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**Best Diversity Practices in Academe:
Strategies that Shift Organizational Culture**

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Overview

Fundamentals — Build the Diversity & Inclusion strategy on a strong foundation

Recruitment — Execute an integrated and targeted outreach program

Retention — Provide relevant benefits and programs of support

Culture — Build a purposeful culture of inclusion

The Fundamentals - Strong Purpose

Ground Diversity & Inclusion within the mission, vision and values

Embedding diversity and inclusion in the administration and culture of the institution ensures that they become part of everything the institution does.

Best Practice in Action

Diversity and inclusion are core values of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, reflected in our Guiding Principles. We value differences among individuals across multiple dimensions including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion and socioeconomic status. We believe that the more we include diverse perspectives and experiences in our work, the better able we are to help all Americans live healthier lives and get the care they need. In service to our mission, we pledge to promote these values in the work we do and to reflect on our progress regularly.

~ RWJF Diversity Statement

Practice enables:
- Embeds D&I at the most fundamental level
- Builds in sustainability

ownership accountability progress leadership fundamental values commitment case business strategy

Build a comprehensive strategy on a strong foundation

An effective and sustainable diversity and inclusion strategy is built on certain core fundamentals, which, taken together, exponentially increase the potential for success.

Build a compelling and relevant case

Showing how the Diversity & Inclusion strategy strengthens the organization is key to leadership buy-in. It is essential for adequate resource allocation, and for the energy needed to change and build new behavioral and organizational competencies. The case statement is the strong rationale for a commitment to a sustainable strategy.

Practice enables:
- Shared understanding
- Increased capacity to adapt
- Leadership ownership
- Rationale for investment

Best Practice in Action

"[Diversity] is especially important in the field of population health, for two reasons. First: the issue of health disparities is central to research in population health – why are some population groups less healthy than others, and what can be done to reduce disparities? Recruiting scientists from underrepresented groups into this area of research is vital. Second: as mentioned above, population health research requires the collaboration of people with different kinds of academic and professional training, so we need diversity along disciplinary lines."

~ National Program Co-Director Dr. Christine Bachrach, Health and Society Scholars

PODCAST LINK

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Demonstrate leadership commitment

Leadership commitment to Diversity & Inclusion is made credible by the actions, pronouncements, and involvement of leaders at all levels. Demonstrated leadership commitment creates an "authorizing" environment.

Best Practice in Action

- The CEO leads the Diversity Council
- The Chief Diversity Officer is a direct report to the CEO
- The CEO meets regularly with affinity groups
- Leadership performance evaluations are tied to diversity results
- The leadership signs off on diversity metrics and progress
- The leadership reviews succession plans
- There is consistency in communications, both internally and externally
- The leadership promotes the involvement of the Board and the Advisory Council

Practice enables:
- A perception of credible leadership
- Leadership buy-in
- The embrace of D&I as a consistent priority
- A strengthened internal and external reputation

Build a sustainable structure, and allocate resources accordingly

To be effective, all Diversity & Inclusion strategies within the organization must be aligned in support of one overarching goal. To deliver measurable results, the strategy must be supported by the appropriate infrastructure, and must have adequate resources assigned.

Best Practice in Action

- There is an office that is responsible for diversity
- There is a dedicated staff that oversees strategy and influences critical elements such as:
  - ❖ budgets
  - ❖ diversity metrics
  - ❖ Progress and program reporting
  - ❖ internal talent movement
  - ❖ resources for programs, affinity groups, and university services

Practice enables:
- Clarity of ownership
- Dedicated budget to establish initiatives
- Effective allocation of departmental budget

Develop systems of accountability

Systems of accountability ensure collective and individual ownership of the Diversity & Inclusion strategy. These systems ensure that plans translate into behaviors, desired outcomes and measureable results.

