Applying an Equity Lens to Policy Review

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“The only path to significantly improve higher education completion rates in most states is by increasing the success of all racial, ethnic, and indigenous populations.”

(Bensimon, 2017)
MINNESOTA STATE- EQUITY 2030

- Minnesota State will eliminate the educational equity gaps at every Minnesota State college and university
  - Increase student retention, persistence, and graduation
  - Increase the percent of Minnesotans age 25 to 44 who have attained a postsecondary certificate or degree to 70 percent across all populations *(Minnesota’s Educational Attainment Goal 2025)*
  - Increase market share of high school graduates and the transfer rate from our two-year colleges to our universities
  - Increase the number of post-traditional (adult) learners
Number of additional adults needed to earn certificate or higher by 2025

Figure 3. Increase Needed of Minnesotans Age 25-44 with Postsecondary Certificates or Degrees to Attain 70% Goal by 2025 - Basic Race/Ethnicity Groups (2011-2015)

Source: IPUMS microdata version of U.S. Census Bureau 2011-2015 American Community Survey, with tabulations and additional analysis by the Minnesota Demographic Center.
POLICY AND STRATEGY

• The role of policy:
  – Guidance about the organization’s mission
  – Guidance to implementing strategies
  – Mechanism of control

• Applying an Equity Lens to Policy Review Tool: Resource
EQUITY AND INCLUSION STANDARDS

• **Standard #11**

  Has current and historical knowledge related to issues of nondiscrimination, access, and equity in higher education institutions.

• **Standard #12**

  Has awareness and understanding of the various laws, regulations, and policies related to equity and diversity in higher education.
AGENDA OVERVIEW

• Define Equity Lens
• Overview of Applying an Equity Lens to Policy Review tool
• Campus-level examples (tools and processes)
• Q&A
WHAT IS AN EQUITY LENS

• A process for **analyzing or diagnosing** the impact of the design and implementation of policies on **underserved and marginalized individuals and groups**.

• A way to identify and eliminate barriers.

• It is deliberately conscious of disparities.

• It prioritizes institutional accountability.
EQUITY DEFINED

EQUITY = parity in outcomes. It is the proportional representation of historically marginalized groups in outcomes.

- Entering Student Population
  - 56% White Students
  - 12% American Indian
  - 32% LatinX Students

- Graduating Student Population
  - 56% White Students
  - 12% American Indian
  - 32% LatinX Students

= Equity
• Please describe specific programmatic or institutional goals set by the participants in this application and how achieving these goals ultimately will increase the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded, allow students to complete bachelor’s degrees within four years, and/or ease transfer. Please describe when and how these goals were developed and how they are used on an ongoing basis. (INITIAL LANGUAGE)

• Please describe specific programmatic or institutional goals set by the participants in this application and how achieving these goals ultimately will increase the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded, allow students to complete bachelor’s degrees within four years, and/or ease transfer. Please specifically discuss how programmatic and institutional goals will close equity gaps in degree attainment for low-income, immigrant, and racial/ethnic groups. Please describe when and how these goals were developed and how they are used on an ongoing basis. (PROPOSED LANGUAGE)
• Please describe specific programmatic or institutional goals set by the participants in this application and how achieving these goals ultimately will increase the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded, allow students to complete bachelor’s degrees within four years, and/or ease transfer, particularly for student groups that are underrepresented in higher education. Please describe when and how these education goals were developed and how they are used on an ongoing basis.

(FINAL LANGUAGE)

Adapted from: Protocol for Assessing Equity Mindedness in State Policy.
THE PURPOSE OF A TOOL

• Capacity building
• Education
• Establishing common language
• Filter/criteria for prompting further review of policies
EFFECTIVE USE OF THE TOOL

- Assess policy intent and inclusiveness
- Uncover policy assumptions
- Make equity a priority
- Invite reflection and discussion on the ways in which our policies can advance equity.
TOOL: Applying An Equity Lens To Policy Review

- Section 1: How to Utilize this Tool
- Section 2: Forming the Policy Review Team
- Section 3: Outlining a Timeline
- Section 4: Determining Policy Purpose and Impact
- Section 5: Common Challenges
  - Leading Conversation about equity and inclusion
  - Overcoming data paralysis
  - Engaging higher education institutions
SECTION I: HOW TO UTILIZE THE TOOL

• Define the equity lens to stakeholders.
• Form policy review team
  – Provide professional development if needed
• Ensure that equity is intentional and not accidental
• Invite reflection on ways that college/university policies can advance equity.
SECTION II: FORMING THE POLICY REVIEW TEAM

• Acts as an advisory board to the college or university leadership on policy decisions.
• Seeks out information to determine timeline for an equity lens review.
• Initiate a review of policy with an equity lens.
• Provide input to college or university leadership on recommended changes to policy after the review process has been completed.
WHO IS ON THE TEAM?

