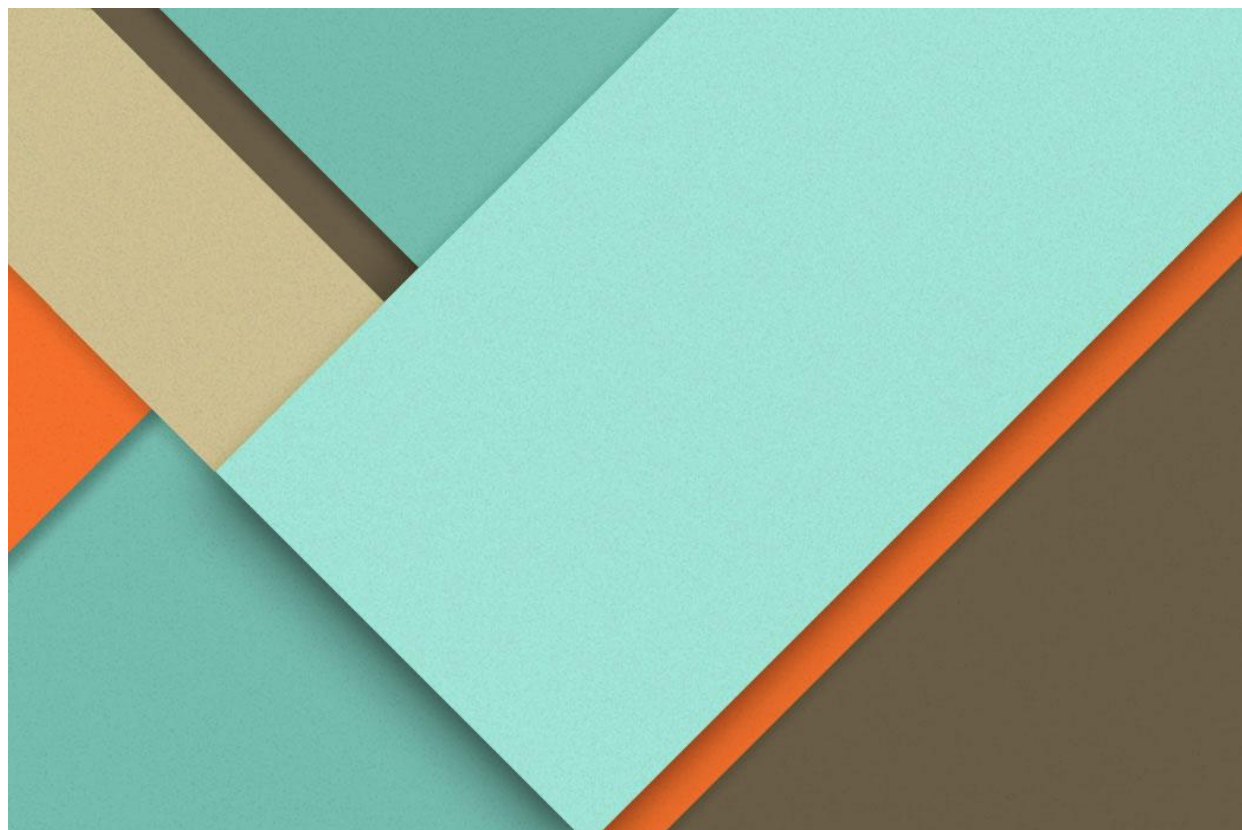




Starting and Sustaining a DEI Committee

A Toolkit from UAW 4121

tiny.cc/4121DEI

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Front matter

The purpose of this toolkit is to support units, departments, and programs at the University of Washington in forming or sustaining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committees. It was developed by the UAW 4121 [Anti-Discrimination Working Group](#) beginning in Spring 2020.

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Introduction

Overview

There is a campus-wide need for departments to better understand and address the needs of minoritized students. At the University of Washington, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, trans, queer, disabled, and other minority UW students and Postdocs are not adequately supported, as demonstrated by recent UW-UAW equity surveys ([2018-19](#), [2019-20](#), [2020-21](#)). These surveys also emphasize the importance of structural change at the departmental and unit level: while students and postdocs generally lack confidence in the potential effectiveness of the institution as a whole, they report much more confidence in department-level efforts and local support resources like union representatives. To address these and other similar issues, many departments/colleges have begun or revived existing Diversity-Equity-Inclusion (DEI) committees. This toolkit is for students, postdocs, staff, faculty, and other department stakeholders who want to form effective DEI committees, or who want to improve existing DEI efforts within their departments.

Unfortunately, DEI committees lacking a clear direction have often been ineffective, exhausting, or even actively harmful. This is particularly true if the committee isn't invested in restructuring power, identifying ways to engage the entire department, and ultimately, altering the status quo. Without careful attention to power and without strategic planning, they can easily become spaces where good ideas go to die, where underrepresented members are burnt out, or where people with privilege go to make themselves feel better.

This toolkit seeks to help address these dynamics by providing a [theory of sustainable change](#) and basic tools for enacting that change. It gives suggestions for developing a strategic plan, understanding power and empowerment, and developing action plans that are effective, transparent, and sustainable. It is not meant as a comprehensive or one-size-fits all solution, but as a way to generate sharper analysis, new ideas, and more widespread participation.

Section summaries

This toolkit is broken down into five sections, summarized below. While we have ordered and organized the toolkit in a particular way, the process of forming or improving DEI committees should be iterative and nonlinear.

