NASH Equity Action Framework

Tools for assessing and advancing higher education system progress toward adoption of essential equity practices

NASH Statement on Equity and Anti-Racism

NASH recognizes that state systems of higher education have a particular responsibility to confront longstanding systemic inequity and visibly stand for the values of inclusive excellence. In addition to identifying and removing barriers to equity, systems and their constituent campuses should be anti-racist. By definition, systemic and institutionalized problems have to be tackled by systems and the institutions in them—explicitly and head-on. Equity is measurable and should be attended to along the student success continuum, ensuring access to and completion of quality education programs across student populations, disaggregated whenever possible by protected status including race/ethnicity, religion, income, gender, gender identity, ability, first-generation, and veteran status.

Universities must allow their students and faculty the freedom to express contrary, even objectionable, views while also condemning racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and other hateful ideologies that marginalize people. These are complex matters but universities, above all other places, must be places that encourage open debate and the questioning of orthodoxies.

As an association of systems, we also view this work through the lens of "systemness"—recognizing that this vital agenda is more than the responsibility of any individual institution—it is, instead, the collective responsibility of all institutions.

NASH recognizes that equity and quality learning are intertwined foundational elements in all that we do. NASH embraces higher education as the most powerful force in society to create a more just and equitable future for all. We advance the important elements of equity-mindedness by:

- Providing relevant supports to ensure that students of all backgrounds are not only welcomed but achieve high success outcomes, with particular focus on those from underserved communities including Black, Latinx, Indigenous and low-income populations;
- Creating a culture of institutional and system responsibility for inclusive excellence among all faculty, staff, and students to identify, name and dismantle racism, discrimination and other systemic barriers to student success;
- Addressing root causes of inequities and racism, not just their manifestations;
- Eliminating policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that 1) reinforce or fail to eliminate differential experiences and outcomes by identity; and 2) perpetuate racism and oppression of minoritized populations; and
- Ensuring students experience equitable treatment as they move among institutions.

Adopted by the NASH Board, October 2020

NASH Equity Action Framework

With the Equity Action Framework, NASH is working intentionally to expand the equity lens that is core to its mission. Recognizing that systems and their campuses are at different stages in this work, this tool will enable higher education systems to assess their progress toward, and act on the adoption and integration of essential equity practices. The framework is designed to promote explicit and sustained engagement with equity, inviting NASH members to look deeply into the mirror in order to examine and act on the role of university systems in addressing systemic inequities that are institutionalized, however unintentionally, within our colleges and universities that so many have worked hard and long to make bastions of student access, opportunity and success. Ultimately, the changes needed will require a significant culture shift. Fearlessly honest discussion may help bring about this change, and we encourage people to approach these efforts with courage rather than shame and guilt.

NASH defines equity in line with Lumina Foundation's Equity Imperative: "*Equity is the recognition and analysis of historic, persistent factors that have created an unequal postsecondary education system.*"[1] In its explicit and sustained engagement with equity, NASH intends its efforts to be inclusive of anti-racism, while recognizing distinctions between the two. NASH adopts the anti-racism definition issued by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women: the "*active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably.*"[2]

The Equity Action Framework is designed to be student-centric and flexible; it seeks to encompass a broad spectrum of system and campus activity. **The framework is organized around nine categories—essential equity practices—for self-assessment and action: 1) public commitment, 2) leadership, 3) data, 4) policy, 5) curriculum and co-curriculum, 6) student success interventions and treatment, 7) faculty and staff hiring, retention, promotion, and rewards, 8) professional development, and 9) community engagement.** The following scale is provided to rate how systematically each sub-practice is implemented at the system and offers questions to consider during the assessment. These are designed to guide concrete actions and next steps to advance the work.

Scale of Adoption	Definition
Not Present	System currently not following this practice
Beginning	Practice present in limited ways in the system administration/office and on some campuses
Emerging	Practice present in the system administration/office and on a majority of campuses and plans exist to scale activities and build frameworks for campus collaboration
Established	Practice implemented broadly within the system administration/office and with some cross-campus collaboration, but significant areas for improvement exist
Systemness	Practice implemented across the system and at depth that reflects core system priority and supports collaboration and sharing of resources across campuses

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[1] Lumina Foundation's Equity Imperative, 2020. https://www.luminafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/lumina-commitment-to-racial-equity-1.pdf
[2] National Action Committee on the Status of Women International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity. https://www.umass.edu/provost/resources/all-resources/faculty-diversity/anti-racism-resources

