

Blueprints for Change



Developing and Implementing Equity Action Plans



Purpose: To Close Equity Gaps in Higher Education

June 7, 2022: Law signed requiring Equity Plans and Practices for Each Institution (110 ILCS 205/9.16) (from Ch. 144, par. 189.16)

To require public institutions of higher education to develop and implement an equity plan and practices that include methods and strategies to increase the access, retention, completion, and student loan repayment rates of minorities, rural students, adult students, women, and individuals with disabilities who are traditionally underrepresented in education programs and activities.

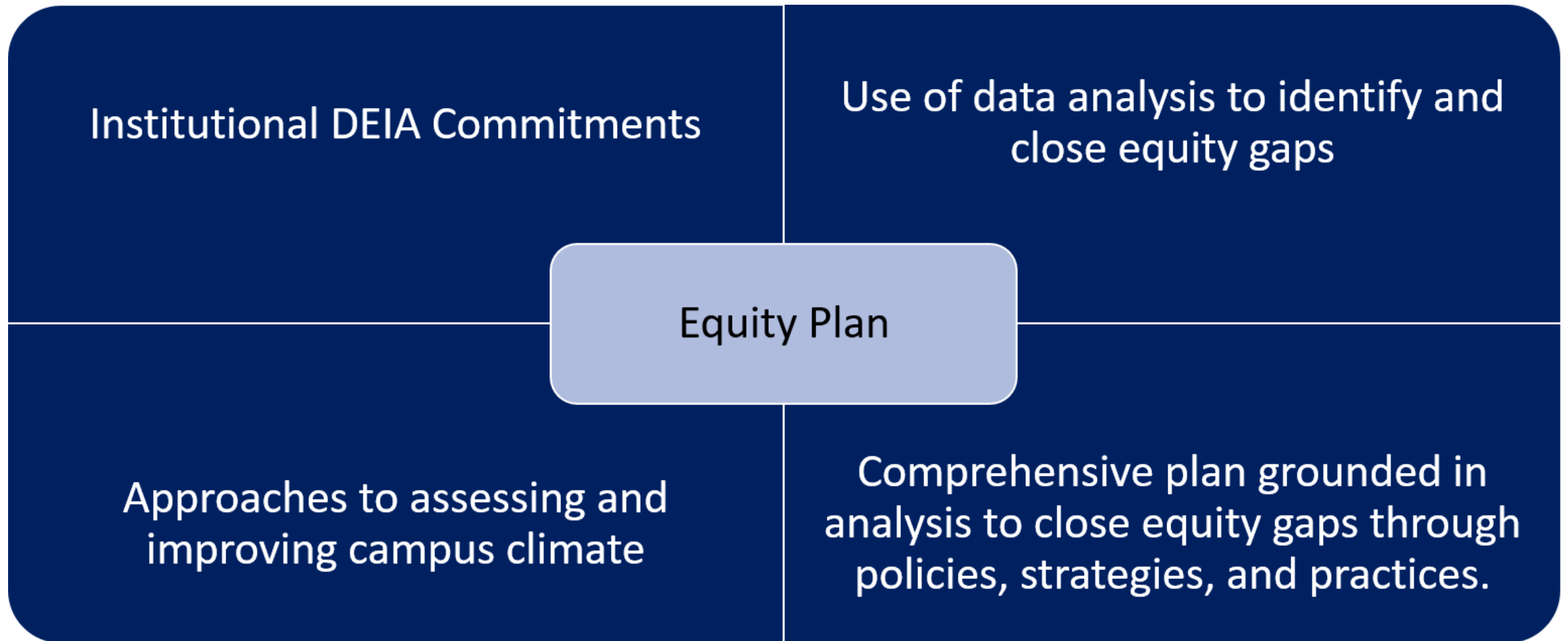
- Replaced Underrepresented Groups Reports requirement
 - A Thriving Illinois
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Purpose: To Close Equity Gaps in Higher Education

Public Institution Requirement (private institutions encouraged)

- Equity Plans and Practices to close gaps in enrollment, retention, completion, and student loan repayment rates
- Focus on Black, Latinx, AAPI, Native American, rural, adult, women & people with disabilities
- Agencies established guidelines and provided support on data

Annual reporting to General Assembly and Governor



Equity Plan Areas for Submission
and Review

Overview: Institutional Review and Feedback Process

Reviewers

- Cross-Section of Higher Education Stakeholders and Experts
- Led by Dr. OiYan Poon and Dr. Lorenzo Baber

Baseline Assessment and Feedback Form

- Based on Equity Plan and Practices Framework
- Refined through calibration process

Three Reviewer Meetings

- Calibration and Norming
- Identify areas of strength and for technical assistance
- Ideas for improving the Equity Plan Process Overall

Reporting

- October 2024: Validation review of Feedback
- October 21: Webinar
- November 2024: Release of Institutional Reports