[1. Background & theory of change.](#) This toolkit is oriented around a model of change focused on prevention—addressing the conditions that make issues of harassment and inequity more likely to occur—and empowerment—rebalancing power so that those in more vulnerable positions have real recourse and a decision-making voice. This section



discusses this model at greater length and illustrates the specific role that DEI committees play within it.

2. Transparency and accountability. It is vital to clearly communicate your DEI committee's goals, work, and decision-making to your community. This section illustrates effective ways to maintain transparency, including how to have a strong online presence. We then discuss how to best ensure that your committee is held accountable to community constituents by regular reporting to campus-wide offices and to the community itself.

3. Basics of committee structure. Equal representation of community members at different levels of power (for example, ASEs, postdocs, and faculty) is essential for effective action. This section discusses best practices for selecting community members to serve as representatives on your committee.

4. Effective action. Structural change does not happen overnight, but your committee has the power to start and support it. Doing so, however, requires concrete and clearly-specified goals. This section illustrates three types of effective DEI committees: those seeking to create action plans and provide guidance; those seeking to conduct feet-on-the-ground surveys, workshops, and programs; and those doing both sorts of work. We discuss examples of each within UW. We then discuss best practices for ensuring that your specific goals are met.

5. Evaluating your work. Regular evaluation of measurable objectives is critical for developing both effective interventions and a culture of transparency and accountability in any DEI committee. This work must start with clear, measurable goals/objectives, which should be developed collaboratively among relevant department stakeholders. This section outlines a step-by-step process for developing and measuring objectives on an ongoing basis, including guided questions your group can use to generate collaborative discussion and planning. This section also includes additional resources—both at UW and beyond—to support evaluation work, as well as a sample self assessment worksheet.

1. Background & theory of change

In this section, we introduce the definition of a DEI Committee and its purpose. We give a brief overview of different techniques and methods that DEI Committees use to combat structural oppression in universities. We then explain the origin and purpose of this document.

Starting commitments & theory of change

Racism and other issues of inequity and marginalization are fundamentally problems of organizational culture and structural oppression. They are not merely issues of a few bad actors, nor are they resolved simply by changing individuals' awareness.¹ For instance, research on sexual harassment clearly identifies organizational culture as the number one predictor of whether harassment will occur.² This toolkit is oriented around a model of change focused on **prevention** and **empowerment**—i.e., addressing the conditions that make issues of harassment and inequity more likely to occur, and rebalancing power so that those in more vulnerable positions have real recourse and a decision-making voice.

We note that the concept of empowerment is often co-opted or watered down to mean something like superficial opportunities to speak up, or calls to “lean in.” Here we mean empowerment to go beyond these common uses. We instead understand empowerment to be an ongoing, grassroots-led process to create conditions that make engagement, decision-making, and leadership development meaningfully possible to underrepresented and systemically oppressed groups. This is particularly important for students and employees who are BIPOC, trans, queer, disabled, caregivers, international, and undocumented.

Under such a prevention/empowerment model, it is not enough to merely enforce compliance with official policy or address individual bad actors (though this may be necessary).³ Rather, it is critical to direct our work towards reconfiguring power dynamics, structures, and community norms that enable discrimination, harassment, and inequity to happen in the first place. A range of factors that must be considered include departmental and institutional policies (e.g., wage transparency, promotion guidelines, workload, appointment security, degree milestones, etc.) as well as norms (e.g., department/lab inclusivity guidelines, collaboration, mentorship practices, etc).

¹ For more on problems with “bad apples” models, refer to Lawton 2005 and Flores 2019.

² E.g., refer to NASEM 2018, 46 and 121; Willness, Steel, & Lee 2007.

³ For more on the insufficiency of compliance approaches to discrimination and harassment, refer to Lawton 2004, NASEM 2018, Ahmed 2017.



In DEI Committee work, these needs surface both in *aims*—what changes committees seek to effect in their departments to make them more equitable and supportive—and in *methods*—how committees themselves structure their work to build accountability, transparency, and democracy with the rest of their department communities.

Under a prevention/empowerment model, every community member has a role to play in proactively creating inclusive and equitable norms; making structural change is fundamentally a matter of collective action. Additionally, those in positions of departmental and/or institutional power have an added responsibility to use their positions to restructure dynamics and conditions that produce inequities for marginalized groups. As a part of this work, increasing departmental democracy and empowerment for vulnerable and marginalized students and workers is critical.

What is a DEI committee?

A Diversity-Equity-Inclusion (DEI) Committee is a group of UW community members within a unit, department, or college, who hold different roles and have different types of expertise. These individuals should work toward systemic change in their unit to improve inclusion, diversity, and equity. Some departments/colleges may have different names for these committees (e.g., Climate Committee, Diversity Committee).

Purpose of DEI committees

The purpose of DEI committees is to hold people with decision-making power accountable to the needs of students, Postdocs, and other department members who have been historically marginalized in academic settings and make structural changes that better meet these needs. This toolkit will help users understand and develop preventative and proactive methods to address harassment, bullying, and discriminatory and racist behavior before it occurs. Our aim is to change structural conditions that create and maintain inequity.

Limits of DEI committees

A DEI committee is only one small part of addressing a large problem. Discrimination and inequity are structurally embedded in every department at UW and higher education as a whole. Thus in order to create equity we must make fundamental changes to policies and cultural norms at all levels. These changes a DEI committee can help advance; however they are not something a DEI committee can accomplish alone. Rather, this work fundamentally requires widespread, proactive participation by members across a community. Where such participation does not already exist, it must be actively built through direct and ongoing engagement to help everyone recognize that DEI issues are *everyone's* issues.