**Standing committee Members**
- Academic Affairs
- Student Affairs
- Campus Diversity Officer
- Students
- Faculty
- Institutional Research or Effectiveness
- Human Resources
- Finance
- Registrar

**Possible subject matter experts**
- Facilities and Planning
- Faculty (expertise in particular field)
- Information Technology
- Advancement
SECTION III: OUTLINING A TIMELINE

• Evidence of policy unintended consequence or disparate impact.
• Student/s bring forward a concern (formally or informally) about the impact of college or university policy.
• Proactive effort on part of the policy custodian/steward to apply an equity lens.
• A change occurs in the underlying driver of the policy.
• A policy targeting plan is created by the review team.
TIMELINE CONSIDERATIONS

• System policies: Minnesota State
  – 5 year review cycle

• Campus-specific considerations:
  – What is your review cycle like?
  – Every 2, 4, or 5 years.
  – How does the process include equity-related check-points?
SECTION IV: DETERMINING POLICY PURPOSE AND IMPACT

Guiding considerations for:

• Policy purpose and design
• Impact, Outcome, Design
• Disparate Impact
• Equity and Inclusion
• Responsibility and Accountability
## SECTION IV: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY PURPOSE</th>
<th>DISPARATE IMPACT</th>
<th>ACCOUNTABILITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>- What is the purpose of the policy?</td>
<td>- Does the policy explicitly account for potential disparate outcomes, especially disaggregated by race, gender, etc.?</td>
<td>- What are the mechanisms in place to ensure accountability? (Define and provide equity-focused benchmarks/indicators)</td>
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<td>- What is it designed to do?</td>
<td>- In what ways does the policy account for focused disparate outcomes? Are there other areas of disparity to account for?</td>
<td>- Do the tools for accountability incorporate equity?</td>
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<td>- What is the policy NOT designed to do?</td>
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<td>- How is an equity lens incorporated in the development of the policy?</td>
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SECTION V: COMMON CHALLENGES

• Leading Conversations about Equity and Inclusion:
  – Policy leaders need to find ways to intentionally and strategically reframe discussions of race, gender identity, ability status, etc. in terms of inequitable structures and based on a shared vision for the organization.

• TO DO:
  – Clear definitions
  – Defuse concerns
  – Identify precedents
  – Moderate discussions
  – Draw on research
SECTION V: COMMON CHALLENGES

• Overcoming Data Paralysis:
  – The process of applying an equity lens must be supported by continuous data analysis.

• TO DO:
  – Create organizational post-secondary vital signs.
  – Identify under-served and under-represented populations
  – Gather demographic trends data
  – Intentionally partner and engage with IR/IE staff.
  – Draw on research
SECTION V: COMMON CHALLENGES

• Engage Higher Education Institutions:
  – Institutional leaders must be given opportunities to engage in dialogue and planning to achieve the desired outcomes. A main focus should be to build capacity among equity practitioners to move the organization from commitment to action.

• TO DO:
  – Design policy that empowers institutions to address equity.
  – Provide professional development opportunities for policy review teams.
  – Ensure accountability, communication, and assessment.
CAMPUS EXAMPLE

Hennepin Technical College

- Process and purpose
- Leadership support
- Policies under consideration
  - Tobacco Free Policy
  - Policy Process (more equitable)
- Protocols and tools to advance work
TOBACCO FREE POLICY

As of July 1, 2013, smoking, tobacco use, and tobacco sales (including the use or sales of smokeless tobacco products and electronic cigarettes) are prohibited on college owned, operated, or leased property. The policy is applicable to all campus persons, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, outside contractors and the general public.

This policy does not apply to specific activities used in connection with the practice of cultural activities including those of American Indians that are in accordance with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 U.S.C. sections 1996 and 1996a as permitted by Minnesota Statutes 2012, 144.4165. For the purpose of this section, a Native American is a person who is a member of a Native American Tribe as defined in section 260.755 subdivision 12. Arrangements for such ceremonies must conform to local fire code requirements and be approved by the College President or their designee in advance.
EQUITY-MINDED POLICY PROCESS

• Broad range of stakeholders (more inclusive)
• Review period
  – 30 days
  – Entire campus community
• Targeted outreach
• Revised policy committee charter to include equity-lens to policy review.
• Implementation of equity-lens tool.
Hennepin Technical College

Policies Process

Policy Revision or Creation
Policy or revision is requested by President designate, committee, or custodian.

Custodian of Policy Appointed
Custodian of policy appointed by President

Drafting of Policy and Procedure
Custodian drafts or makes revisions to policy

Policy Committee Review
Policy Committee reviews and approves draft for 30-day review period

30-day Review Period
Policy is posted for review and comment by all stakeholders

30-day Review Period Notification
Policy Committee Chair notifies stakeholders of 30-day review period

Feedback Review
Custodian or President designee reviews all feedback and makes any necessary changes

Policy Committee Review
Policy Committee reviews feedback and custodian moves policy forward to SGC

Shared Governance Council Review
Approval, rejection, or modifications are documented by custodian and accompany policy forward to Cabinet

Cabinet Review
Reviews, considers feedback from stakeholders and SGC, and makes recommendation to approve or reject

President Approval
Approves, rejects, or modifies and notifies Policy Chair of decision.

Posting of Policy and Procedure
Policy and Procedure are posted to the Hennepin Technical College website.

Notification to Stakeholders
The Policy Committee Chair will notify stakeholders via email that policy is posted.

5/28/2019
ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES

BEFORE:
Parental Leave

• Must be employed 9 months
• 50% appointment or greater
• Female employees – up to 6 weeks paid leave upon birth
• Female employees – up to 2 weeks paid leave for adoption
• Male employee – up to 2 weeks paid leave

AFTER:
Parental Leave

• 50% appointment or greater
• Up to six weeks paid leave for birth, adoption, or gestational surrogacy for any employee
• Benefit available upon hire

University of Minnesota Policy.
RESOURCES

• Government Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE Toolkits)
  https://www.racialequityalliance.org/tools-resources/

• Race Forward Racial Equity Impact Assessment:
Q & A
THANK YOU

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