establish broad interest and ownership. The team should ideally include faculty, staff, and students.
3. Establish a timeline and discuss how to customize the process to fit your unit culture.
4. Develop a workplan to help support the work of the planning team.

***Step 2. Gather information and conduct self-assessment to establish your baseline***

1. Think about the university’s goal to become the nation’s “first equity-serving institution” and the college’s strategic priorities listed above. Reflect on the following questions:
   1. How do the strategic plans align with the mission of your department?
   2. Which of the strategies in the university and college plans reflect areas in which the department is already strong?
   3. Are there areas in the plans where you believe the department can be seen as a leader – either in the university and/or within your field?
   4. In which areas are you most excited to expand your work over the next 3 to 5 years?
   5. What would you most like to be known for in relation to equity, diversity, and inclusion in the future?
   6. Are there other important ways the department engages issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion that are not reflected in the university and college strategic plans? If so, what are they?
2. Analyze departmental data, including the Climate Workplace Survey; faculty, staff, and student demographic data; and student success information, including graduation and DFW rates. These discussions should include the entire department.

*Climate and Belonging*

Analyze Campus Workplace Climate Survey (CWC) and any other information you have (e.g., informal surveys, FCQs comments, departmental discussions) to assess department climate.

If your unit has fewer than ten responses at any level of the CWC, you will have no results in the interests of protecting anonymity. This means some small units may wind up with no usable CWC data. If this is the case, you can pair with another similar unit or go up to the division level to analyze climate data in your area. This will not deliver an ideal analysis of climate and belonging, but it will provide a starting point. Reflect on the following questions:

* + 1. Are there any particular strengths or challenges indicated by the data? This question can be asked relative to the following areas:
       1. the overall assessment of department climate/culture and respect felt by members of your unit
       2. the sense of belonging department and community members feel within the unit, including differences between groups or identities if available
       3. the percentage and sources of exclusionary behavior experienced
       4. concerns about transparency and communication with your unit
       5. the importance of diversity within your unit
       6. student satisfaction with classroom and departmental experience
       7. job satisfaction among faculty and staff, including mentoring, support, and ability to advance
  1. Do the responses or the experiences of any specific groups stand out to you? If so, what concerns or opportunities do you see?
  2. What issues related to departmental climate are you most interested in addressing at this time?

*Enrollment and Student Success*

Analyze department DFW rates, graduation rates, and enrollment trends to assess

student success and equity gaps. Reflect on the following questions:

1. What do you notice about your enrollment trends – both undergraduate and graduate – in general? Do your DFW rates reflect equity gaps?
2. What are you already doing to create a climate conducive to the success and retention of all students, especially students from historically underrepresented groups?
3. In what areas or courses do you think students need additional support? Are there any student populations you serve that might need targeted support (e.g., international students whose first language is not English, or a high proportion of transfer or first-generation students)? How might you provide such support in the future?
4. What strategies can you adopt both to reduce DFW rates and equity gaps? What efforts could be made to develop and utilize teaching strategies and/or additional tutoring or coaching that are more responsive to the needs of students from groups that are underrepresented in higher education or in the field? How might the campus support these strategies?
5. Internships, career pathways, community-based learning, and study abroad programs have been shown to increase retention among students from historically underrepresented groups. How might your unit utilize these strategies?

*Hiring and Employee Diversity*

Conduct self-study of department demographics and hiring processes. Reflect on the

following questions:

1. How do your department’s overall demographics compare to the demographics of the division, college, and university? Do BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color) faculty cluster in staff and IRC positions rather than in tenured/tenure-track positions? Why?
2. Are there demographic groups that are completely absent in your department? Why?
3. What are your goals for expanding diversity within the department? Based on these goals, which demographic trends do you see as most promising?
4. Are there any areas where you feel existing trends in the department need to be reversed? Are there areas where progress toward the department’s goals seems to be stalled?
5. How do demographic trends within the department compare to trends for your division, college, or the campus as a whole?
6. Looking at the data on your department’s recent faculty hires, to what extent do these hires reflect (or exceed) availability pools – for women? for historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups (African American, Chicano/Latino, Native American/Alaska Native)? for Asian groups?
7. In what ways do your recent hires advance the department’s goals for expanding faculty diversity? In what ways do they not advance these goals?
8. Take a moment to consider the availability pools in your field. In some fields, the numbers of women and/or underrepresented scholars can be extremely low. Are there additional goals beyond simply matching availability pools that your department is seeking to reach?
9. Compose a brief self-assessment of the current state of equity, inclusion, and diversity in the department based on what the planning team has learned from the data review process in each area.

***Step 3: Make the Strategic Goals and Objectives Your Own***

1. With your data assessment in mind, discuss the Strategic Goals and Objectives developed by the IEWG. Think about which goals and objectives the data suggest should be short-term priorities and which might be more appropriate longer-term targets.
2. Use the template in Appendix A to develop an implementation plan detailing how the department will commit to concrete actions and strategies to achieve each objective. Collectively decide on metrics that allow the unit to see if an objective has been met or still needs work.
3. The department’s implementation plan should identify leaders for each area of work, as well as an estimated timeline (to 2030) for specific objectives. You should also designate a point person to coordinate and monitor overall implementation (probably, the EDI Liaison identified in Goal 1, Objective 1). To encourage broad commitment to the department’s IESP, you should plan to include a range of stakeholders in developing, or at minimum reviewing, goals, strategies, and metrics.
4. Draft your full strategic plan for inclusive excellence with the elements of introduction, self-assessment, goals, objectives, metrics, and implementation plan.