Methods and community engagement

Beginning in Spring 2020, members of the UAW 4121 Anti-Discrimination Working Group identified common problems found within departments at UW through surveying and informal conversations with other students and Postdocs in departments across UW. We conducted research into best practices identified by other institutions, research groups, existing committees at UW, as well as literature on DEI work, prevention, institutional change, and more. We additionally drew from annual equity surveys developed and implemented jointly between UW and UAW 4121 and housed under the UW-UAW [Empowering Prevention and Inclusive Communities](#) program. Working in continued conversation with DEI committee members in departments across UW, we then synthesized this information into a series of suggestions and guiding conversations for improving the effectiveness in DEI committees.

This toolkit is intended to be a collaborative and living document and will be updated as our research and engagement continue. Any UW community member with questions, requests, or suggestions for future work can get in touch by emailing anti-discrimination@uaw4121.org.

Context and acknowledgements

This toolkit originally emerged in Spring 2020 alongside other anti-racist organizing and activism in response to the murder of George Floyd. Over the course of its development, it has also been influenced by increasing work within our communities to address racism, ableism, transphobia, xenophobia, and other forms of oppression, especially as they have come into sharper relief than ever as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is situated within the larger anti-racism and equity efforts in the U.S., in Seattle, at UW, and in our union. You can find more information about UW-based efforts in this [anti-racism and resistance map](#) put together by Divest & Demilitarize.

We also recognize that our work -- both on this DEI Toolkit, and at UW more generally -- takes place on the unceded lands of the Duwamish people, past and present. We encourage those reading this toolkit to take time to honor both the land and the Duwamish people by [learning more about the tribe](#), [paying Real Rent](#), [reading more about land acknowledgements](#), and otherwise working to build accountable relationships with the Duwamish people.

2. Transparency and accountability

It is vital for a DEI committee to be transparent and accountable to its department members. In this section, we answer questions on how a DEI committee can best communicate its activities, goals, and decision-making. We then address best practices for maintaining accountability.

How do we communicate DEI goals and progress to the public?

It is important to regularly report on your committee's activities and goals. Such reporting might take the form of a quarterly newsletter that you distribute internally to students, staff, and faculty of your department (e.g. a quarterly newsletter).

But maintaining a website describing your committee's work can be particularly effective. Ideally, this site should be prominently featured on your department's website. Having a robust online presence provides an easy way for both department members and members of the public (including prospective students, staff, and faculty) to learn about your DEI efforts.

The following are a list of possible sections with some prompts to help you adapt and incorporate them into your committee's website. The process for developing each of these items can and should also be done transparently. There should be clear communication with department members on what the process is, how they can participate, and when the action is final. We also strongly recommend clearly posting these items onto a publicly available page on your website.

DEI Committee Website Components

1. General Mission Statement.

- a. What are some core and generalizable driving principles behind your DEI Committee and the work it undertakes?
- b. What are the general goals you have as a committee?
- c. A mission statement can provide a strong signal of your commitment to fighting discrimination across any identifier and actively working toward inclusive practices throughout all levels of your department.

2. Department/Program-Specific Mission Statement.

- a. What are the area-specific forms of equity and inclusion that are a particular focus of your department/program?

- b. How does your specific focus-area uniquely relate to the efforts of diversity and inclusion within your department/program across UW, and throughout the broader community?
- c. Consideration and active inclusion of a broad range of individual identities can help to cultivate diverse thought, action, and cultural awareness as they relate to your focus area.

3. **List of Committee Members and Contact Information.**

- a. What is the composition of your committee membership?
- b. Do you have individuals representing each peer group within your department/program (i.e. undergraduate students, graduate students, postdocs, staff, faculty)?
- c. Do you have a point of contact within the department?
- d. Have you involved a Diversity Specialist who has expertise in guiding DEI-focused teams on your committee? (For more on DEI Committee structure, refer to [Section 3.](#))

4. **List of Current Activities.**

- a. What initiatives is your committee focused on currently and in the near/long term?
- b. How can members of your community get engaged with these initiatives or the committee?
- c. Would the addition of a calendar help present/organize departmental DEI events?
- d. A calendar is a good place to provide meeting agendas and minutes from meetings (note that it is important that some information be redacted to retain anonymity for any sensitive discussion items).

5. **Anonymous Reporting Tool.**

- a. How does your committee provide methods for individuals to report transgressions and manage them in a timely manner?
- b. Providing explicit information for how the reporting will be handled (who will receive the report, timeline for review and action, etc.), and acknowledgement of receipt of the report will help support the reportee.
- c. **Anonymous reporting tools should only be used with extreme care and intention.** For more on important considerations you should take before moving forward with an anonymous reporting tool, see the [next subsection.](#)

6. **Committee Operations**

- a. What are the modes by which your committee operates? for example:
 - i. the relationship it has with your department,
 - ii. any bylaws/governing principles for running the committee,
 - iii. the responsibilities for members, or the committee as a whole

- iv. a list of reports on committee audits,
 - v. tools and resources for accommodation and inclusion
 - b. Do you have a strategic plan for the short/long term for the direction of your committee's initiatives? (For more on developing and measuring strategic objectives, refer to [Section 5](#).)
- 7. Feedback and Survey Forms.**
- a. What are the mechanisms for individuals within your department/program to provide feedback on the committee, for example:
 - i. Areas that are being done well
 - ii. Areas that need improvement
 - iii. Suggestions for topics of interest to the community for the committee to discuss/focus on?
 - b. Engaging members of your department/program and community is important to ensure that your efforts remain vital, focused, and relevant to the community you seek to serve. (For more on surveying and other community assessment, refer to [Section 5](#).)

