Shared Equity Leadership Toolkit

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Defining Shared Equity Leadership

Shared equity leadership (SEL) is a leadership approach that scales diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work and creates culture change by connecting individual and organizational transformation. Individuals embrace a personal journey toward critical consciousness to become equity-oriented leaders. Collectively, leaders embody a set of values and enact a set of practices that form new relationships and understandings, ultimately working to dismantle current systems and structures that inhibit equitable outcomes.
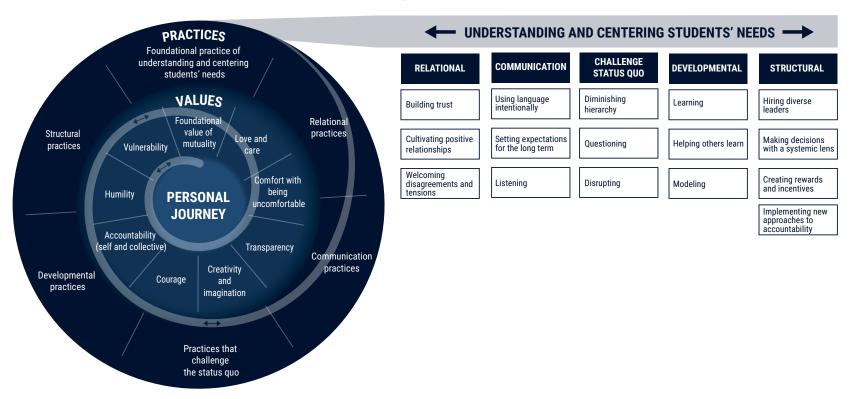
Purpose

This toolkit accompanies the report *Shared Equity Leadership Making Equity Everybody's Work*, and enables leaders to reflect on their personal journey toward a critical consciousness. Through the SEL Toolkit, leaders can identify their own strengths and potential areas for growth in the values and practices that are necessary to effectively practice shared equity leadership. Leaders can assess and reflect on their strengths individually as well as map the strengths present in their team or group.

Goals

1. Unpack critical understandings of systemic inequities as well as personal identities and experiences.

2. Identify particular SEL values and practices that are areas of skill or strength for you.

3. Reflect on strengths and brainstorm ways to further develop and apply SEL values and practices.

4. Identify and map the values and practices represented on your team.

5. Reflect on ways your team can benefit from individuals' existing strengths in particular values or practices and build capacity in areas that may be missing.

Shared Equity Leadership Model

SHARED EQUITY LEADERSHIP

UNDERSTANDING AND CENTERING STUDENTS' NEEDS

RELATIONAL	COMMUNICATION	CHALLENGE STATUS QUO	DEVELOPMENTAL	STRUCTURAL
Building trust	Using language intentionally	Diminishing hierarchy	Learning	Hiring diverse leaders
Cultivating positive relationships	Setting expectations for the long term	Questioning	Helping others learn	Making decisions with a systemic lens
Welcoming disagreements and tensions	Listening	Disrupting	Modeling	Creating rewards and incentives
				Implementing new approaches to accountability

Personal Journey Toward Critical Consciousness

Self-Reflection Questions

Leaders' personal journeys help them operate effectively in a shared equity leadership environment. The notion of the personal journey centers around an ongoing reflection on one's identities and experiences as well as an understanding of the systemic or structural nature of inequities that inform and strengthen one's commitment to equity work.

Questions	Reflection
What inspired you to become an equity leader, and what continues to sustain you in this work?	
How does your campus position influence or shape your approach to equity leadership?	
What aspects of your identity hold privilege in society? What aspects are marginalized or minoritized by society? How do these aspects of your identity shape your agency in your current role and spheres of influence?	

Questions	Reflection
How do you think aspects of your identity or position (either privileged or marginalized) affect other leaders you might work with in a shared equity leadership effort?	
Reflect on a time along your personal journey when you encountered or identified inequitable systems, structures, or policies within your institution. How did this encounter align with, diverge from, or change your worldview?	
How do you hope to further grow your personal journey as an equity leader and why? Reflect on what it is you may need from your team or your institution to further the development of your critical consciousness.	
Select one of the personal journey case study examples (starting on page 32) to read. How did this person's identity and experiences shape their journey? Did you see elements of their story that connected with your own experience?	
Pick two of the personal journey case study examples (starting on page 32) to read. What similarities or differences did you notice in these leaders' journeys? How do their experiences relate to or inform your own personal journey?	

