IDEAL Equity Tools: Resources for Reimagining our Future
Office of the Vice President for Equity and Inclusion

Since 2014, the IDEAL framework has been supporting a transformational strategy for our campus, guided by individualized and scalable Diversity Action Plans (DAPs). In so doing, the UO is working to establish a more consistent and commonplace focus on equity as a tool for our institution's continuity, engagement and recovery.

To further that end, the IDEAL Equity Lens described below provides guidance on important decision-making, resource allocation, and planning. Like universal design, the IDEAL Equity Lens is a tool to remove barriers to access and achievement. The path forward will draw on local efforts to fashion a campus-wide equity-minded strategy focused on embedding equity throughout the UO's top priorities: research excellence, student access, and student success, as well as enhance UO's positioning to address the world's most pressing social issues.[1]

Common Language:
A common language and understanding are essential to our campus-wide approach:

A. *Equity*[2] —When outcomes are not predetermined by race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, disability, language or other demographic characteristics.
B. *Equity-minded*[3]—Cognitive framework that recognizes barriers to achievement, understands the role of institutional accountability and focus strategies on areas where outcomes can be achieved.
C. *Embed* —Integrate equity-minded practices into existing polices, processes and norms.

The IDEAL Equity Lens:
The IDEAL framework and DAPs highlighted individualized opportunities and barriers, as well as identified scalable solutions for advancing equity across campus. For more detail on these, with emerging considerations specific to the UO context, please see this report on DEI's web site. The IDEAL framework and DAPs provide a foundation for this UO IDEAL Equity Lens to protect existing gains, while also expanding, deepening and

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[1] Equity is not just important to the UO, but it is absolutely vital to success in our state and nation. Equity is the engine for our state and national economies, providing the skilled labor force to grow per capita income. Equity is the blueprint that ensures that populations diverse in class, race, geography, gender, ethnicity, thought and language are well prepared to contribute to the information economy and beyond. Equity, therefore, is our moral imperative to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to achieve their full potential, unfettered by structural and systemic barriers.

[2] Equity directs resources to where they are needed to help close gaps, and in the end, facilitates access to success in learning, research, creative activity and job performance for all members of our community. While individual accountability is important, equity focuses primarily on institutional accountability. It also ensures that everyone is able to achieve at the highest potential and thereby to advance the spelled out institutional mission of our university.

[3] We draw on research from the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education to explore what it means to be equity-minded and how to use an equity-minded approach to fashion an equity lens, which is appropriate to the work at hand. Equity-mindedness, by definition, means:
  • Being color conscious—understanding inequities rooted in racial, ethnic and indigenous communities as the foundation upon which to understand other barriers around gender, class, national origin, color, disability, age, LGBTQIA or other protected group status.
  • Using language that is clear, specific and empowering. Rather than using "under-represented communities", specifically name them, e.g., women in science, Native faculty, LGBTQIA+ staff.
  • Analyzing and reporting disaggregated data to understand how challenges and opportunities are organized across specific populations.

accelerating the work. Like the five fingers on our hand, the UO IDEAL equity lens applies the following five key questions when designing and implementing policies, processes and programs, particularly in evaluation, assessment and fiduciary processes amidst the COVID-19 continuity, engagement and recovery processes:[4]

1. What is the current state of equity with respect to the issue at hand?

2. Who are the racial/ethnic and other underserved groups (gender, disability, class, geography, nationality, discipline, employee type, sexual identity, etc.) affected? What is the potential impact of the resource allocation and strategic investment to these groups?

3. Does the decision being made ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences? What is the impact on eliminating the opportunity gap?

4. What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)

5. How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are members of the communities affected by the strategic investment or resource allocation? How do you validate your assessment in 1, 2 and 3?

Our Approach:
In addressing these issues, it is important to lead with an ethic of care, as evidenced through the [L.A.C.E. framework](#) L.A.C.E., or love, authenticity, courage and empathy, As we work to build more equitable and inclusive campus, L.A.C.E. or love, authenticity, courage and empathy, is an approach to enhancing personal character and embracing lifestyles, relationships and systems that prepare us for a more just future. Based on research in neuroscience and positive psychology, L.A.C.E. is a roadmap to individual, relational and organizational transformation and wellness. Below, please find a few of the reflective questions that guide the L.A.C.E. ethic of care:

a. How do our policies and processes convey kindness and fairness? (Love)
b. How will living into the UO values and being transparent in our work enhance our mission now and in the future? (Authenticity)
c. What are the unearned advantages and unearned disadvantages that are impacting the people and culture on your team? How are you moving through fear, tradition and/or the status quo to address them? (Courage)
d. How are we holding space for and acknowledging the concerns of others, even as you make difficult decisions that are undergirded by fairness? (Empathy)

Applying the Equity Lens: Budget/Resource-Specific Considerations:
Economic uncertainty, including shifts in enrollment (domestically and internationally) and concern regarding state appropriations with budget cuts are often in play at the UO and in higher education mor generally. Diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives are vital to our ability to advance our academic mission; the overall well-being of our campus community; and to strengthen access to talent networks in diverse communities and Indigenous nations. Therefore, the following questions are offered when considering cuts or reductions in program budgets:

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[4] This lens is based on the [Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) Equity Lens](#).

1) Is the program one that is utilized by under-represented or underserved students, faculty, and/or staff? If the program is cut, what will be the impact on those who rely on it? Are you relying on data or anecdotal evidence?

2) Is the program one that is primarily staffed by under-represented or underserved students, faculty, and/or staff? How are you ensuring that personnel cuts don't disproportionately affect one group or another (age in this context should also be considered).

3) On a university campus, programming is rarely offered in a silo – the impact of the network of support is larger than the sum of its parts. Consider first:

- Does the program complement or support other initiatives on campus in other units? Or does it provide a unique service or support?
- Would its elimination or reduction affect campus programming in other units, making that programming less effective?
- Do you know the status of programs in other units on campus which your programming relies upon to be effective?
- Are there innovative collaborations that would allow you to partner with others on campus to provide similar programming?
- Can you communicate to these campus partners the areas where you are considering cuts, so that decisions can be made in collaboration, ensuring that large gaps are not being created?