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# Diversity and Inclusion in Academic Medicine: A Strategic Planning Guide

Second Edition

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## Part I

# Nine Essential Tasks for Creating a Diversity and Inclusion

*The process of preparing a diversity and inclusion strategic plan is complex and labor-intensive. The nine essential tasks outlined here are intended to offer structure to the process and make it more manageable and productive. Each task comprises a task summary, key questions to answer, tips to ensure that task completion is successful, and selected resources to provide more information.*

## Getting Ready

Before you begin working on the essential tasks outlined in this guide, please see the Getting Ready page of the toolkit. This resource will help you do the following:

- Assemble your team
- Establish scope
- Determine your timeline

## How to Access the Toolkit

To get started, go to [www.aamc.org/diversitystrategicplanning](http://www.aamc.org/diversitystrategicplanning). All tools, resources, and downloadable documents are available there.

## Essential Task 1: Solicit buy-in and commitment from key stakeholders

**Task Summary:** This is the initial task but also one that underpins many other tasks you will complete as you create and implement your plan. Given the nature of diversity, your strategic plan will touch every person at an institution; therefore, at every step, you will need to find allies and create partnerships to ensure the plan is carried out. The first step is essential because the task that follows it assesses where you are currently, which requires the permission and assistance of many across the organization.

**Method:** Answer the questions that follow ([Stakeholder Identification template](#) available in the toolkit).

- a) Who asked you to develop a diversity strategic plan and why?
- b) How much support (advocacy, financial, personnel, protected time, etc.) can you count on to help make your plan a reality in the long term?
- c) What other stakeholders need to be involved to assess where you are currently and implement your proposed strategic priorities in the future?
- d) Who are other champions, leaders, and allies who can move the strategic plan along?
- e) Which groups are more interested and which are less interested in cultural change? See Diversity Adoption and Engagement Resource page for guidance on managing diversity culture change.

### Tips

- Never underestimate the value of allies. There are many people in your organization already working on the assessments and strategic priorities you will create in this process.
- Always tailor your message to the audience; it should always be about how diversity can help them reach their goals.
- All resources below are available in the toolkit. Please see page 5 for link to toolkit.

### Communication Resources

- [The Case for Diversity and Inclusion](#) and the [Role of Diversity Officers](#) in Part II of the *Strategic Planning Guide*
- [Elevator Speech: Tips and Samples](#)
- [Diversity Rationale: University of Louisville School of Medicine](#)
- [Diversity Statement: University of Massachusetts Medical School](#)
- [AAMC Communicating Your Strategic Plan Teleconference](#)
- [AAMC Diversity 3.0 Learning Series Webinar, The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies](#)

### Strategic Planning Resources

- [AAMC Diversity and Inclusion in Academic Medicine: A Strategic Planning Guide Webinar](#)
- [AAMC GDI Navigator to Excellence: Strategic Planning Webinar](#)
- [AAMC Introduction to Strategic Planning](#)
- [AAMC Organizational Alignment Presentation](#)

### Diversity Resources

- [Diversity Adoption and Engagement Resource](#) (Loden M. 1995. Implementing Diversity: Best Practices for Making Diversity Work in Your Organization. New York: McGraw-Hill).
- Smith DG. 2009. [Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making It Work](#). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. ISBN: 1421405733.
- Ross HJ. 2011. [ReInventing Diversity: Transforming Organizational Community to Strengthen People, Purpose, and Performance](#). Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield. ISBN: 9781442210431.

## Essential Task 2: Build a strong foundation for the initiative by assessing the existing landscape

**Task Summary:** Strategic planning begins with an assessment of where your institution is on the diversity and inclusion continuum, which refers to the stages of diversity delineated by Marc Nivet, the AAMC's chief diversity officer, in *Diversity 3.0: A Necessary Systems Upgrade*.<sup>1</sup> This effort will provide insight into potential challenges and leverage points (see Essential Task 3). Fortunately, there are a number of institutional readiness checklists to aid in the process (see resources below).

**Method:** Answer the questions that follow ([Assess the Existing Landscape](#) template available in the toolkit).

- a) How have commitment and action around diversity and inclusion evolved over time? What, if any, seminal events need to be considered?
- b) Where was the focus on diversity five years ago? Where is it now?
- c) What policies are already in place to support diversity and inclusion? The difference between policy and practice can sometimes be dramatic. Things are often done in a certain way because "that's the way they have always been done." The impact on processes such as hiring, recruitment, retention, professional development, lab space, support staff, promotion, and merit raises can be profound.