Values Associated with Shared Equity Leadership

- **Mutuality:** A foundational value of mutuality underlies all the other values. It emphasizes a shift away from traditional egoistic notions of leadership that focus on the individual leader and instead embraces notions of leadership as a collective process.

- **Love and care:** An ethos of love and care underscores the personal nature of equity work and shared equity leadership. Leaders feel and display love and care for those with whom they are working— fellow leaders, students, faculty, staff, and community members. They try to approach all of their relationships with a deep sense of caring and compassion, even if they tend to disagree or have had contrasting experiences.

- **Comfort with being uncomfortable:** Equity work can be uncomfortable, especially when talking about race. It also sometimes requires leaders to sit with the emotions and pain of students and community members in uncomfortable situations, rather than immediately finding solutions. It is important for leaders to be comfortable with such feelings of discomfort.

- **Transparency:** A value of transparency means leaders are honest, clear, and open about decision-making and about the successes and challenges of this work.

- **Creativity and imagination:** Creativity and imagination are important in both performing equity work and leading in a collaborative or shared manner, especially because there are no universally agreed-upon ways of doing this work.

- **Courage:** Courage for shared equity leaders means standing up for equity even when it's not popular or easy and remaining dedicated in the face of resistance or skepticism.

- **Accountability (self and collective):** Leaders who have accountability (self and collective) hold themselves accountable for doing the work, getting results, learning about equity, continuing to challenge their preconceived notions, and being willing to change their beliefs and practices as they continue to learn and grow.

- **Humility:** Leaders who have humility are able to admit when they have done something wrong or when something has not worked well. They understand that they do not have all of the answers or solutions, that their experience isn't everyone's experience, and they have things to learn from other people.

- **Vulnerability:** Vulnerability in leadership means being able to open up about difficult personal experiences or being willing to risk exposing their true selves, even without knowing exactly how they will be received. These vulnerable experiences are often related to race or other aspects of identity and can be painful to share. Being vulnerable can help faculty and staff to build connections, trust one another, and better understand the perspectives and experiences of other people, especially students.

Individual Values Inventory

Directions: These values are important for shared equity leadership, and you may find that they all strongly resonate with you. For this exercise, however—instead of selecting the values that feel most important to you—**please select only those values that you feel you are able to best implement or model in your work**.

Mutuality	
Love and care	
Comfort with being uncomfortable	
Transparency	
Creativity and imagination	
Courage	
Accountability (self and collective)	
Humility	
Vulnerability	

Individual Values Reflection Questions

1. Select one of the values you chose as a strength and describe a time you demonstrated or embodied that value. You can do this for multiple values!

2. How might you leverage your strengths in a team-based or shared leadership setting? Include examples of what that might look like.

3. Were there any values that felt especially challenging or off-putting to you? Why do you think these are more challenging or uncomfortable for you? What structures, systems, or conditions on your campus or in your department might be contributing to these feelings of being challenged or uncomfortable? What aspects of your identity, experiences, or personal journey might inform how you experience these values?

4. Which values, if any, do you not fully understand? Please reflect on and write about why that is and what you would like to explore and learn.

5. Which values would you like to develop and grow, and how might you go about that process?

Team Values Mapping Exercise

Directions: Write your team members' initials in the boxes that correspond with the values they selected as their biggest strengths.

Mutuality											
Love and care											
Comfort with being uncomfortable											
Transparency											
Creativity and imagination											
Courage											
Accountability (self and collective)											
Humility											
Vulnerability											

Team Values Reflection Exercise

1. Are any values strongly represented on your team map? If yes, how have you seen this value manifest in your day-to-day work, given that so many team members have strength in this area? Consider this question for each strongly represented value.

2. Are there any values that only one or two members of the group selected? How might you capitalize on their strengths in these areas to bring these values to the forefront of your team's work?

3. Are there any values that no one selected as their area of strength? How might you cultivate these values on your team without existing reservoirs of direct expertise or strength?

4. Are there any conditions or systems on your campus that might be inhibiting the expression of particular values?

5. How could you connect people who have strength in a particular value with those who want to grow or develop in that value?