***Step 4: Review Your Plan with the CLAS Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion***

***Step 5: Launch Your Work!***

1. Plan for resources such as trainings and workshops, online materials, reference guides, and consultation services that will help in successfully executing your new plan.
2. Share your plan and successes.
3. Please contact the Dean’s office, the IEWG, and the Council on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for ongoing support as needed.

***Step 6: Continue the Process***

1. Continue to collect data.
2. Report data to unit.
3. Consider changes in metrics.
4. Revise your plan if necessary.

Definitions

The following definitions may be useful to you in your strategic planning process:

***Strategic Planning***

Strategic planning is an organized effort by members of an organization to collaborate on a set of larger goals and more specific and operational objectives in order to set an organization’s policy direction over a given time frame, usually from a year to a decade.   
  
***Strategic Goal***  
Strategic goals are high level goals that reflect an organization’s mission, values, and vision over a set time frame.

***Strategic Objectives***

Strategic objectives are measurable and actionable steps toward achieving a goal.

The following definitions are adapted from definitions provided by the CU Denver Institutional Equity Advocacy Council:

***Equity***

Equity is a quality of being fair to all members of an organization. To borrow a sports metaphor, equity is the quality of creating a level playing field for all players. Equity is not equality. We do not expect any of us to be equal, but we do expect that all of us will have the opportunity to succeed, be respected, and enjoy our participation in the organization without barriers that limit these things.

***Diversity***

Diversity is the range of differences among people, including but not limited to race, sex, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, veteran status, and political beliefs, among other examples.

***Inclusion***

Inclusion is a behavior that leads to a positive workplace culture—one that welcomes, values, and respects the diversity of people within the organization.

***Safety***

Safety is both the practice and condition (safe) of ensuring that within an interpersonal or collective environment, individuals experience (feel, think, and believe they have) fair and reasonable opportunities to share their perspectives, particularly those held by individuals from historically minoritized backgrounds. Individuals should feel comfortable taking risks and failing without fear of being harmed, shamed, or retaliated against. All members of the CU Denver community can raise EDI concerns about their learning/ working environment without retaliation. When targeted or threatened, members of the CU Denver community will be protected through the enactment of protocols, grievance procedures, and other mechanisms.

***Belonging***

Belonging is the experience of acceptance, support, connection, value, and respect within a community. For individuals from historically minoritized backgrounds, a sense of belonging encourages and supports their full and authentic participation as physical, mental, emotional, religious, intellectual, social, and cultural beings. Additionally, belonging at CU Denver is directly tied to the likelihood of success and retention of staff, students, and faculty, and this requires that the CU Denver community ensure that individuals from historically minoritized backgrounds gain acceptance, attention, and support from members of the entire community, while also providing the same care and attention to other members of the community.

***Implications for Practicing Safety and Belonging***

For university employees from historically minoritized communities, safety and belonging means being able to raise EDI concerns about their learning and working environment without retaliation. When targeted or threatened, members of the CU Denver community will be supported and protected by appropriate and equitable protocols, use of robust grievance procedures, guidance from equity-oriented policies, and the care and support of members of the CU Denver community.

***Harm***

Harm refers to a psychological, emotional, physical, or intellectual experience, whether intentional or unintentional, resulting in the reduction of the safety and/or sense of belonging for any faculty, staff, student, or group. For individuals and groups from historically minoritized communities, instances of harm reverberate with past instances of collective or targeted threat and can often result in compounded consequences.

1. CU Denver 2030 Strategic Plan, https://www.ucdenver.edu/2030/goals-for-2030/equity [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The Inclusive Excellence Council is a council convened by the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. It includes members from each of the schools and colleges as well as administrative units such as Human Resources and University Communications. Some members were invited by the VCDEI and others were appointed by the Deans/Directors/VCs/AVCs of their units. Associate Dean Marjorie Levine-Clark was invited by the VCDEI to represent CLAS. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. CU Denver, *Equity Task Force Report*, 4, https://www.ucdenver.edu/docs/librariesprovider15/default-document-library/equity-task-force-report.pdf?sfvrsn=7c8276ba\_2. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. By minoritized groups, we refer to groups of people that are historically and currently marginalized, underrepresented, and underserved in the U.S., including but not limited to those that self-identify as Black, African Americans, Hispanic, Latinx, Latino/Chicano, Asian Americans, American Indian, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islanders, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, + Intersex, Asexual (and limitless sexual orientations and gender identities), people with disabilities, and women. (Adapted from [UC Berkeley, 2009](https://diversity.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/speid_final_webversion.pdf), 35). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. The members of this working group, Mike Green (Integrative Biology), Michelle Comstock (English), Edelina Burciaga (Social Sciences), Ivan Ramírez (Integrated Sciences), and Faye Caronan (CLAS Dean’s Office) were invited to join Marjorie Levine-Clark as members of the Inclusive Excellence Council during the period of this project. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)