Consider policy versus practice in the following:

- Hiring practices
  - Recruitment
  - Equity (compensation, access, promotion, treatment, etc.)
  - Mentoring
- d) What are the particular imperatives driving diversity and inclusion strategic planning within your institution? Are there any state laws, community efforts, or institutional mandates that create pressure points and opportunities?
  - e) What have previous climate assessments told you about the environment?
  - f) What other sources of data can you access to assess the organizational culture (e.g., exit survey data, nonmatriculating student survey data)?
  - g) What was done with the data that were previously gathered? How were the data used to inform practice? Are any of the data/analyses still relevant?

### Tips

- Use checklists to assess readiness—there is no need to reinvent the wheel.
- Make your plan broad enough so that it is a driver for institutional excellence.
- All resources below are available in the toolkit. Please see page 5 for link to toolkit.

### Organizational Assessment Resources

- [Getting Ready: Data Collection Self-Assessment](#)
- [National Multicultural Institute, Identifying Organizational Readiness Checklist](#)
- [University of Washington School of Medicine, Board of Deans Report Checklist](#)
- [Organizational Readiness: HR Questions](#)

### **Climate and Culture Resources**

- [Assessing the Existing Landscape](#) in Part II of the *Strategic Planning Guide*
- [AAMC Diversity Engagement Survey](#)
- [AAMC Assessing Institutional Climate and Culture Webcast](#)

### **AAMC Data Resources**

- [Data and Analysis](#)
- [Facts and Figures Data Series](#)

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**Make your plan broad  
enough so that it is a driver  
for institutional excellence.**

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## Essential Task 3: Identify leverage points and challenges

**Task Summary:** Your efforts will be more fruitful if you identify the leverage points that already exist within your institution. Leverage is often tied to urgent initiatives and concerns. Likewise, if you know what challenges already exist, you can build strategies to address them and ensure that momentum is not lost.

**Method:** Answer the questions that follow ([Leverage Points, Challenges, and SWOT Analysis template](#) available in the toolkit).

- a) Outline your organizational readiness. How can you control and define your pace, flow, and momentum?
- b) How committed are constituents to embracing an agenda that supports progressive change and equality for all members of the community, regardless of identity characteristics? (See Diversity Adoption and Engagement Resource in Task 1 for information on how to engage people across the adoption continuum.)
- c) Shift the organizational mindset. Define urgency for your institution. What is your “burning platform”? Consider the following:
  - Numbers
  - Culture
  - Turnover
- d) Determine the baseline of financial and human capital resources that supports diversity and inclusion integration at your institution. What are the current programs? Where are they located? How does diversity planning fit into the overall financial plan of the institution?
- e) Have you educated yourself about the change-management process involved in this effort? Where is your organization in the process? What can you reasonably expect to accomplish in the coming months to move the organization forward? (See works by Loden and Kotter listed under Organizational Change Resources for more information on change management.)

### Tips

- Recognize the leverage points available to you, such as the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accreditation elements (formerly standards), Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) core competencies, and new National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services. Learn to translate the standards into meaningful language that will have the impact you need on the issues that are important to your administration.
- Focus on quantitative and qualitative data to validate your goals.
- Understand that all key leadership must know the vision and deliver the same message throughout the organization on a consistent basis.
- Realize that diversity initiatives go hand-in-hand with organizational change; therefore, expect challenges to the concept and your authority.
- Be aware that diversity and inclusion initiatives can fail if the institution has not invested in the human capital to do the work. Having enough of the right people on board with expertise and skills is important to doing the work efficiently and correctly.
- All resources below are available in the toolkit. Please see page 5 for link to toolkit.

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### How can you create urgency?

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### Data Collection Standards

- [LCME Data Collection Instrument Survey, Sections 3.3 and 7.6](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health Care](#)

### AAMC Data Resources

- [Request AAMC Data](#)
- [Faculty Forward Engagement Survey](#)
- [Diversity Engagement Survey](#)

### Organizational Change Resources

- [Achieving Diversity and Inclusion](#) in Part II of the *Strategic Planning Guide*
- Loden M. 1995. [Implementing Diversity: Best Practices for Making Diversity Work in Your Organization](#). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kotter International. 2014. [The 8-step process for leading change](#).

## Essential Task 4: Set diversity and inclusion goals that align with organization mission, vision, and values

**Task Summary:** Your goals for diversity and inclusion reflect the desired outcomes of the strategic plan. To achieve them, they must align with the institution's stated mission, vision, and values and be seen by all as strategic initiatives so they are not "siloed."