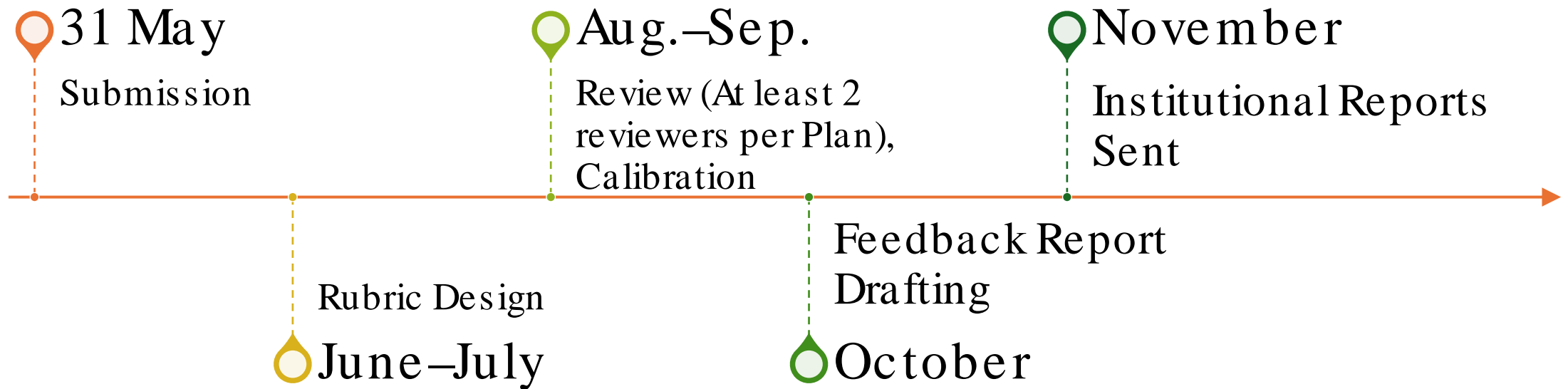
Equity Plan Review Process

Equity Plan Review Team

in addition to state agency and Governor's office leaders

Team Member (Role)	Expertise Areas
Dr. OiYan Poon, Co-Lead and Reviewer	Enrollment management, campus climate assessment, organizational change, and racial equity
Dr. Lorenzo Baber, Co-Lead and Reviewer	Community college leadership, post-secondary STEM education and minoritized student experiences
Dr. Antoinette Newsome, Design Lead and Reviewer	Implementation of racial equity practices in higher education, postsecondary support systems for students of color, women of color in the academy, equity-based institutional action and practices
Dr. Erick Montenegro, Reviewer	Equity-minded and culturally responsive assessment and evaluation practices, equitable career pathways, and access to opportunity for underserved communities
Dr. Bren Anderson, Reviewer	Campus climate assessment and student experiences at the intersection of systems of oppression (e.g., racism, patriarchy, classism)
Dr. Gianina Baker, Reviewer	Associate director of evaluation, learning, and equitable assessment at the Office of Community College Research and Leadership.

Timeline: Baseline Year



Review Objectives & Parameters

Dimension: Institutional Plan Review

- Recognize unique institutional contexts.
- Assess individual institutional baseline for equity planning.
- Identify areas of strengths to build on and areas for improvement to work on.

Dimension: Cross-Institutional Analysis

- Things to elevate and learn more about
- Identify technical assistance and support opportunities
- Assess and improve Equity Plan process.