Practices Associated with Shared Equity Leadership

Foundational Practice	**Understanding and centering students' needs (or understanding and centering needs of systemically marginalized communities)**	The foundational practice of shared equity leadership is understanding and centering students' needs or the needs of systematically disadvantaged communities when having discussions and making decisions by considering all of the different ways these decisions might affect students and people of those communities.
Relational Practices	**Building trust**	Leaders need to build trust and strong relationships among members of the leadership team to lead effectively around issues of equity in a collaborative manner.
	Cultivating positive relationships	Leaders can learn to trust each other by cultivating positive relationships in more informal settings, such as having a potluck party outside of formal, professional settings.
	Welcoming disagreements and tensions	Disagreements and tensions are an inevitable part of doing equity work; therefore, it is important to normalize disagreement and conflict among the leadership team. By welcoming and respectfully managing disagreements and tensions, the leadership team creates a safe place where a diversity of perspectives are valued and rewarded.
Communication Practices	**Using language intentionally**	The practice of using language intentionally includes explicitly naming race issues or other equity challenges, frequently and publicly talking about equity to emphasize its importance, intentionally choosing asset-focused rather than deficit-focused languages, and effectively using different language to frame their work for different audiences in order to garner support.
	Setting expectations	Equity work takes time. It is important for leaders to set expectations for the long term so that other members of their leadership teams, the broader campus community, and stakeholders understand that the larger systemic changes to make institutions more equitable take time to enact.
	Listening	Listening authentically and actively to others' perspectives and experiences is crucial for equity leaders to collaborate effectively.

Developmental Practices	**Learning**	Leaders learn about equity and leadership in four different ways: 1. Listening, specifically to others' stories of their experiences 2. Looking at data, facts, and figures, such as racially disaggregated data on student outcomes 3. Learning formally through professional development sessions on topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion 4. Learning informally through reading or discussions with colleagues
	Helping others learn	Leaders help others learn by using the inverse of the four aforementioned strategies that they used to learn: 1. Sharing personal stories, whether it is their own perspective as a member of a marginalized group, their own journey to becoming an equity leader, or others' experiences 2. Marshaling data to draw colleagues' attention to inequities 3. Facilitating professional development sessions about equity or specific leadership skills 4. Creating environments where colleagues can learn informally from one another
	Modeling	Leaders model the shared equity leadership values and practices by actually exercising them, which helps others to see how they work and gain confidence that equitable change is possible through the shared leadership effort.
Practices That Challenge the Status Quo	**Diminishing hierarchy**	Diminishing organizational hierarchy and power differentials enable all perspectives to be heard. Minimizing hierarchy helps leaders without positional authority feel comfortable when challenging senior leaders, and it serves to promote greater equity for leaders from minoritized backgrounds whose voices might otherwise be overlooked. For example, leaders could flatten the hierarchies by forming a circle in a meeting, or senior leaders could volunteer to take on a less prestigious service role in a meeting.
	Questioning	Another strategy to challenge the status quo is to ask questions. Leaders need to ask questions about taken-for-granted policies and practices, the team's deeply held assumptions, and any outstanding or unresolved issues.
	Disrupting	Leaders can take this practice a step further by intentionally disrupting traditional norms or ways of thinking and operating by pointing out inequities.

Structural Practices	Hiring diverse leaders (or composing diverse teams)	Hiring leaders who are from different racial/ethnic backgrounds, were low-income or first-generation college students, or are LGBTQ+ is an important practice of shared equity leadership that will better represent the diversity and complexity of the student body. The complexities inherent in solving equity challenges at a broad or systemic level benefit from the perspective of people who bring different ideas and experiences to the table.
	Systemic decision-making	When engaging in systemic decision-making, leaders connect or build up pockets of existing work and make sure to have a cohesive approach across campus. They also embed equity in every facet of the institution to make it unavoidable.
	Creating rewards and incentives	Rewarding and incentivizing equity work is another important practice of shared equity leadership. Leaders and institutions can reward/incentivize equity work by tying unit budgets to achievement of DEI goals, building in rewards for equity work in the faculty review process, providing seed grants for faculty and staff who want to experiment with an equity-oriented project, and pro-viding professional development credits for faculty who participate in equity-related professional development opportunities.
	Implementing new approaches to accountability	While accountability (self and collective) is an important shared value, equity leaders also enacted new practices around accountability as they worked to hold one another accountable as a collective. Some of those accountability approaches might be informal (e.g., hold-ing colleagues accountable in a respectful, professional way) and others might be more formal (e.g., explicit and measurable DEI goals, or holistic and qualitative approaches to accountability).

Individual Practices Inventory

Directions: Write your team members' initials in the boxes that correspond with the practices they selected as their biggest strengths.

Foundational Practice	**Understanding and centering students' needs**												
Relational Practices	**Building trust**												
	Cultivating positive relationships												
	Welcoming disagreements and tensions												
Communication Practices	**Using language intentionally**												
	Setting expectations												
	Listening												
Developmental Practices	**Learning**												
	Helping others learn												
	Modeling												
Practices That Challenge the Status Quo	**Diminishing hierarchy**												
	Questioning												
	Disrupting												
Structural Practices	**Hiring diverse leaders**												
	Systemic decision-making												
	Creating rewards and incentives												
	Implementing new approaches to accountability												

Individual Practices Reflection Questions

1. Which practices did you identify as areas of strength? Did you select multiple areas of strength for any category of practices?