Practice enables:
- Informed decision-making
- Awareness of the need for intervention
- Collecting information about gaps in performance
- Development of a baseline for continuous improvement

Best Practice in Action

- Provision and encouragement of a risk-free system to capture and analyze comments, suggestions and grievances at all levels.
- Engagement and perception surveys graded and analyzed by third parties
- Monitoring of open positions, hiring, and succession planning
- Tracking participation in training and career development programs
- Frequent review of turnover and promotion rates
- Establishment of qualitative and quantitative measures of success
- Development of clear and agreed-upon measures for collecting, analyzing and sharing data across all areas of the institution
- Evaluating the results of work culture and campus climate surveys

The Fundamentals - Councils

Establish influential councils

Organizations that follow best practices often create a Diversity & Inclusion Council. Council members are chosen from well-positioned, highly respected, and influential leaders. Members are empowered to oversee the Diversity & Inclusion strategy.

Best Practice in Action

The D&I Council plays a critical role in:

- Shaping a culture of inclusion
- Supporting and advancing the institution's D&I strategy
- Tracking and reporting progress on D&I
- Assuring accountability
- Sustaining Diversity & Inclusion as an organizational priority

Practice enables:
- Leadership involvement in the Diversity & Inclusion strategy
- Institutional knowledge of the level of importance attached to D&I
- The establishment of D&I as a long-term priority
- A public statement of engagement and commitment

The Fundamental - Communicate the Commitment

Internal and external communications

The Diversity & Inclusion communications strategy builds the organization's brand, accelerates positive change, and supports outreach and recruitment. It reinforces the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and strengthens its reputation internally and externally.

Practice enables:
- Confidence in the institution's commitment
- Widespread knowledge of D&I accomplishments
- Widespread knowledge of the benefits of D&I
- Inspiration to action and active support
- A vibrant common vision of diversity
- Consistency between internal and external messages

Best Practice in Action

- Bold and sincere messaging about commitment from the top
- Prime positioning for D&I information on the website (not buried within careers and community or several clicks from the home page)
- D&I information is found in multiple online locations
- D&I information includes more than a requisite statement; there is meaningful, compelling, and relevant information
- Public statements of goals and progress
- Rewards and corporate recognition for successes
- Public access to video testimonials and success stories (mentees and mentors, utilization of employee-resource groups)
- Publicly shared annual diversity report
- Web pages dedicated to resource groups

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Rethink the Recruiting Strategy

Attracting candidates from underrepresented groups requires the development and execution of a comprehensive diversity recruiting plan that is integrated within an overall recruiting strategy. This plan must include targeted recruiting…

Reduce the power of "Whom you Know"

Equal access to high-quality, consistent, and accurate application and program information removes barriers and reliance on "whom you know." It provides technical information to individuals who may not have access to insiders, or experience applying to such programs.

Practice enables:
- A clearer picture of the program for applicants
- A better understanding of what the program seeks
- Increased numbers of applications from members of underrepresented groups
- Higher quality applications overall

Best Practice in Action

**Health and Society Scholars
Users Guide to the Application**

"The site is also used as a marketing tool that provides more detailed information about the program and application process to individuals and institutions who may not have much experience in applying to programs like this, thereby potentially increasing our geographic and institutional diversity."

~ Gerard Lebeda
Deputy Director
Health and Society Scholars

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Develop communications that resonate

A compelling value proposition, relevant messages, and representation in marketing materials all welcome candidates from under-represented groups. These things provide re-assuring cues that enhance the attractiveness of the program.

Practice enables:
- A strong message of inclusion
- A focus on program alumni and grantees from underrepresented groups
- The message that "This program can be for me"

Best Practice in Action

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center for Health Policy at Meharry Medical College works to increase the diversity of health policy leaders in the social, behavioral, and health sciences, particularly sociology, economics, and political science, who will one day influence health policy at the national level

Helena Dagadu, MPH
RWJF Center for Health Policy Fellow
PhD Student, Vanderbilt University

" *Health policy research is my passion— and my path to solutions.* "

Helena Dagadu expected to follow her father's career path into medicine. But working on a project, probing cancer and health disparities funded by the Centers for Disease Control, showed Helena the power and impact of diving deeper on the issues as a social scientist influencing policy. She is currently an RWJF Health Policy Fellow at the Center.

http://meharryhealthpolicy.org/

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To learn more about Robert Wood Johnson Foundation scholars, fellows and leadership opportunities in health and health care.