**Method:** Answer the questions that follow.

- 1) Review and complete the [Key Terms and Examples: Vision, Mission, and Values](#) document found in the toolkit.
- 2) Answer the questions that follow ([Goal Setting and Alignment template](#) and [Goal and Strategy template](#) available in the toolkit).
  - a) Based on the data you analyzed, what diversity and inclusion goals should your organization focus on? (Goals are the broad outcomes your plan seeks to achieve. For example, "Develop innovations in education to prepare students and trainees from diverse backgrounds to be collaborative practitioners of medicine.")
  - b) What is the exact desired outcome for each goal? (Outcomes should be specific and measurable. For example, "Students will be able to describe a strategy for engaging medical practitioners from a variety of backgrounds.")
  - c) To what extent are diversity and inclusion seen as strategic imperatives and part of everyone's responsibilities?
    - How are these imperatives communicated to the organization's broader community?
    - How well are these imperatives understood?
  - d) If the diversity and inclusion imperatives are not well communicated or understood, answer the following questions:
    - What would be necessary to incorporate diversity and inclusion as strategic initiatives (e.g., getting buy-in and support from many levels of the organization, including, most importantly, senior leadership)?
    - How could you go about elevating the level of importance for these strategic initiatives?
  - e) What immediate steps can you take to better incorporate diversity and inclusion within all missions of the institution?
  - f) Is there a "charge" from senior leadership that reflects commitment and clear expectations? Identify one or more senior leaders who will be responsible for the diversity and inclusion strategic goals. (For example, if there is a financial goal, it might be assigned to the chief financial officer. If there is a curriculum change, this might be assign to the dean of medical students.)

### Tips

- Prioritize goals.
- Explain goals clearly and in measurable terms so that metrics can be applied for assessment.
- Remember that the plan is not static and will define a long-term process that evolves with continuous effort from everyone within the institution.
- All resources below are available in the toolkit. Please see page 5 for link to toolkit.

### Goal Setting Resources

- [On Strategy, Goal Setting as an Art Form](#)
- [University of Wisconsin–Madison Project Prioritization Guide](#)
- [Victorian Department of Health \(Australia\), Writing Measurable Objectives \(SMART Goals\)](#)
- [Tarrant County College, Writing Outcomes/Objectives](#)

### Diversity Goals Examples

- [Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Medicine](#)

### Strategic Planning Resources

- [Society for College and University Planning, A Practical Guide to Strategic Planning in Higher Education](#)
- [U.S. Department of Energy Guidelines for Strategic Planning, Sections 2 and 4](#)

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**What steps can you take  
now to prevent diversity and  
inclusion from being siloed?**

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## Essential Task 5: Set clear and realistic objectives, supporting tasks, and action steps required to achieve goals

**Task Summary:** Achieving your goals requires a top-down, highly structured approach to the actual work that will be done by you and your committees. This task defines each step in the process.

### Method

- 1) Review and complete the [Key Terms and Examples: Goals, Objectives, Tasks, and Action Steps document](#) found in the toolkit.
- 2) Answer the questions that follow ([Goals, Objectives, Tasks, and Actions template](#) and [Goal and Strategy template](#) available in the toolkit).
  - a) What are your objectives for each goal? (*Objectives are the strategies to achieve each goal.*)
  - b) What key tasks are necessary for each objective to be achieved? (*Tasks represent the work that must be assigned.*)
  - c) What action steps are needed to complete each task? (*Action steps define the work flow.*)

### Tips

- Establish two to four objectives per goal (recommended). However, some goals may take more than four objectives to implement.
- Prioritize the objectives.
- Take care to identify levels of complexity involved in each task and any challenges that may emerge. Seek input from those with knowledge of details.
- All resources below are available in the toolkit. Please see page 5 for link to toolkit.

### Related Resources

- [Achieving Diversity and Inclusion](#) in Part II of the *Strategic Planning Guide*
- Bimbaum R. 1988. [How Colleges Work: The Cybernetics of Academic Organization and Leadership](#). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- [University of Texas Medical Branch Strategic Planning Process Diagram](#)
- [AAMC Group on Institutional Planning Strategic Planning Resources](#)

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Take care to identify levels of complexity involved in each task and any challenges that may emerge.