2. Select one of the practices you chose as a strength and describe a time you demonstrated or enacted that practice. You can do this for multiple practices!

3. How might you leverage your strengths in a team-based or shared leadership setting?

4. What practices felt especially challenging or off-putting to you? Why do you think these are more challenging or uncomfortable for you?

5. What systems or structures on your campus or in society might be discouraging the development of particular practices, either implicitly or explicitly?

6. Which values, if any, do you not fully understand? Please reflect on and write about why that is and what you would like to explore and learn.

7. What practices you would like to develop and grow? How might you go about that process of growing your strengths in these areas? What do you need from your team or institution?
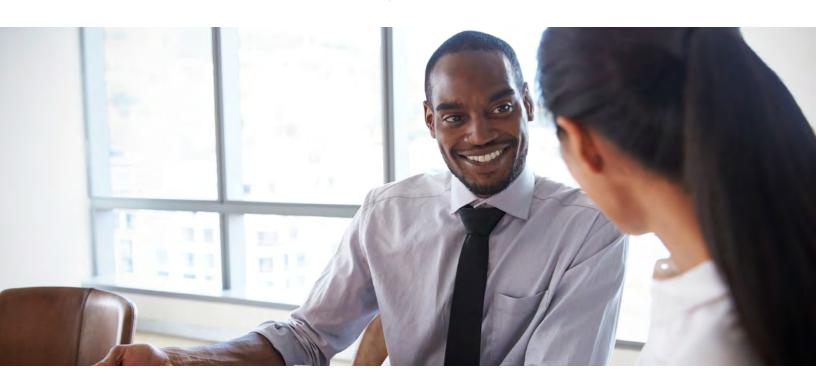
Practices Team Mapping Exercise

Directions: Write your team members' initials in the boxes that correspond with the practices they selected as their biggest strengths.

Foundational Practice	Understanding and centering students' needs											
Relational Practices	Building trust											
	Cultivating positive relationships											
	Welcoming disagreements and tensions											
Communication Practices	Using language intentionally											
	Setting expectations											
	Listening											
Developmental Practices	Learning											
	Helping others learn											
	Modeling											
Practices That Challenge the Status Quo	Diminishing hierarchy											
	Questioning											
	Disrupting											
Structural Practices	Hiring diverse leaders											
	Systemic decision-making											
	Creating rewards and incentives											
	Implementing new approaches to accountability											

Team Practices Reflection Exercise

1. Are any practices strongly represented on your team map? How have you seen this practice manifest in your day-to-day work, given that so many team members have strength in this area? Consider this question for each strongly represented value.

2. Were any practices selected by only one or two members of the group? If so, how might you capitalize on their strengths in these areas to build this practice into your team's work?

3. Are there any practices that no one selected as their area of strength? If so, how might you cultivate these practices on your team without existing reservoirs of direct expertise or strength?

4. What structures or systems on your campus may be inhibiting the enactment of certain practices, either implicitly or explicitly?

5. How could you connect people who have strength in a particular practice with those who want to grow or develop in that practice?

Further Reflection on SEL Values and Practices

Use the space below to reflect on the values and practices in any way that would be most helpful for you. Some suggestions for using this space include:

- Describe what each value and practice means to you. How you have embodied these values and practices in your role on campus?

- Give an example of a time you have seen each value or practice embodied or enacted by colleagues, or provide several examples of how you have seen a value or practice enacted in different ways by different people.

- Describe how you might struggle with or have difficulty enacting a particular value or practice. Reflect on why that might be.

VALUES	
Mutuality	
Love and care	

VALUES	
Comfort with being uncomfortable	
Transparency	
Creativity and imagination	

VALUES	
Courage	
Accountability (self and collective)	
Humility	

VALUES
Vulnerability

PRACTICES		
Foundational Practice	**Understanding and centering students' needs (or understanding and centering needs of systemically disadvantaged communities)**	
Relational Practices	**Building trust**	
	Cultivating positive relationships	

PRACTICES		
Communication Practices	**Setting expectations**	
	Welcoming disagreements and tensions	
	Using language intentionally	
	Listening	

PRACTICES		
Practices That Challenge the Status Quo	**Diminishing hierarchy**	
	Questioning	
	Disrupting	

PRACTICES	
Structural Practices	**Hiring diverse leaders (or composing diverse teams)**
	Systematic decision-making
	Creating rewards and incentives
	Implementing new approaches to accountability

PRACTICES		
Developmental Practices	**Learning**	
	Helping others learn	
	Modeling	

Personal Journey Case Study Examples

Please use these case study examples to inform your responses to the corresponding questions from the Personal Journey Toward Critical Consciousness: Self-Reflection Questions on page 6.