Examples of programs at UW with a strong online DEI presence include the [Center for Quantitative Science \(CQS\)](#), the [School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences \(SAFS\)](#), and the [Department of English](#), among others.

How can the people we represent provide feedback and share concerns?

It is important for those on the committee to represent diverse constituencies within the department (a point we discuss at greater length in [Section 3](#)). However, this is not enough on its own to ensure committee accountability. Creating mechanisms for department members to share feedback or discuss concerns can help ensure the committee is adequately responding to needs within the department. An anonymous comment system (such as the one run by [SAFS](#)) may encourage those inside or outside the committee with less institutional power to share their concerns and perspectives. It is critical to actually follow up on the anonymous comments made and transparently communicate to the department community how they have been integrated into the committee's work and practices.

However, while they may be useful tools, **anonymous comment systems—even with thoughtful and transparent response protocols—are not sufficient on their own for creating meaningful accountability.** Too often, anonymous reporting systems are adopted as shortcuts or band-aids that do little to address underlying structural issues or departmental norms. Meaningful accountability is only possible in contexts where all involved parties know how to access real recourse. In order to create a department culture

that is deeply rooted in inclusion and equity, it is thus critical to proactively build norms and structures that promote harm prevention, mutual support, and community-building. These norms and structures should support taking action through union, university, or external processes.

Developing departmental accountability requires developing systems that enable department members to access trusted support resources that enable them to effectively address issues that arise quickly at lower levels, before they rise to the level of a formal complaint. Unfortunately, research shows us that across academia, trust in institutional and departmental support and reporting resources is often quite low, and this is exacerbated by (often accurate) perceptions that institutional resources are ineffective or insincere, or only exist to protect the institution's liability. Peer-based resources that are backed with meaningful power, such as union stewards, are thus critical resources for creating improved networks of support and buy-in.

Committee members should also be active in engaging the constituencies they represent, in order to both get feedback and suggestions and inform them about committee work. (Note that by “constituencies” we mean positions within the department such as undergraduates, graduate students, staff, faculty, post-docs, specific offices, labs, and centers, etc. It isn't appropriate or equitable for committee members who are from marginalized groups to be expected to be a spokesperson or representative for their group.)

Who should the committee report to?

Many schools have offices dedicated to DEI plans and initiatives. At UW, these include the [Office of Minority Affairs and Diversity \(OMAD\)](#), the [UW Tacoma Office of Equity and Inclusion](#), and the [UW Bothell Office of Diversity & Equity](#). It may make sense for the committee to regularly check in with and hold itself accountable to one of these offices (cf. [UC Berkeley's Strategic Planning for EDI Toolkit](#)). Reporting to these offices can help the committee stay on track by troubleshooting plans or learning about more university resources. **More fundamentally—and at a minimum—the committee should regularly report to the department community itself** (for more on which, see the [next question](#)).

How will we ensure adherence to guidelines and progression towards our goals?

Another way to ensure the DEI committee adheres to stated guidelines and makes progress toward goals is to invite the wider department community in to hold the committee accountable. This can be done through 1) sharing committee goals and plans and 2) regular updates/reports to the overall department, such as a yearly annual report. Creating report templates can streamline the reporting process. Transparency, setting and sharing SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-limited) goals, and

evaluating the results of implemented policies are all helpful in ensuring the committee is held accountable to the broader community. See, as well, [above](#) and [Section 5](#).

3. Basics of committee structure

Committee membership and roles

While most DEI committees are composed of mainly faculty and graduate students, it is important to be proactively inclusive of different types of staff members (e.g. postdocs, undergraduate students, administrative and research staff, etc.). Be mindful of whether there are identities and positions that are under- or over-represented. A diversity of identities, backgrounds, and expertise leads to the inclusion of various viewpoints—and ultimately a more thoughtful and equitable approach. Broadening the membership of the committee also increases the likelihood that initiatives are successfully implemented at every level. Below is a list of individuals who (if applicable to your department) should be represented in the committee:

Faculty	Staff	Students
Tenured Faculty Tenure-track Faculty Lecturers Adjunct Faculty	Postdocs Research Scientists Lab Managers Lab Techs Administrative staff Facilities staff	Graduate Undergraduate Academic Student Employees Other student workers

Length of tenure

Positions should have a set length of tenure, typically one academic year. It is important to make meetings open to the entire department, regardless of committee membership, but it is also encouraged to have some number of official (preferably paid) members in order to create stability and accountability regarding projects (more on compensation below).

Appointment versus election

It is best not to have the chair of the department or only senior members appoint new members because this does not generate confidence in the committee, and does not empower interested department members to get involved. The most inclusive way to select committee members is either by holding a department-wide election or having each group (e.g., faculty, graduate students, etc.) elect representatives for their group.