Rethink the Application Strategy

Traditional selection processes are yielding to more innovative approaches. The success of Holistic Review shows that traditional practices are not necessarily the best practices. Encouraging reapplication and allowing candidates to learn from rejection strengthens their future applications and their prospects for a successful candidacy.

Practice enables:
- A second chance for qualified applicants
- A better understanding of pipeline issues
- Integration of points of intervention so as to increase the quality of applications
- Familiarity with the application process for candidates with little prior experience and ineffective networks
- Support for candidates' career development overall

Best Practice in Action

We also provide a "lessons learned" webinar for candidates who were not successful; we talk about issues that came up -- generically -- in the applications and interviews, give them feedback on the process and invite them to apply the next year if they are still eligible. We remind them about the webinars, and to get started early. This helps them work through the process. We've had at least two candidates from minority backgrounds who were rejected on their first applications, went through the learning and analysis process, applied again and were accepted.

~ Jacquelyn Campbell, PhD, RN, FAAN
National Director, RWJF Nurse Faculty Scholars
Anna D. Wolf Chair and Professor
Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing

Recruitment – Use Multiple Channels

Really reach out

A targeted outreach strategy requires a high level of precision. The strategy makes use of advisory board members, strategic partners, and alumni in outreach, development and recruitment efforts. This approach requires meaningful relationships with influencers, connectors, and organizations that provide access to candidates. Strong relationships are necessary to build a pipeline for the future.

Practice enables:
- Enhanced opportunities for word-of-mouth recruiting
- Establishment of a pipeline of interested candidates
- Expanded awareness of the program
- Access to assistance in the recruiting effort

Best Practice in Action

- Ongoing sourcing of passive candidates
- Maintenance of databases of potential applicants from diverse backgrounds
- Relationship building with professional organizations
- Use of referral programs, networks, and affinity groups
- An aggressive internal and external branding campaign
- Use of search firms that specialize in diversity
- Internship programs
- Recruiting events
- Presence at community fairs, job fairs, employer outreach events, etc.

Encourage and Support Engagement

The process of engagement starts early on. It improves the prospects for positive Diversity & Inclusion outcomes and for a successful institutional culture of diversity. Engagement is a vital contributor to inclusion, retention, and productivity.

Provide multiple channels
for mentoring

Members of underrepresented groups benefit from inclusive and cross-racial mentoring. Mentoring, coaching, and sponsoring contribute greatly to career development, retention, promotion, and engagement.

Best Practice in Action

- Individual coaching and feedback
- Group learning and experience exchanges
- Mentor and mentee training
- Multi-level coaching and career sponsorship
- Innovative practices for orientation and on-boarding
- A defined process for holistic experiential exchange
- An alumni-hosted webinar for potential candidates

Practice enables:
- An inclusive and supportive experience
- A reduced likelihood of giving up
- A gateway to other helpful programs and services
- The acceleration of acculturation

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Retention – Benefits and Programs

Support real needs

Understanding the real needs and concerns of those in the program, and developing services and benefits that support these needs, can contribute to the retention of members of underrepresented groups, and of those in the program overall. It can also positively affect the career path of members of underrepresented groups and of others.

Best Practice in Action

- Financial support
- Crisis support
- Support for family issues and work-life balance
- Help with academic preparation
- Instructor support
- Support for health problems
- Help with faculty issues

Practice enables:
- An inclusive and supportive workplace experience
- A reduced likelihood of giving up
- A gateway to other helpful programs and services