Maria

Maria is a professor of mathematics at Valley University and a liaison with the Center for Teaching and Learning on inclusive pedagogies in STEM. Maria came to the United States at age 23 to attend graduate school, but she is originally from Chile and grew up in Santiago. Her family owned several businesses, and Maria and her siblings attended elite private schools and Chile's top universities. She noted that she was considered to be White while growing up in Chile; when she came to the U.S., however, she was suddenly considered to be a person of color and was lumped into the "Latina/Hispanic/underrepresented" category. This experience was somewhat jarring for Maria. She had a privileged childhood and adolescence, but was now in an environment where many people assumed she came from an impoverished or marginalized background. When she started her PhD program in the U.S., Maria spoke fluent English but with a strong accent. She described several incidents in which faculty or other students treated her as if she must not be very smart, presumably because of her accent. After one faculty member made derogatory comments to her in a meeting, Maria went to her dean with a complaint. Fortunately, the dean was extremely supportive of Maria and disciplined the faculty member, but the incident stuck with Maria and spurred her to become more engaged with affinity groups for students of color on campus and in her discipline. The relationships she formed with other students in these groups helped her learn more about racial dynamics in the U.S., in academia, and in STEM in particular. By the time Maria was writing her dissertation, she was also working with other leaders in one of her disciplinary societies to create an inclusive pedagogy interest group.

Once she completed her PhD, Maria got a tenure-track faculty position at a university in a mostly White, rural area. In order to remain competitive for tenure she had to focus more of her time on research, but she remained engaged with her colleagues who were doing work on inclusive pedagogy in mathematics. In addition to engaging her intellectually and informing her instruction, this group provided a space for her to process some of the isolation she was feeling as an immigrant in a predominantly White community.

After earning tenure, Maria was recruited to Valley University, which is located just outside a major urban center. Both the university and its surrounding community are extremely diverse, resulting in a much more welcoming environment than Maria's prior institution. Maria was instrumental in helping start up the university's culturally responsive pedagogy initiative. She works closely with other faculty at the university, leaders in the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the provost's office, as well as with her colleagues across the country doing inclusive pedagogy in mathematics who have become a central part of her professional support network. Maria now has a buyout for part of her time to serve in a liaison position for the College of Arts and Sciences and works with faculty across all STEM disciplines to implement culturally inclusive practices in their classrooms. She attributes much of her success in connecting with faculty members of all different backgrounds to her personal experiences of growing up with a White/majority identity yet identifying with racially minoritized groups in the United States. She feels she can relate to both White faculty and faculty of color and find common ground with colleagues from all backgrounds, which helps her recruit more faculty to try out different culturally responsive strategies.

Pamela

Pamela is the director of career development at Mount Lincoln Polytechnic Institute in the Midwest. She identifies as a cisgender, Latinx woman. Having worked in higher education for 30 years, she admits to both experiencing and bearing witness to a great number of inequities, especially on Black and Latinx students and staff. However, she had never thought explicitly about equity or racism within the context of her career development work. Joseph Bailey, the new president of Mount Lincoln, stressed the importance of placing equity and anti-racism at the forefront of all departments and divisions, Pamela, as a result, needed to begin thinking critically with her staff about equity and racism in this space.

Hoping to find ways to learn more about equity and anti-racism in departmental and division siloes, Pamela turned to colleagues that she regularly communicates with in her work including the Office of Residential Life, Alumni Relations, and the Office of Student Life. Pamela has a trusted friend in the Office of Residential Life, Megan James, who agreed to sit with her and talk about the equity plan that the office of residential life has successfully created and implemented. The plan included a working definition of equity and equity-mindedness, a strategy to ensure an equitable housing lottery, and even a tool to ensure they are using equitable practices to hire residential assistants and student staff.

After her extensive conversation with Megan, Pamela was eager and ready to begin developing an equity plan for the Office of Career Development. She worked with the office manager to gather the names and email addresses of students who have visited the office for career services in the past two years. She also reached out to the Office of Alumni Relations to gather the names of a few successful alumni who might be willing to share their ideas about making the office and its services available more equitable and accessible to students, especially those from disenfranchised communities. Together, Pamela, the office manager, a representative from the Office of Alumni Relations, and the Office of Career Development's assessment coordinator, worked to create a survey for students.