Compensation

Having some number of committee members who are paid for their work is highly encouraged. A paid position allows for individuals who participate in DEI work to be compensated for their time and helps to alleviate the burden most often placed on BIPOC members of the department who frequently take a leading or large role on their department's DEI committee through unpaid service work. With limited funds, students, Postdocs, and other staff should be prioritized over faculty members, although ideally everyone is paid for their work. Though some departments are working towards compensating their members fully, many departments do not have paid positions. When this is the case, it is important to be respectful of the time the individuals are volunteering. Below are some options for allocating funding:

- For graduate students, offer full-time (20hrs/wk) research assistant (RA) or staff assistant (SA) positions
- Dedicate a portion of the person's normal appointment to this work (example: a Postdoc appointed at 100% FTE dedicates 20% FTE to DEI work)
- Offer pay dependent on total hourly commitment (examples: as a 25% FTE appointment; at an hourly rate for 5h/week)
- Offer pay dependent on predetermined bonus, regardless of hourly commitment (example: 2 hrs of pay for being a member, regardless of the time put in)

Schedule

Many departments have regular meetings, from once a week to once a month. On top of those meetings, which are usually open to the entire department, there may be more frequent subcommittee meetings where smaller groups work on projects within the larger DEI framework. Meeting schedules, agendas, and locations (in person or remote) should be communicated clearly to members of the department; e.g., on a calendar on the department website or via department-wide emails.

4. Effective action

Structural change does not happen overnight, but your committee has the power to start and support it. What, then, does effective committee action look like? In this section, we address the best ways to position the committee within the department, college/school, and university in order to implement structural and/or policy change, and we provide some illustrative examples.

Identify your goals

Having clearly defined goals is essential for effective action (for more guidance on developing goals, refer to [Section 5](#)). Following [Leon & Williams 2016](#), we can split successful DEI committees into roughly three types:

1. **Strategy-focused.** Aims to provide guidance and direction for DEI policies, programs, and initiatives. This might involve developing a strategic plan for faculty, ASEs, and/or students to follow.
2. **Implementation-focused.** Focuses on “on-the-ground” work such as organizing workshops and events, as well as collecting, analyzing, and reporting data. It is important for this sort of committee to secure funding for these activities (e.g., through grants).
3. **Hybrid.** Pursues goals from either or both of the previous types, depending on the department’s needs.

If you are trying to kick-start DEI efforts in your department or program, a strategy-focused approach can be fruitful. ASEs can play a lead role in forming strategy-focused committees. For example, graduate students in UW’s [Center for Quantitative Science](#) formed the center’s DEI committee in the 2020/2021 academic year, recruiting both faculty members and ASEs to have equal representation on the committee as co-chairs. Initial committee work involved drafting a strategic plan and obtaining anonymous feedback from the center’s members.

If your department already has a fruitful strategic plan in place, your committee might shift to implementation-focused work. UW’s [Department of English](#) provides one good example. Their website features their strategic plan prominently, highlights a wealth of resources (including guides for equitable teaching and mentoring), and integrates similar work being done by the [Expository Writing Program](#). With this structure in place, the DEI committee focused on assessing the climate in the 2020/2021 academic year. This work involved conducting a detailed, anonymous survey, which received over 100 replies. It also involved conducting voluntary interviews with four different focus groups of students. They are currently analyzing their collected data and drafting a report for general distribution.



The hybrid approach works particularly well for smaller departments and programs. The [Department of Philosophy's](#) Climate & Diversity Committee provides a prime example of this approach. Philosophy is a comparatively smaller department, one with fewer faculty focusing on diversity-related research. The committee thus handles both general guidance and feet-on-the-ground outreach. They have [curated guides](#) to diversifying syllabi and making classroom materials accessible. And in Spring 2020, they hosted a two-day workshop on [Universal Design \(UD\)](#) for learning. For funding, they (successfully) applied for a [Diversity and Inclusion Seed Grant](#) the previous summer, obtaining early feedback and support from the department chair. They invited a range of speakers with diverse backgrounds and expertise, including faculty from other departments, a member of our union's [Anti-Discrimination Work Group](#), and the director of [Disability Resources for Students](#). Early advertising (through department email lists and in-person reminders) ensured a high turnout, and careful moderation ensured a respectful discussion.

UW's [Department of Dance](#), a relatively small department, also takes a hybrid approach to their DEI committee. In addition to writing and distributing a [mission statement](#), the committee has pursued several projects addressing specific equity goals. For example, they have created a certified safe space and healing circle on campus. They also communicate large-scale changes to teaching praxis on the [department's website](#), such as a recent revision of the undergraduate course to de-emphasize predominantly White dance idioms. The committee also organized 1-on-1 meetings between students and new faculty candidates, giving students a voice in ensuring inclusive hiring practices.

Who needs to be involved in creating change?

As discussed in [Section 1](#), this toolkit is oriented around a particular theory of change under which it is critical to direct our work towards reconfiguring power dynamics, structures, and community norms through grassroots participation and empowerment. This requires considering a range of factors, including departmental and institutional policies (e.g., wage transparency, promotion guidelines, workload, appointment security, degree milestones, etc.) as well as norms (e.g., department/lab inclusivity guidelines, collaboration, mentorship practices, etc.). It also requires the democratic decision-making of those who are most structurally vulnerable in the department.

Every community member has a role to play in proactively creating inclusive and equitable norms. Building and sustaining meaningful structural change requires widespread grassroots participation in departmental decision-making, particularly focused on those who are most structurally vulnerable. On the flip side, those in positions of departmental and/or institutional power have an added responsibility to use their positions to restructure dynamics and conditions that produce inequities for marginalized groups.

For this to work, increasing departmental democracy and empowerment for vulnerable and marginalized students and workers is critical. Departments must work to make

engagement, decision-making, and leadership development meaningfully possible to underrepresented groups. This often can involve supporting and upholding the democratic voice and rights of unionized department employees.

Who do we need to move in order to implement changes?