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## Essential Task 6: Develop accountability methods and metrics to measure achievement of objectives

**Task Summary:** Metrics allow you to monitor your performance. Baseline assessments of where you are, followed by targeted goals, are important components of metric development. Accountability will keep momentum moving forward.

**Note:** The next three tasks address the development of processes and structures to ensure successful implementation of goals and objectives. Establishing metrics is one important process. Having an implementation plan that assigns each objective to an individual for completion within a specified time frame is another (see Tasks 7 and 8). Linking diversity and inclusion objectives to the annual budget and operating plans is yet another (Task 8). You will need to develop the processes that are appropriate for your institution.

### Method

- 1) Review the [Key Terms and Examples: Measure, Metrics, Target, and Benchmark](#) document found in the toolkit.
- 2) Answer the questions that follow ([Metric Development template](#) and [Goal and Strategy template](#) available in the toolkit).
  - a) Is each objective framed so that results have an associated metric (e.g., can you set a success measure for excellence in faculty diversity)?
  - b) How will metrics be gathered, analyzed, and reported and with what frequency? The Data Dictionary template provides a place to record a definition, data source, and frequency for data collection on each metric.
  - c) What baseline metrics are you going to use to gauge your success for each objective? When assessing metrics, it is useful to assess the following: (1) your organization's trend/baseline and (2) how your organization is doing compared with peers. Consider using data from the AAMC on specialties and ACGME data for national values. (See Data Collection and Accountability Resources below for resource links.)
  - d) What is your target for performance going forward and to whom are you reporting your progress?
  - e) How will you monitor accountability for each goal? Consider using multiple points of accountability throughout the institution (you do not want to put the total responsibility on senior leadership alone). Consider using dashboards for tracking and reporting progress on each goal.
  - f) How will you know if the accountability process is sufficiently transparent?

### Tips

- Performing an annual trend analysis of the data will provide insight into how well you are reaching your targeted objectives and goals.
- Ongoing reassessment will support sustainability and continuous improvement.
- All resources below are available in the toolkit. Please see page 5 for link to toolkit.

### Data Collection and Accountability Resources

- [Responsible Accountable Consult Inform \(RACI\) Charting](#)
- [Data Dictionary Template](#)
- [Performance Dashboard](#)
- Person SD et al. 2015. [Measuring diversity and inclusion in academic medicine: the diversity engagement survey](#). *Academic Medicine* 90(12):1675-1683.
- Brotherton SE, Etzel SI. 2014. [Graduate medical education, 2013–2014](#). *JAMA* 312(22):2427-2445 (ACGME data source).
- AAMC Faculty Roster. [Distribution of U.S. medical school faculty by sex, race/ethnicity, rank, and department](#).

### Related Resources

- [Assessing the Existing Landscape](#) in Part II of the *Strategic Planning Guide*
- [Workforce Diversity Network, Diversity Metrics, Measurement, and Evaluation](#)

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**Metrics will allow you to  
monitor your performance.**

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## Essential Task 7: Establish roles, responsibilities, and decision-making channels

**Task Summary:** Having the right people on board with the necessary skills and dedication is essential. An advisory council can be appointed, composed of people who represent a cross-section of the organization and key stakeholders. Individuals who will be responsible for and assist in implementation will need to be assigned to implementation teams. Communication and decision-making channels need to be very clear and agreed upon by all.

**Method:** Answer the questions that follow ([Roles, Responsibilities, and Decision Making template](#) available in the toolkit).

- a) **Advisory council.** Who has the knowledge, skill, and commitment to work with you? Who are the key stakeholders and thought and opinion leaders from within and external to the organization? **Note:** You can use the Stakeholder Analysis grid in Task 1 to identify advisory council members.
- b) **Implementation group.** Have you established mechanisms or structures to ensure the implementation of your plan and accountability? This information should be documented in a RACI chart (see Task 6).
- c) **Implementation group.** Are the responsibilities of each role clearly defined, and are required tasks outlined in a way that can be implemented? Has protected time been allotted for work in this area? **Note:** Task assignments should be recorded on your Goal and Strategy template (Tasks 4–6).
- d) What mechanisms do you have in place to communicate the strategic plan across the organization? Who needs to be involved to develop a communication plan?
  - Who needs to see what level of detail?
  - What do different audience segments need to know about the plan?
- e) What kinds of communication challenges are typical within your organization, and how can you overcome them? (You might want to refer back to the communication elements you developed in Task 1.) **Note:** Your communication plan will not be implemented until the plan is written.