After receiving a 65 percent response rate, Pamela and team discussed the results and began charting a path towards creating an equity plan for the office. One of the major results of the survey was that racially and ethnically minoritized students did not feel as if the office was an equitable or empowering environment. Many respondents felt that their career aspirations were devalued by career counselors. These findings disheartened Pamela. As a Latinx woman, she knew firsthand how it felt to be disempowered in spaces and how it felt not to belong; however, she had not thought about these feelings in the context of her work until now. The survey results served, in part, as a reawakening for her and her staff. The results also proved that an equity plan was imperative to better serve students, especially those with disenfranchised identities.

Kristin

Kristin has been working as the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) at Palms University for the past seven years. A historian by training, she leads the university's largest college. As a leader, she has a strong commitment to social justice and equity for students in CAS. Kristin has worked with senior administrators at the university and faculty and staff within CAS to increase inclusion and belonging of students of color and first-generation college students in CAS's academic programs. They have also implemented many new programs and policies to better support these students, which have significantly closed racial gaps in persistence and completion. At the same time, they have meaningfully increased the number and proportion of tenure-track faculty of color within CAS.

Kristin, a White woman, grew up in the U.S. South with middle-class parents who never attended college. With little knowledge about college, Kristin decided to join the military after high school with the encouragement of her family. Kristin vividly recalls lying during the military intake process about being gay after she was confronted about whether or not she had homosexual tendencies. She recounted the internal struggle she underwent while living through the "don't ask, don't tell" policy in the military, knowing all along that she is gay. This experience made her extremely empathetic to people who feel marginalized. That experience of isolation and exclusion helped her to reflect on her childhood from a different and new perspective. Although she did not have the language then, she began to realize that she grew up in a racially segregated neighborhood that had many racist undertones and overtones. Her gay identity helped her to see the intersections of oppression and gave her an understanding that people's differences should be acknowledged and respected. This sparked her desire to live a life of service to make the world a more equitable place. After four years in the military, Kristin went to college and focused her studies on understanding the intersections of race, class, and gender inequality in American history. She continued her academic interests in graduate school focusing on historic injustices and systemic inequities while beginning her professional career working in higher education as a faculty member and academic administrator.

About a decade ago, Kristin adopted an African child with her partner, who is also White. Reaching this new personal milestone in her life and working to raise a Black daughter in the U.S., she began to recognize the limitations of what her academic training around equity could teach her. Her personal experience has made her more aware and thoughtful in her professional work.

Evan

Evan is an associate professor of race and political science at Exposition College, a private four-year institution in the heart of Chicago. Evan grew up on the west side of Chicago in an underresourced neighborhood. Growing up, he realized that many of his peers aspired to attend college, but could not afford to do so because they lived within a system and structure that was purposely designed for them to fail, and even worse, make it painfully difficult to remain alive and afloat. Taking advantage of his dad's tuition remission benefit from his job on the facilities team at the University of Illinois, Evan was able to attend the University of Illinois for undergrad. There, he participated in a special college access program that gave him the opportunity to take courses the summer before the start of the fall semester and introduced him to a network of other first-generation college students of color. After completing undergrad, he went on to serve as a special admissions counselor responsible for recruiting first-generation students of color into this program.

Evan's background as a Black man from the West Side of Chicago, his identity as a first-generation college student, and his professional experience working in higher education led him to continue onto his PhD in political science. His background, identity, and experiences also shaped his research interests where he opted to focus on the intersection of race, higher education, and civic engagement. He conducted research around how college access programs promoted civic engagement for and with communities of color and even worked with higher education faculty members to investigate the role and importance of chief diversity officers in helping higher education achieve their diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. After completing his PhD, Evan was recruited to return to his alma mater, the University of Illinois, as an assistant professor in the political science department. After five years, he transitioned to Exposition College as an associate professor.

Recognizing the fact that Evan researched issues around race and higher education from a political science standpoint and had a personal investment in the work, the president of Exposition College, Jolene Taylor, recruited Evan to join the president's commission on equity and anti-racism. President Taylor created a position for Evan within the president's cabinet: equity and anti-racism faculty fellow and consultant. The position came with both course reductions and administrative responsibilities. Here, Evan had the opportunity to help develop a special college access program specifically for Black students coming from the West Side of Chicago. For Evan, this position and this opportunity was the perfect blend of all of his interests. He worked with staff and community members to recruit students to the program and help develop a curriculum with a particular focus on community service and anti-racism. For Evan, his greatest accomplishment in the role was to see the staff and administrators he worked with become more socially conscious around issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. His personal journey was guided by an amalgamation of his upbringing, his research interests, and his position within the university. He was able to help people along the journey, in part, because of how far along he was in his own journey.