In order to increase equity within a department, a DEI committee must be able to implement structural changes, including policy changes. While they may be helpful, events or solutions which don't require structural change are not enough on their own. Discrimination and inequity are embedded in every department at UW and higher education as a whole, and thus in order to create equity we must make fundamental changes to policies and cultural norms at all levels. These changes are not something a DEI committee can accomplish alone. It is important to identify individuals and offices who have the decision-making authority to implement DEI policies, and then develop strategies that will move them to do so.

Identifying who these key decision makers are will depend on what initiatives the committee is focused on and the specific structure of a department. Depending on the initiative, it may also be necessary to engage leadership at the broader college/school or university level. Establishing a partnership with DEI related offices at UW may also be a way to increase the committee's power to implement changes.

How can we engage decision-makers in strategic ways?

This analysis will always be highly context-specific, and should reflect the relationships you already have with key decision-makers, what motivates them to act, etc. Depending on the context, you might engage decision-makers in some of the following ways:

- It can sometimes be helpful to include department leadership in the DEI committee as a way of generating increased buy-in for the group's work (cf. [UC Berkeley's Strategic Planning for EDI Toolkit](#)).
- If department leadership are unavailable, it can be useful to identify and recruit someone within the department who is in a position of power and holds institutional knowledge about the department (cf. [UW Medicine's Leaders Guide for Convening and Running an Effective EDI Committee](#)). This person can help with any of the following:
 - Serving as an advocate of the committee
 - Serving as a liaison to department leadership
 - Mentoring the committee chair(s)
 - Implementing committee policies
- It might make sense to solicit department leaders' feedback after a project or proposal is already developed, and their input could help with implementation of certain initiatives.

- Working to change longstanding and entrenched structural inequity is rarely as easy as proposing a change and having it enacted. Even with supportive decision-makers, it's often important to create additional momentum and leverage. The most effective way to do this is to build and demonstrate widespread buy-in from the rest of the community. This can look like:
 - Developing a letter that a majority of the department signs onto in support of your demands or proposed initiatives.
 - Circulating a survey that a majority of the department takes
 - Holding a town hall meeting to describe the issue and proposals you're making, and turning out everyone in the department to attend.
 - Holding a direct action to put pressure on an intransigent decision-maker.
 - You may also consider using other forms of leverage, such as strategic op-eds, union grievances, information requests, political action, legal action, university complaint processes, etc.

Beyond the committee

A DEI committee is only one small part of addressing a large problem. It is important to recognize the scope and limits of your committee's work and to situate it within other ongoing DEI efforts. Situating committee efforts within existing work, demands, and recommendations can save the committee time and help focus the committee on impactful initiatives (cf. [RISE MIT's Best Practices for Effective DEI Committees](#)). For example, your committee might support demands and petitions from:

- Departmental and student groups, such as the [demands](#) of the UW BSU and the [decriminalize UW petition](#)
- Campus unions, such as UAW 4121, WFSE 1488, and SEIU 925
- Community groups and coalitions

It is also important to **engage with equity workers outside of your committee**. This helps not only to avoid duplication of efforts, but also to build an additional network of support that you can turn to if you are facing problems within your committee.

5. Evaluating your work

Regular evaluation of measurable objectives is critical for developing both effective interventions and a culture of transparency and accountability in any department. Such evaluation should be developed and regularly reviewed collaboratively with department stakeholders. Individuals who are most directly impacted by DEI issues in the department should be at the center of the evaluation process.

Here are some helpful discussion questions a department can ask itself to help include as many relevant stakeholders as possible:

- Which groups aren't represented in our current evaluation team who stand to be impacted by our DEI work?
- How can we include them in a meaningful way?
- How can we develop group practices that make participation in this evaluation process easily available, equitable, and democratic?

Need for evaluation

Few departmental DEI committees engage in regular or thorough evaluation of their work, which leads to a number of related dynamics that reduce their work's ability to have a positive impact on DEI needs:

1. First, without thoughtful evaluation, it's impossible to reliably tell whether a DEI committee's work is actually improving diversity, equity, or inclusion, or to accurately compare the effectiveness of different interventions.
2. Second, without the prompting of evaluation, committees regularly fail to develop their interventions on measurable objectives. Without clear objectives for a given intervention or program, departments set themselves up for failure.
3. Third, most fundamentally, lack of evaluation also feeds a culture of departmental and institutional unaccountability. When a department is not assessing how well its DEI interventions are working, it (a) is not holding itself accountable to improving those efforts based on evidence and (b) communicates to its employees and students that it does not take effectiveness seriously.⁴ This becomes particularly concerning from the perspective of a prevention approach. These messages exacerbate community norms that enable harassment and discrimination.

⁴ These concerns are more than just a matter of principle. For instance, in the context of anti-harassment training, research demonstrates that individuals' perceptions of their institutions' sincerity and effectiveness in dealing with harassment are themselves predictors of training effectiveness (Cheung et al. 2017, Walsh et al. 2013).

Establishing & measuring goals

Evaluating work in DEI committees must start with clear, measurable goals/objectives. In order to build community investment in the committee's work, goals/objectives should be developed collaboratively by any relevant department stakeholders: students (both graduate and undergraduate), postdocs, research staff, administrative staff, faculty, etc. Goals should include both long-term objectives and short-term goals that are instrumental to the larger objectives. In the next [subsection](#), you'll find a step-by-step process with guided discussion questions for developing and measuring objectives on an ongoing basis. It may also be helpful for your DEI Committee to first go through a self-assessment to develop a group understanding of where you're starting. You can find a [sample self-assessment worksheet below](#).

