

A.1 Letter sent to college of science employees and students

Dear College of Science Colleagues & Students,

The College of Science (COS) thanks you for volunteering to participate in our Diversity, Equity, Justice and Inclusion (DEJI) focus group sessions. The purpose of these sessions is for you, as an integral member of the college, to provide input and vision to a COS Diversity Action Plan (DAP).

The College of Science is using the “[Adaptive Strategic Planning for Inclusive Excellence framework](#)”, created by the Office of Institutional Diversity (OID), that is intended to spur sustainable, organizational change through learning and doing. A COS-DEJI Working Group was put together in Fall 2020 by Dean of the College of Science, Roy Haggerty, and charged with writing an action plan, consultatively with the faculty, staff and students in the College as well as with the OID and the Cultural Resource Centers, **to improve outcomes for underrepresented students, faculty, and staff.**

You can see a description of the Working Group and the charge to this group in our IMPACT article [Town hall centers Black experiences in the College, paves the way for action.](#)

The deliberative phase of the plan builds capacity through stakeholder engagement, visioning, assessment, and action to create measurable progress and improvement to advance inclusive excellence. In recognition of the importance of embedding equity in the functions of our organization and the processes supporting these functions, your insight and ongoing commitment are necessary to develop a strong DAP. Your input will be used in an anonymous manner, without the inclusion of any identifying attributes in the DAP. The COS-DEJI Working Group will look for broad themes and issues that emerge from the collective responses of COS members to inform actions and timelines in our final DAP.

Each focus group session will be 90-minutes long, starting with a short introduction, in which I will briefly outline the college’s process to create a DAP and introduce the session facilitators. After the introduction, pre-assigned breakout groups will deliberate a set of four foundational questions. Our facilitators will take notes of the discussion.

In the remainder of this document, you will find the following materials.

- Conversation Guidelines to be followed at our focus group sessions
- Foundational Questions to be collaboratively deliberated in breakout groups at one of our focus group sessions.

Please review these materials, reflect on our conversation guidelines and come prepared to deliberate our foundational questions.

We appreciate your willingness to engage in this process and we look forward to seeing you at one of our focus group sessions.

Sincerely,

Vrushali Bokil

Chair, College of Science Diversity, Equity, Justice & Inclusion Working Group
Associate Dean for Research & Graduate Studies
College of Science, Oregon State University

Conversation Guidelines

COS -Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Committee

Respect Each of us has the right to hold opinions and beliefs that are our own. Assume good intent from everyone. Let us challenge or criticize ideas and not the person.

Listen Practice active listening. Each of us has the right to speak. Allow everyone their chance to speak and participate.

Appreciate When a person is speaking, listen deeply, courteously and with full attention.

Speak Share your voice, your experience and your discomfort. Be mindful of how much talking space you occupy. At the same time, be empowered to speak up when someone dominates the conversation.

Interrogate Have real conversations and interrogate reality. Be prepared to check your biases, to question yourself and others. Support your statements with evidence and rationale and expect the same from others.

Recognize Each of us possesses many identities. We do not speak to represent our race, our gender or any of our other identities. We speak for our whole unique selves.

Advocate Look to see who is present and who is not and be intentional in seeking out and amplifying voices that are not in the room.

Transform When the conversation becomes difficult, breathe. Take care of yourself. Find the source of your anger or discomfort and transform it to constructive action. Practice humility and compassion.

Protect Take the ideas, stories and what you have learned with you and share. Leave the names and who said what in our virtual discussion room. Maintain the privacy of our meetings.

COS-DEJI focus group foundational questions

Deliberate the FOUR question sets below with your group using your experience, expectations and aspirations. Please follow our conversation guidelines. Below, “unit” refers to either your department, the College of Science, or some other facility in the college, or all of the above.

Question set 1: Do you feel a sense of belonging to your unit?



Who is a Scientist?

If yes, what are the elements that contribute to a welcoming environment for you?

If no, what needs to be done to help you feel a sense of belonging?

What are elements or issues that your group described that are different from your response?

Question set 2: What do you perceive to be the values of your unit?



**Values, Goals,
Mission**

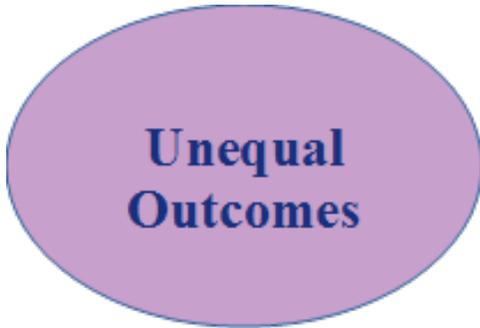
Are these values explicitly stated? Does your group agree with you?

What are goals & missions of your unit?

Does your unit’s day-to-day functioning align with these values, goals and missions?

If no, what needs to be done to align values, goals & mission with functions?

Question set 3: How can your unit advance their mission while ensuring that no aspiring scientist is left behind?



What would successful outcomes for all students look like?

What would successful outcomes for all faculty & staff look like?

If you could change three things right now, that you perceive are hindering success for all,

what would those be?

Question set 4: How do you define the words diversity, equity and inclusion?



What are your expectations around diversity, equity and inclusion in your unit?

Is your unit meeting your expectations? If yes, how?

If not, what needs to change? What are two things you would change now and why? Does your group agree with you?