Liliana

Liliana has been the director of the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at Center City University for the past two years. Liliana's own experiences as a first-generation Latina in academe and growing up in a low-income agricultural immigrant community are inextricably intertwined with her professional commitment to equity. She recounts numerous personal experiences of the challenges she and her family encountered while navigating inequitable institutions. Her father was a migrant worker and her mother worked in a factory. Both had less than a high school level of education and spoke limited English when she was a child. Acting as a cultural broker at a very young age, Liliana assumed mature roles while helping her parents translate and navigate institutions in the U.S. She witnessed and experienced many painful and uncomfortable instances of racism and discrimination.

The college application and selection process was one of the toughest times Liliana can recall. Her sights were set on the prestigious private college in her state, but she knew the high cost of tuition made it unattainable for her family. Even though she had her parents' support and the grades and test scores to meet the institution's average student profile, she was figuring it out on her own and had little knowledge about the college application process. Therefore, she attended the local community college. While working full time, she earned her associate degree after three years. Liliana then transferred to the state flagship institution, where she discovered and quickly enrolled in support programs for first-generation, low-income students. As an upperclassman, she both participated in and worked as a peer adviser for EOP. She felt empowered helping communities like her own. Her experience in this program revealed a world previously unknown to her. She realized she had missed many resources for which she qualified, but had not been aware of at the time when they could have assisted her. This fueled her passion to create and improve access to educational opportunities for people like her.

Upon graduating, Liliana continued her professional career as an administrative assistant in the EOP office while simultaneously earning her graduate degree in higher education. She slowly climbed the ladder and worked her way up to a director-level position over the course of 13 years. During that time, Liliana always went above and beyond to improve equity initiatives for the students she served. This work has always been personal to her. Her experiences of marginalization while attending predominantly White institutions gives her a lens into what students have felt throughout their academic journeys and strengthened the commitment to equity she developed in childhood.

Ken

Ken was recently selected as vice chancellor of student affairs at Lakeside College, a predominantly White, private, liberal arts college in New England. Ken, a graduate of Lakeside, has spent nearly his entire career working there. Ken is White, grew up in a racially homogeneous and affluent town in the mid-Atlantic region, and had several family members who also graduated from Lakeside. As an undergraduate, Ken was a highly involved student and took advantage of an opportunity to be a resident assistant (RA). He greatly enjoyed this experience and worked as an RA for the final two years of his undergraduate career. Taking an interest in residential life and unsure of what he wanted to do in the long term, Ken worked at Lakeside as an assistant hall director upon graduating. Over the next 15 years, Ken worked in a few different student affairs roles at his alma mater and one other local institution and acquired a graduate degree along the way as his interest in student affairs leadership grew. During his tenure working as director of student affairs at Lakeside, he was asked to incorporate and lead diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives after the institution adopted inclusive excellence as one of its primary values amidst its push to diversify the student body. Ken had taken a few workshops on diversity and inclusion and attended DEI leadership meetings over the course of his time in leadership roles. He knew he wasn't an expert, but he felt like he was doing DEI effectively by this point.

When his longtime mentor and boss retired, Ken decided to apply for the position of vice chancellor of student affairs at Lakeside. After interviewing for and receiving the job, part of Ken's charge was to lead the development and implementation of a DEI strategic plan for the Division of Student Affairs. Immediately, Ken was confronted with many challenges given the growing diversity of the campus's student body and the complexity of his task. Although he was committed to equity, Ken quickly realized his previous DEI training was both limited and superficial, leaving him to feel severely underprepared for this new role. In order to be successful, he knew he needed to prioritize his personal development and invest in his own learning and understanding of the students and communities he now served. He embarked on a journey investing in numerous professional development and learning opportunities related to issues of DEI both within and outside of the institution (e.g. town halls, public forums, and trainings on implicit bias, campus climate, and microaggression). In these spaces, he had eye-opening and profound learning experiences as he listened to and learned from his students and trusted colleagues about their experiences with discrimination and prejudice on campus and beyond. He began to understand how students from different backgrounds might feel unwelcome due to institutional barriers and hostile campus climates. Learning about the challenges of those he cared about only strengthened his personal commitment to equity. Recognizing how limited his experiences had been, he developed a more vested interest in unpacking his own identities using the literature and tools from his trainings. He also spent a lot of time learning about the college's history and its involvement in past traumas to the local indigenous communities. Ken took any opportunity to engage in one-on-one conversations with trusted colleagues while also collaborating with the institutional research office to make sense of disaggregated student data. After engaging in this process iteratively, he grew considerably and realized he better understood his own privilege and power. This allowed him to readily and confidently discuss DEI leadership and issues on campus. He acknowledges that he still does not have it all figured out, but he is much further along in his own personal development than he previously had been.