Steps for developing measurable interventions

The following is adapted from the [National Sexual Violence Resource Center Evaluation Toolkit](#).

1. **Identify what you hope will be different in the world as a (partial) result of your efforts.** This is your "outcome." You can have multiple outcomes at different scales, and some outcomes may be instrumental towards bigger picture goals. E.g., the outcome "Decreased rates of sexual harassment" is very large, and you likely also want to brainstorm intermediate goals like "Increased rates of bystander behaviors among department members." Measurable outcomes include a clear direction of change. This can be indicated by the words like "increased/decreased", "improved", etc. In particular, this is a key step to center the perspectives and participation of those who are likely to be most impacted by DEI issues in the department -- both in terms of identity (BIPOC, queer and trans, international, undocumented, disabled, etc) and in terms of positionality in the department (students, postdocs, etc).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- If we could change one thing about the department culture tomorrow, what would it be?
- What would it look like to have a department that clearly valued and embodied principles of equity, inclusion, community, collaboration, etc?
- What do those who are most impacted by DEI issues wish was different about the department?
- What would a supportive and inclusive department look like to them?

- What are some instrumental goals towards advancing these big-picture aims?

2. **Identify how you could concretely tell if that outcome has been met.** For instance, you might know that rates of sexual harassment are decreasing by comparing survey results of harassment experience across time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How will we know if we're making progress on our short-term and long-term goals?
- What measurable factors would change, and how?

3. **Develop evaluation tools for measuring changes identified in Step 2.** Some helpful examples and recommendations are [here](#) and [here](#). Common examples include surveys, polls, focus groups, and existing reports. For instance, reports on the [annual UW-UAW Equity Survey](#) are a helpful resource (follow the link then click "Program Reports" for more). In particular, be careful to focus on metrics that center the perspectives of those who are most directly impacted by the DEI issue in question. For some tips on developing evaluation instruments, refer to the table below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How can we best center the experiences of those most impacted by DEI issues in our evaluation of our change markers?
- What kinds of evaluation instruments could be used to generate greater investment in these issues from all department members?
- How can we use tools like surveys or focus groups to establish community norms of collaboration, inclusion, etc?

Basic tips for developing evaluation instruments

What the research tells us	Evaluation best practice	Example
DEI interventions are unlikely to change personal attitudes or beliefs about	Evaluation instruments should primarily focus on knowledge, behavior, &	DO: "Have you done any of the following in the past

discrimination, but can impact both knowledge and behavior. Behavior change is the best predictor of overall culture change (Magley et al. 2013, Kalinowski et al. 2013).	experience, not personal attitudes or beliefs about discrimination. (Attitude questions about the institution or the community can be helpful, however; e.g., refer to Cheung et al. 2013).	six months: [list bystander behaviors]" DON'T: "Do you believe discrimination is a problem in our department?"
Even when a person has demonstrated that they understand the definition of a jargon term (e.g., sexual harassment), they often do not associate their own experiences with it (cf. Magley et al. 2013).	Avoid jargon and abstract questions. Instead ask about concrete examples and specific behaviors or experiences.	DO: "In the past year, have you experienced any of the following: [list behaviors that constitute harassment]" DON'T: "Have you experienced harassment at UW?"

4. **Develop interventions aimed at helping meet these goals.** This should be done after developing overall program goals. For instance, interventions that could help increase bystander behaviors among department community members might include [hosting trainings](#), discussing bystander skills at a lab meeting, developing educational resources on bystander strategies, etc. After establishing an intervention, you may also need to develop further evaluation tools specific to the intervention.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What interventions could be helpful towards meeting the goals that were established?
- What individuals would benefit most from participating in the interventions?
- What is the best way to organize the intervention and encourage/enforce participation?
- What resources are needed to successfully implement an intervention?

5. **Assess progress on your goals on an ongoing basis.** Set regular times to measure your progress on your goals. The frequency of these times can depend on the intervention. Use your findings to adjust or revise the intervention as needed, or to

develop a different intervention aimed at meeting outstanding needs better. Again, as in every step of this work, centering the perspectives of those most directly impacted by the work and DEI needs is critical.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How can we best hold ourselves accountable for making progress on our DEI goals?
- How frequently should these regular times be to measure progress?
- What is the best way to decide if an intervention needs to be changed or not?

Resources on developing evaluation & interventions

At University of Washington:

- [Empowering Prevention & Inclusive Communities \(EPIC\)](#)
- [UW Office of Educational Assessment](#)

Toolkits and guides:

- [National Sexual Violence Resource Center Evaluation Toolkit](#)
- [Strategic Planning for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Toolkit](#)
- [Step-by-Step: A Guide to Achieving Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace](#)

Self assessment

While there are several methods for a DEI committee to be held accountable by outside entities, self-assessment is one additional way a committee can hold *itself* accountable. This section provides sample survey questions a DEI committee can give to its members and other individuals associated with the community.

Below you'll find a sample self assessment worksheet. This is not a comprehensive list, but a guide to help committees think of questions to hold itself accountable. While we present these ideas in the form of survey questions, the self assessment need don't be done in a survey; the concepts presented in this section could be implemented in other ways such as a town-hall, one-on-one interviews, or an open message board, etc. You may choose to go through this self assessment collaboratively as a group discussion, or have individuals each fill it out and aggregate the responses.