### Tips

- Consider an advisory council to keep the institution focused, accountable, and on track. The council should comprise people who represent a cross-section of the organization and who are champions for the initiative.
- Plan to educate your team.
- Understand that the dean needs to hold the chairs accountable for their diversity efforts. You are not the “sheriff”; rather, you are the messenger.
- All resources below are available in the toolkit. Please see page 5 for link to toolkit.

### Roles and Responsibilities Resources

- [Joint Planning Diversity Functions Chart](#)
- [University of Massachusetts Medical School Diversity Initiative Organization Chart](#)

### Advisory Council and Communication Resources

- [Developing an Effective Advisory Council](#)
- [Meeting Planning and Communication](#)

### Related Resources

- [The Role of Diversity Officers in Part II of the \*Strategic Planning Guide\*](#)
- [National Multicultural Institute, Identify Organizational Readiness Checklist](#)
- Plummer DL, ed. 2002. [Handbook of Diversity Management: Beyond Awareness to Competency-Based Learning](#). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Plummer DL, Jordan CG. 2007. [Going plaid: integrating diversity into business strategy](#). *OD Practitioner* 39(2):35-40.
- Axelrod NR. 2004. [Advisory Councils](#). Washington, DC: BoardSource.

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Having the right people on  
board with the necessary  
skills and dedication is  
essential.

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## Essential Task 8: Develop a realistic timeline for executing all action steps

**Task summary:** Keeping momentum moving forward means that timelines must reflect reality. Those carrying out the action steps (i.e., the work!) need to agree to your timeline and be held accountable. Achieving buy-in to the timeline is one of your biggest challenges. Other things to think about to ensure that plans are implemented include establishing realistic time frames, identifying resources, and aligning plan objectives with annual operating plans and budgets.

**Method:** Answer the questions that follow (refer back to your work outline in Task 5; [Timeline template](#) available in the toolkit).

- a) Is your timeline realistic? Do you have enough people involved to accomplish a specific task? Do you have the right people? Do you and they have enough time and money to accomplish the tasks? Who is the timekeeper?
- b) Have you assigned leads to each task?
- c) Have you identified the drivers for your timeline? Is there an accountability mechanism for these drivers? Do you have clear criteria for identifying success for each task?
- d) Have you identified both existing and emerging barriers? What are your strategies for overcoming them?
- e) Stakeholders: Is everyone in agreement? Is there broad consensus?
- f) Stakeholders: How prescriptive or collaborative have you been about the time frame?
- g) Have you identified what resources will be needed and how much those resources will cost?
- h) Is your budget aligned with your strategic priorities?
- i) Prioritizing objectives, strategies, and tasks helps in defining an appropriate timeline. How will you set your priorities for the strategies in your plan? Consider the following:
  - Organizational readiness
  - Staffing
  - Budget
- j) How will your plan get operationalized and integrated? How will it be woven into the fabric of the institution? How will you ensure that this plan will be recognized as a part of each person's job?

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### Timelines must reflect reality.

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#### Tips

- A graphic of the various time frames should be created for reference.
- Timelines will keep you committed, focused, and accountable.
- You may need to be flexible with individual department needs.
- All resources below are available in the toolkit. Please see page 5 for link to toolkit.

#### Timeline Development Resource

- [Office TIMELINE](#)

#### Related Resources

- [Assessing the Existing Landscape](#) in Part II of the *Strategic Planning Guide*
- [CFAR, Regional Health System Proposed Timeline and Process for Updating the Strategic Plan](#)

## Essential Task 9: Prepare the written plan

**Task summary:** As is obvious by now in the process, writing your strategic plan is a multifaceted job that will require coordination and various approvals. The details of the process should be reflected in your timeline.

**Method:** Review the sample strategic plans provided below.

### Tips

- Do not feel constrained by templates or samples. The structure of your written plan should match your requirements.
- Review plans prepared by colleagues for inspiration.
- Implement your communication plan as you complete your written strategic plan.
- All resources below are available in the toolkit. Please see page 5 for link to toolkit.

### Resources

Sample Strategic Plans:

- [The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#)
- [Rush University Medical Center Plan for Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Southern Illinois University School of Medicine Policy and Plan for Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [University of Arizona College of Medicine–Phoenix Office Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Planning Map](#)
- [University of California, San Francisco, Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)
- [The University of Kansas Medical Center Diversity and Inclusion Action Items](#)
- [University of Massachusetts Medical School Diversity Strategic Plan](#)
- [University of Texas Medical Branch Diversity Scorecard](#)