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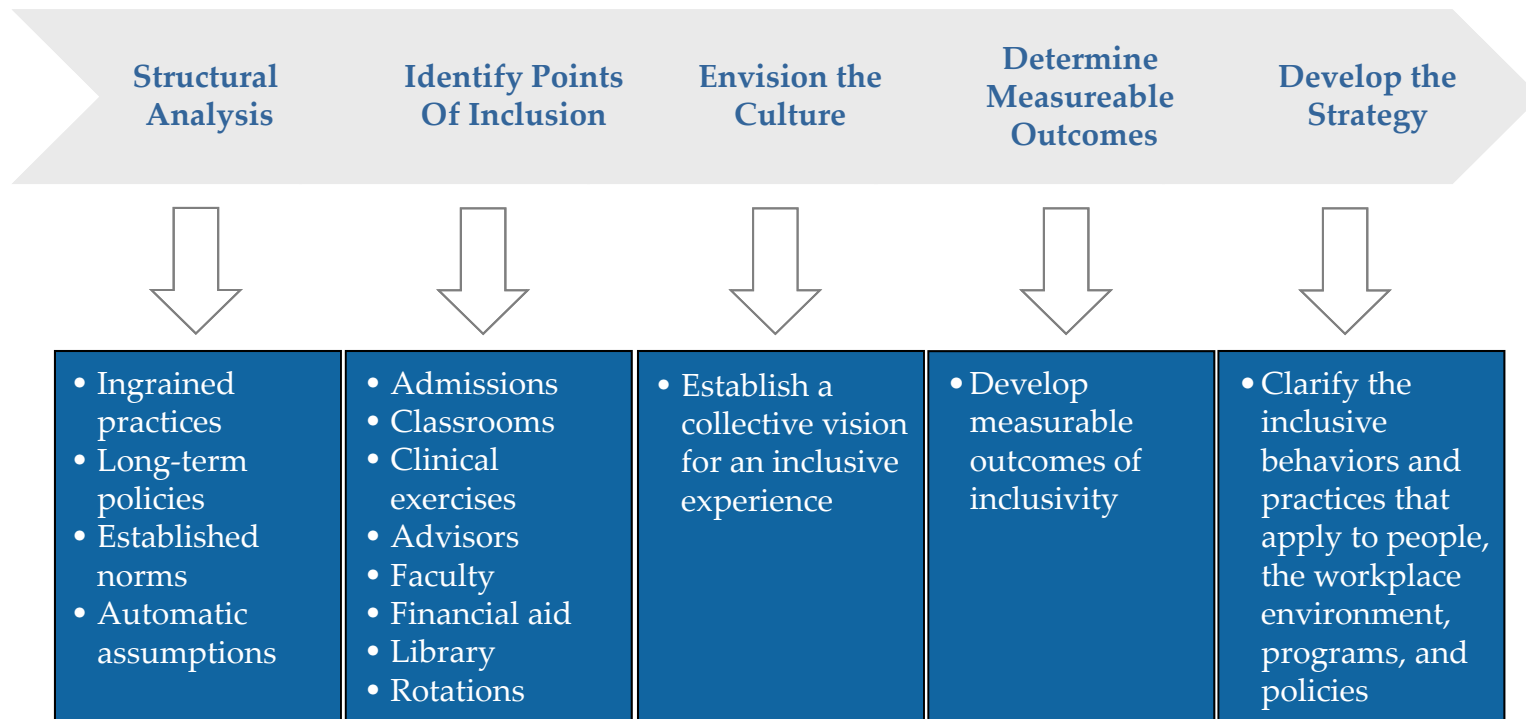**Diversity Matters Community**