Katy

Katy is senior adviser to the president at Horizon University and leads the Presidential Diversity Commission, which directs campus diversity assessments, educates the campus community about diversity and inclusion, and holds the university accountable for meeting the goals in its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategic plan.

Born in a middle-class White family and raised in a racially diverse urban neighborhood, Katy was generally aware of inequities that existed in society, but never spent a lot of time reflecting deeply on them until she got to college. As an anthropology major, she studied abroad in Brazil her junior year and spent time living and learning with several different indigenous tribes in the Amazon basin, as well as with people of indigenous descent living in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Following her passion for human rights, social justice, and the needs of indigenous populations specifically, she pursued a dual master's degree in international education and anthropology. After working for several years in global nonprofit organizations, she applied for an administrator position at Capitol University at the International Center, later advanced to the director position, and then to vice provost of international affairs at Capitol. Through this work, she developed a greater sensitivity to the ways in which international work on college campuses links to equity issues and the importance of intercultural understanding and competency. Further, as her campus increasingly engaged in DEI work, she found that her intercultural values and professional skills and experiences developed through her work in global contexts were transferable to some of the domestic equity work happening on campus. She began to participate in committees and groups on campus pushing for greater diversity among faculty and campus leadership, as well as a group advocating for decolonizing the general education curriculum.

As Katy progressed in her career and became increasingly engaged in equity work in higher education, she came across the position opening for a new senior adviser to the president at Horizon University. The position was intended to focus on DEI issues at the university, and Horizon has a unique context situated in a state with a large Native American and indigenous population. The role represented a big departure for Katy—as her formal roles had all focused on global or international affairs until this point—but her early experiences working with indigenous groups and her growing advocacy for equity at Capitol made her a strong fit for the position. After she was hired, she grappled with her White identity and her role as the top DEI leader on campus. Students, faculty, and staff from minoritized groups on campus were initially skeptical of her ability to effectively drive change. Katy has had to explicitly and publicly reckon with her racial identity and her relatively privileged background in her new role in ways she wasn't expecting, but these reflections and conversations have led to significant personal growth and learning for her.

Project Team

Adrianna Kezar is the Dean's Professor of Leadership, Wilbur-Kieffer Professor of Higher Education at the University of Southern California, and Director of the Pullias Center for Higher Education. A national expert on change, governance and leadership in higher education, Kezar is regularly quoted in the media, including *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *The Atlantic*, *Boston Globe*, *Washington Post*, PBS, and NPR (national and local stations), among others. At the Pullias Center, Kezar directs the Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success and is an international expert on the changing faculty. She also regularly consults for campuses and national organizations related to her work on non-tenure-track faculty, STEM reform, change, collaboration, leadership development, and change.

Elizabeth Holcombe is a Senior Postdoctoral Research Associate with the Pullias Center for Higher Education at the University of Southern California. Holcombe researches organizational issues that influence student success in higher education, including leadership, faculty development and workforce issues, undergraduate teaching and assessment, and STEM education. She has held a variety of roles in student affairs, including running a college access partnership, managing an academic advising and mentoring program, and leading a student affairs assessment initiative. She holds a PhD from the University of Southern California, an MA from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a BA from Vanderbilt University.

Darsella Vigil is a Senior Research Analyst at the American Council on Education, where she manages various mixed methods projects on topics including shared equity leadership; institutional change and transformation; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and race and racism in higher education. Vigil also works on research-to-practice programming and curriculum for shared equity leadership, creating social learning opportunities for institutional leaders and their teams. Formerly, Vigil worked in research and administrative roles for nearly 15 years at two- and four-year postsecondary institutions. She leverages her research expertise to deliver evidence-based trainings to faculty and staff, and consults campuses on developing inclusive and equitable institutional policies and practices for first-generation, low-income, immigrant, and undocumented students of color. Vigil is earning a PhD in higher education from the University of Denver. She has an MA in educational leadership, policy, and advocacy from New York University and a BA from the University of Northern Colorado.