Self Assessment Worksheet					
1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Undecided 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree					
GENERAL CLIMATE					
Our unit prioritizes and values DEI	1	2	3	4	5
The students, staff, and faculty of our unit generally interact well across differences of:					
• Age	1	2	3	4	5
• Disability	1	2	3	4	5
• Religious beliefs/affiliation	1	2	3	4	5
• National origin & citizenship status	1	2	3	4	5
• Sexual orientation	1	2	3	4	5
• Veteran or military status	1	2	3	4	5
• Socioeconomic status	1	2	3	4	5
• Race/ethnicity	1	2	3	4	5
• Gender identity and expression	1	2	3	4	5
Our unit actively assesses, addresses, and challenges bias, stereotyping, (micro)aggressions, privilege, power, and related DEI dynamics	1	2	3	4	5
Our unit actively engages all department members on DEI issues, including:					
• Undergraduate students	1	2	3	4	5
• Graduate students	1	2	3	4	5
• Postdocs	1	2	3	4	5
• Research Staff	1	2	3	4	5
• Administrative Staff	1	2	3	4	5
• Facilities Staff	1	2	3	4	5
• Adjunct faculty or lecturers	1	2	3	4	5
• Tenure-track or tenured faculty	1	2	3	4	5
Our unit actively recruits, supports, and retains faculty/staff/students from underrepresented groups	1	2	3	4	5
UNIT LEADERSHIP					
Leaders in our unit communicate with and seek out relationships with groups on and off campus to advance engagement in and understanding of DEI issues	1	2	3	4	5

Our leaders actively work to improve the climate of our unit	1	2	3	4	5
Leaders of our unit gather, analyze, and disaggregate data about the demographics of faculty, students, and staff in order to identify inequities	1	2	3	4	5
Our faculty understand how to responsively work with diverse populations	1	2	3	4	5
All faculty actively provide inclusive mentorship (either formally or informally) to students, postdocs, and other staff	1	2	3	4	5
EMPOWERMENT					
Our unit supports and upholds the democratic input of students, staff, and faculty.	1	2	3	4	5
Junior members of our unit have effective avenues for raising concerns and are actively included in decision-making.	1	2	3	4	5
Tenured faculty and supervisors in our unit face repercussions for behavior like bullying, retaliation, or harassment.	1	2	3	4	5
Our unit upholds union contract provisions, and our unit leadership positively engages with departmental union representatives.	1	2	3	4	5
There are transparent and accessible opportunities for junior employees in our unit (e.g., academic student employees, postdocs, research staff) to advance in their careers and develop their leadership skills.	1	2	3	4	5
ENGAGEMENT, AWARENESS, AND TRAINING					
The members of our unit regularly engage in conversation, training, workshops, surveys, and/or research about DEI	1	2	3	4	5
Our unit regularly incorporates and/or focuses on DEI at events, productions, publications, exhibitions, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
Our unit focuses on making events, classes, resources, facilities, etc. accessible to everyone (inclusive of, but not limited to, physical and intellectual ability)	1	2	3	4	5
Our unit actively shares internal and external resources relating to DEI with students, faculty, and staff	1	2	3	4	5

Instructors in our unit receive paid training in equitable teaching practices such as culturally sustaining pedagogies, decolonizing instruction, and/or anti-racist classrooms	1	2	3	4	5
Faculty and other supervisors are trained in effective mentorship practices	1	2	3	4	5
TRANSPARENCY & COMMUNICATION					
We have (a) clear, published mission statement(s) addressing our goals, values, and department-specific plans around DEI	1	2	3	4	5
We have a well-structured and easily accessible (section of a) website with information about our specific DEI efforts	1	2	3	4	5
We share information and updates with the public about current actions and plans related to DEI	1	2	3	4	5
Our DEI committee actively communicates with members of our unit in order to best address the most salient and relevant issues	1	2	3	4	5
COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & POSITION					
Our DEI committee is composed of members with a variety of positions, backgrounds, and identities	1	2	3	4	5
Our DEI committee has an easily accessible set of governing documents which outline processes and actions	1	2	3	4	5
There is a fair, equitable, and clear process detailing how someone can become a member of the DEI committee	1	2	3	4	5
Structural incentives or standards exist for those who engage in DEI work in the form of compensation, tenure review, service expectancy, and/or awards/recognition	1	2	3	4	5
EVALUATION & COLLABORATION					
We have gone through a collaborative process to determine clear objectives for our work and what we want to change.	1	2	3	4	5
We regularly evaluate our DEI work through reflection, evaluation, climate surveys, and/or town hall-style events.	1	2	3	4	5
Individuals who are most directly impacted by DEI issues in the department have a direct role in our evaluation process.	1	2	3	4	5

End matter

About the authors

This toolkit was initially developed between Spring 2020 and Winter 2021 by members of the [UAW 4121 Anti-Discrimination Working Group](#), including Lars Crawford (Bioengineering), Zoe Ferguson (Psychology), Nina Galanter (Biostatistics), Levin Kim (Information School), Brianne King (Chemistry), Natalia Mesa (Neuroscience), Ai Khanh Nguyen (Education), George Schafer (Education), Sam Sumpter (Philosophy), Jer Steeger (Philosophy), Sarah Sweger (Chemistry), William Yang (Industrial & Systems Engineering), and Yasaman Zia (Epidemiology).

This toolkit is intended to be a collaborative and living document, and it will be updated as our research and engagement continue. Any UW community member with questions, requests, or suggestions for future work can get in touch by emailing anti-discrimination@uaw4121.org. UAW 4121 members are strongly encouraged to get involved with the workgroup!

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