Build a Purposeful Culture

Building a culture of inclusion is a process of institutional change. It is driven by the institution's larger strategy for growth, relevance, and leadership. The change management process involves building the "experience of inclusiveness." This requires learning inclusive behaviors, building systems of accountability, establishing methods to evaluate progress, and developing new competencies.
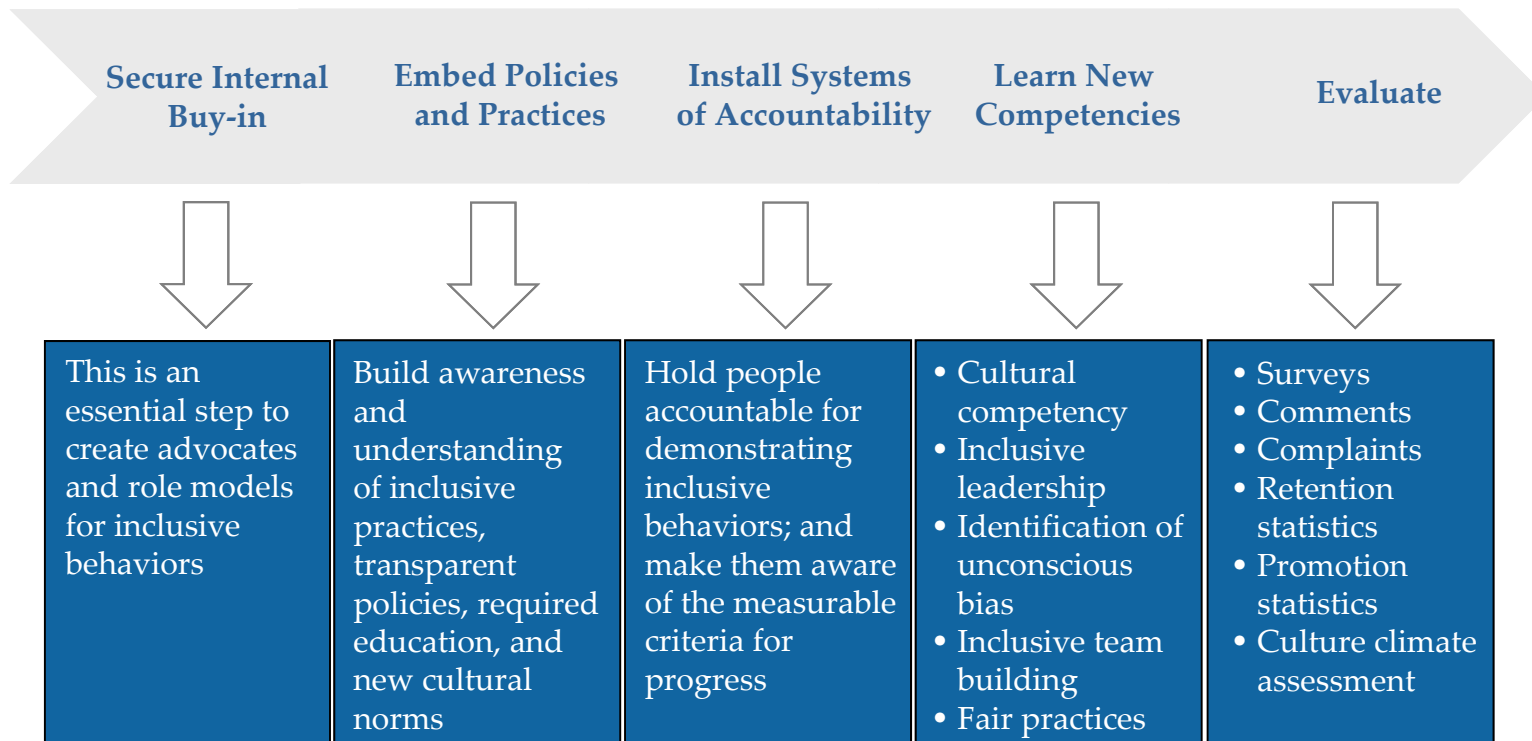
Culture - Building an Inclusive Culture From the Inside Out

Building an inclusive culture requires taking a holistic view and constantly seeking opportunities to demonstrate inclusive behaviors. Institutions seeking to increase diversity and inclusion should ask honest and hard questions about their culture, with an eye toward identifying practices of exclusion and unintended barriers to inclusion.

