

Operationalizing your diversity and inclusion strategy: Five ways leaders can foster cultural change

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) isn't just about having a representative mix of employees and students. It's about creating an environment where people can be true to themselves, have a sense of belonging and know they can make a difference.

"We believe a diverse and inclusive workforce is one of our greatest strengths, a key enabler in achieving our special mission for millions of people."

— Roger W. Ferguson, Jr., President and CEO, TIAA

Take action

Creating a cultural transformation was the focus of a panel of not-for-profit leaders in higher education. The panel recommended **five key actions** to help foster an inclusive and collaborative culture:



1. Act with urgency—Make D&I a strategic pillar of your institutional goals and priorities.

- Include D&I as a key component of your mission statement.
- Develop a D&I strategic plan with bold recommendations and guiding principles.
- Communicate your strategy across the organization; significant cultural change requires a commitment from the top.
- Motivate your peers; how you address D&I may impact your organization's reputation and alumni relationships.



2. Kickstart the dialogue about diversity and inclusion—and give everyone a voice.

- Create a climate in which everyone feels it's safe to share their views.
- Establish venues for students, faculty and administration to share experiences.
- Identify champions of D&I and engage them.



3. Develop education and training programs for faculty, staff and students.

- Integrate programs with student orientation and course work.
- Address issues of implicit bias.



4. Develop employee networks to advance diverse cultures and points of view.

- Consider establishing employee affinity groups to help drive change throughout the organization.
- Partner with the community and other organizations to find D&I success stories.



5. Establish metrics; measure and communicate progress.

- Measure success across your entire institution including faculty, staff and students.
- Conduct surveys or focus groups to understand and measure cultural changes.