What We Learned

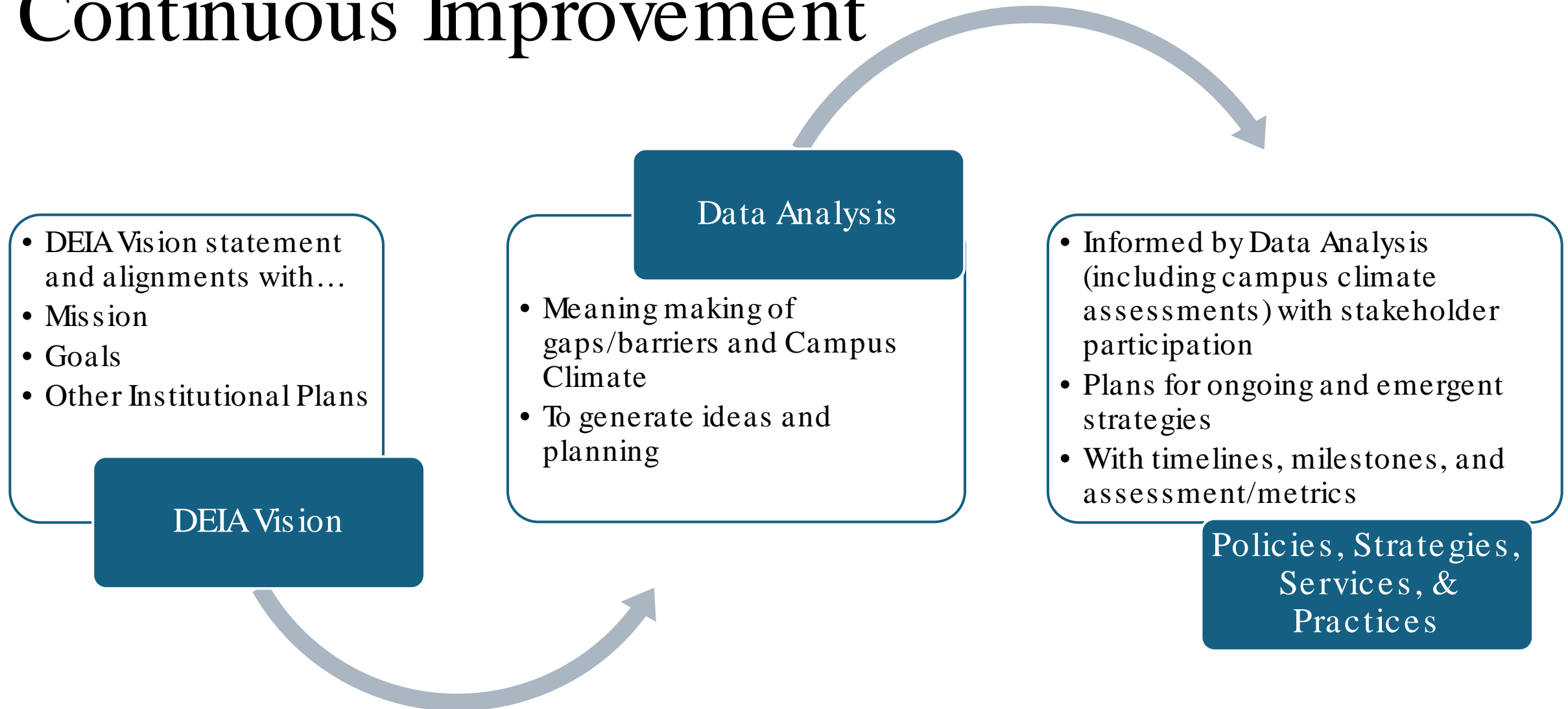
Strengths

- All plans: a consistent acknowledgment of the critical need to focus on DEIA
- Most plans: utilized data from state agencies to present current gaps for underserved populations
- Best plans:
 - Provided institution-specific analysis of data
 - Summarized current and future interventions
 - Outlined specific timelines

Areas for improvement

- Institutions prioritize a stand-alone DEIA vision statement as guide
- Tighten connections between data analysis, targeted strategies, and assessment metrics
- Thorough data analysis including:
 - Varying data collection methods
 - Disaggregation of data across intersectional identities
 - Specific timelines and performance indicators to track institutional progress

Cohesive, Integrated, and Holistic Plans - Aligned Action, and a Feedback Loop for Continuous Improvement





Exemplars: Integrated and Holistic Plans – Goal Setting

“Based on the college’s findings in the Data Analysis section, which was guided by research and feedback from students, faculty, and staff, the decision was made to change the objectives into four target areas so that they are aligned with the requisite SMARTIE (Strategic, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable) goals.”

- “By 2027, students, faculty and staff will express a 15% increase in their sense of belonging.”

Decrease the proportion of African American and low-income students placed in developmental education courses, which currently stand higher than other demographics.

Use data to reduce the D/F/W rates in gateway courses, aiming to close equity gaps in course completion for African American, Latinx, Pell-eligible, and other underrepresented groups.

Increase student completion by 10%, focusing on Black, Latinx, adult, and rural learners.



Exemplars: Integrated and Holistic Plans – Policies, Strategies, Programs

- Ongoing and routine campus climate assessments and data dashboard usage, spotlighting perspectives of all campus stakeholders; incorporation of findings into strategic plans and action
 - Centering the importance of diversity as a fundamental element of excellence
 - Revised billing cycle based on student feedback.
 - Transfer credit estimator and scholarships
 - Elimination of standardized test score requirements for merit scholarships
 - Work with faculty to revise/strengthen curriculum and pedagogy; reduce DFW rates
 - Early warning systems for academic advising
 - Credit recovery programs
 - Holistic student supports (e.g., food pantry, childcare, etc.); Redesigned Student Orientations
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What's next?

Reports

Reports offer feedback on continuous improvement action plans for equity.

ICCB and IBHE will (1) send reports to each institution in November, (2) post Equity Plans on a website, and (3) submit a report to the General Assembly.

Inform a continuing conversation and state action planning. One component of many to close equity gaps at the state level.

Technical Assistance and Support (Planning)

- TBD: Spring 2025
- Communities of practice
- Potential topics
 - Data disaggregation and analysis/meaning making
 - Equity-centered assessment and evaluation tools
 - Resources for clearer campus climate concepts, assessment, and integration of findings into equity planning

Guiding Questions for Small Groups



- To what extent were you aware of or involved in the Equity Plan development process?
- What initial questions and thoughts are generated for you during this initial year of the equity plans?
- As a trustee, how will the equity plans inform your stewardship of the institution?
- As a trustee, what strategies will you use to signal the importance and possibilities for institutional improvements through the routine equity plan process?