Structural Analysis	Identify Points Of Inclusion	Envision the Culture	Determine Measureable Outcomes	Develop the Strategy
• Ingrained practices • Long-term policies • Established norms • Automatic assumptions	• Admissions • Classrooms • Clinical exercises • Advisors • Faculty • Financial aid • Library • Rotations	• Establish a collective vision for an inclusive experience	• Develop measurable outcomes of inclusivity	• Clarify the inclusive behaviors and practices that apply to people, the workplace environment, programs, and policies

Culture - Building an Inclusive Culture From the Inside Out

With an established vision of the inclusive experience, and supported by standards for measurable outcomes, the organization can begin the hard work of building new competencies, learning inclusive behavior, and embedding inclusive practices in institutional routines. In doing so it must follow transparent policies and construct new cultural norms in the workplace.
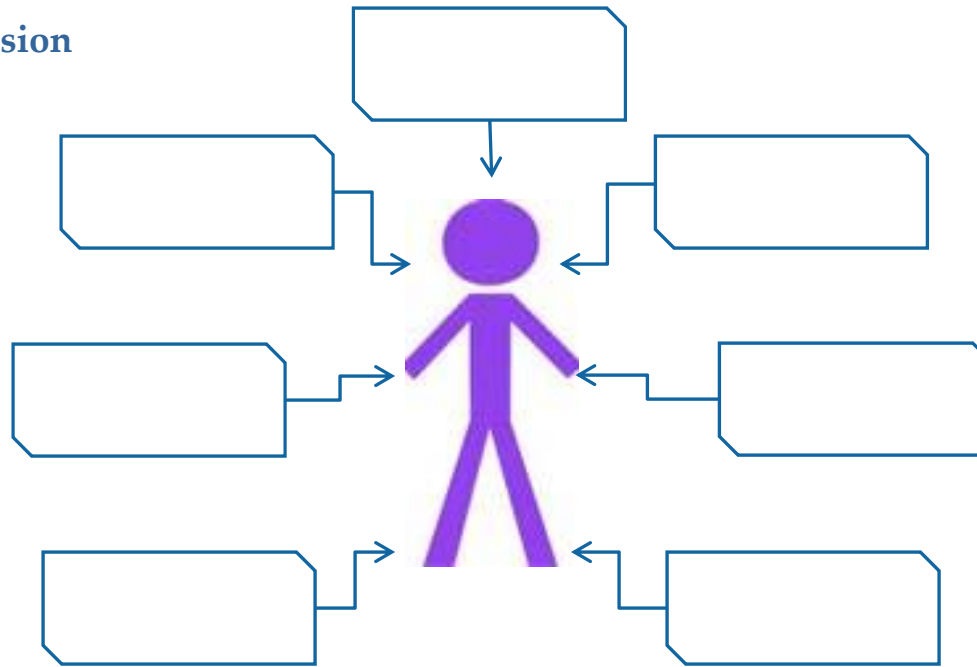
Secure Internal Buy-in	Embed Policies and Practices	Install Systems of Accountability	Learn New Competencies	Evaluate
This is an essential step to create advocates and role models for inclusive behaviors	Build awareness and understanding of inclusive practices, transparent policies, required education, and new cultural norms	Hold people accountable for demonstrating inclusive behaviors; and make them aware of the measurable criteria for progress	• Cultural competency • Inclusive leadership • Identification of unconscious bias • Inclusive team building • Fair practices	• Surveys • Comments • Complaints • Retention statistics • Promotion statistics • Culture climate assessment

Summary

The Fundamentals	Well Established	Needs Improvement	Need to Establish	N/A
• Build a comprehensive strategy on a strong foundation	○	○	○	○
• Ground Diversity & Inclusion within the mission	○	○	○	○
• Build a compelling and relevant case	○	○	○	○
• Demonstrate leadership commitment	○	○	○	○
• Invest in a sustainable structure	○	○	○	○
• Align independent strategies and develop systems of accountability	○	○	○	○
• Communicate internally and externally	○	○	○	○
• Establish influential councils	○	○	○	○

Recruitment				
• Rethink the recruiting strategy	○	○	○	○
• Provide equal access to quality information	○	○	○	○
• Encourage re-applications	○	○	○	○
• Develop communications that resonates	○	○	○	○
• Really reach out	○	○	○	○

Retention				
• Encourage and support engagement	○	○	○	○
• Provide multiple channels for mentoring	○	○	○	○
• Support real needs	○	○	○	○

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Opportunities for Inclusion

Systems of Support