There are multiple ways that systems and institutions can engage with this tool. While the framework seeks to be comprehensive in the essential equity practices and dimensions of system work that are included, we recognize that its comprehensiveness may be daunting and that equity is almost always a work-in-progress. Most systems will be able to point to strong practice in many of the categories, with perhaps less activity in others. A starting point might be to assemble a core team within the system administration to complete all or several categories of the assessment to ensure that those with relevant knowledge of your system's equity practices and policies are included. Once a diverse, inclusive core team has completed the assessment, members should then engage others at the system in conversation about the results, beginning with the system head and her/his cabinet and followed by a broader group of staff, offices and units. Systems might also engage cross-campus or cross-sector teams together to address specific areas of focus, such as student success. Another approach would be for leadership at all levels to engage teams through all or several categories, from presidents and chancellors, to chief academic officers and provosts, to office and unit heads. Ideally these discussions should help refine the assessment, build shared understanding of the ways the system does and does not support equity and anti-racism, and—importantly—lead to specific actions and improvements. The tool is not a report or score card; it is designed to engender change and action. For more information on how to use the tool, please see the FAQ.

This framework advances the important elements of equity-mindedness by providing system-level approaches to ensure that students of all backgrounds are not only welcomed but achieve high success outcomes, with particular focus on those from underserved communities including Black, Latinx, Indigenous and low-income populations. As you consider the framework in the context of your system, it will be important to define the underserved communities in your region and state. Rather than spend time dissecting the terms used in the framework, we suggest that you think about the student groups that your system aims to better support; those where the equity gaps and the need for intentional solutions are the greatest.

The NASH Equity Framework is inspired by the work of Estela Mara Bensimon, the Center for Urban Education, Shaun Harper, the American Association of Colleges and Universities, Excelencia in Education, Lumina Foundation, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program and the Community College Research Center at Columbia University, the New England Resource Center for Higher Education, and our member systems.

Public Commitment
How the system publicly demonstrates and acts on the commitment to equity

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #1: PUBLIC COMMITMENT	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
a. System mission statement includes a statement on equity	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Is equity identified as a core value, fundamental to the system mission? • Is equity characterized in terms of "all students," or are specific populations identified? • Is equity connected to the interests of the region and state?		
b. Equity is featured in system planning	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Is equity an element in the system strategic plan? • Does the system educational attainment plan address equity gaps? • Is equity addressed in relation to other strategic priorities for the system? • Are there specific goals for reducing equity gaps?		
c. System has a common definition of equity	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• How does the system define equity? • Is this definition incorporated into campus approaches? • If there is not a common definition, is there a rationale for why not?		

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ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #1: PUBLIC COMMITMENT	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
d. System webpages and social media include attention to equity gaps and their reduction	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Where are equity issues featured on the system webpage? • Are disaggregated data on student access and success regularly tracked in public documents? • Are initiatives designed to address equity gaps highlighted in media sources?		
e. Equity is a shared responsibility across the system	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Are Issues of equity central to activities in multiple system offices? • Are there specific resources dedicated to equity? • If a leadership position is assigned to address the issues of equity, diversity and inclusion, how does this individual influence the actions of others?		
f. System acknowledges histories and legacies resulting in inequitable educational access and attainment	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system acknowledge system and institutional histories and legacies? • Does the system seek truth and reconciliation by openly addressing issues of founding principles, land holdings, naming and other artifacts?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #1: PUBLIC COMMITMENT	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
g. System specific element:	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	•		

Leadership
How system and institutional leaders communicate, act and hold themselves accountable on the commitment to equity

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #2: LEADERSHIP	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
a. System leaders speak publicly and regularly about equity	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system chancellor/president speak publicly about the importance of addressing equity? • Do system leaders know and speak to the specific data around equity gaps? • Do system leaders take prompt and clear public stands on current events related to equity in the state/region/community?		
b. System leaders take action to advance equity	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Do system leaders make data on equity transparent and accessible? • Do system leaders support closing equity gaps, through development of initiatives and commitment to funding? • Do system leaders consider who is at the table when making critical system decisions? • Do system leaders have an understanding of the realities and experience of faculty of color? • Are system leaders who are in environments without much diversity actively working to bring in diverse perspectives and voices?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #2: LEADERSHIP	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
c. Governing Board speaks publicly about equity	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Are the issues of equity and equity gaps discussed by the board on a regular basis? • What roles do board members play in advancing the equity agenda on campuses? • Are board leaders champions of equity efforts with state policy makers and other external stakeholders? • Does the board play an advocacy role in advancing these issues in interactions with campus leaders?		
d. Governing Board takes action to advance equity	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the board have a specific policy addressing equity? • Does this policy address racial inclusion and opposition to systemic racism? • Is the board engaged in considering policy changes related to equity gaps? • Does the board regularly review progress on reducing equity gaps at the system level? At the campus level? • Do board members use their spheres of influence to advance the issues of equity?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #2: LEADERSHIP	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
e. System leaders are held accountable for progress on equity	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Are there clear expectations for progress on student success and hiring metrics, disaggregated by race and ethnicity? • Does the Governing Board evaluate the system leader and campus leaders on progress measures related to equity? • Does the Governing Board evaluate the system leader and campus leaders on progress to improve campus culture? • Do system leaders evaluate their direct reports on progress measures related to equity?		
f. System leaders allocate meaningful resources to support equity efforts	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Are financial resources and personnel dedicated to support equity efforts at the system level? • Do such resources reflect strategic investments of existing resources rather than one-time funds? • Do system leaders make incentive funds available to the institutions to support equity efforts?		

	ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #2: LEADERSHIP	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
g.	System and campus leadership reflects the diversity of the state and region served	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Is attention paid to the demographic makeup of the senior system leadership, including efforts to bring in more diversity in terms of gender, race and ethnicity? • Is attention paid to the demographic makeup of the senior campus leadership, including efforts to bring in more diversity in terms of gender, race and ethnicity? • Does the Governing Board advocate for greater balance in overall diversity in system and campus leadership?		
h.	Governing Board membership reflects the diversity of the state and region served	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Do Governing Board members advocate to the appointing authority for greater diversity in filling vacancies? • Does the system leadership advocate to the appointing authority for greater diversity in filling vacancies?		
i.	System specific element:	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	•		

Data

How the system ensures that data collection, analysis and transparency are equity-informed and actionable across the system and institutions

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #3: DATA	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
a. Equity and student success are fundamental components of the system's overall approach to data planning	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• To what degree do the concepts of equity or student success inform the way the system designs, collects, analyzes, and disseminates various equity- and student success-related data? • To what degree are system data planning processes undertaken with the explicit goal of identifying and eliminating educational inequities? Or with the explicit goal of advancing educational equity? • Do system data planning processes take into consideration which groups or individuals will benefit from their data analyses? Or which groups or individuals may be harmed based on how the data are interpreted? • Do system data planning processes include the participation of community members or other institutional experts in determining which issues will be explored or what questions will be asked? If no, why not? • Do system data planning processes allow for a serious exploration of		

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ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #3: DATA	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
		implicit biases that may impact how data are collected, interpreted and ultimately used? • Are system staff trained in how to apply an equity lens to their data work?		
b. System utilizes various forms of data that allow for an interrogation of equity gaps, their root causes, and the potential actions that can be taken to eliminate them	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• What kinds of data does the system collect currently? Is it quantitative? Qualitative? A mix? • What does this data tell us about how the system is faring in their efforts to advance equity across its institutions? • To what degree is system data effective in helping people develop strategies that advance equity or close equity gaps? • Are there other forms of data the system might use in the identification of equity gaps and ways to eliminate them? • Who determines what kinds of data the system will collect and report on? Who else might be brought to the table to help define what kinds of data should be collected?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #3: DATA	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
c. System uses equity-oriented and inclusive practices in the gathering and collecting of data	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system's data collection agenda rely primarily on the acquisition of quantitative data? Is any qualitative data gathered to help provide a more holistic and humanistic view of the lives that are represented in system data? • In what ways does the system contextualize the data it gathers? Is it presented on its own without any context or discussion or is it presented alongside other kinds of information that help us understand the larger social, educational, and historical conditions that might be at play? • Do the system's data collection practices include the gathering of information related to policy, research, resources, services or practice? • Who is included in discussions of which data should be collected or gathered? Is it limited to system staff or does it include other relevant stakeholders? What others should be included in these discussions? What important perspectives would they bring to the table that are currently missing? • Do discussions of data collection touch upon implicit bias,		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #3: DATA	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
		stereotypes or deficit-minded thinking? Are staff encouraged to reflect upon and question if these negative mindsets are influencing their decision-making related to data gathering? • Are system staff trained in identifying these negative mindsets in their data collection work and how to mitigate their overall impact?		
d. System is intentional in its application of an equity lens to inform the way it conducts data analyses, generates conclusions, and creates recommendations	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system have an agreed-upon set of practices that it uses to mine data for equity gaps or racial inequities? • For example, is system data routinely disaggregated by race and ethnicity? • Is system data routinely disaggregated by intersectional identities (e.g. looking at race by gender) ? • In its analysis of educational outcomes, does the system acknowledge the larger social or historical conditions that may be contributing to the inequities or disparities seen in the data? Or does it leave these conditions out altogether in the interpretations of findings?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #3: DATA	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
		• Does the system intentionally look to different comparison groups when analyzing its findings? Or does it default to using White groups or outcomes as the standard by which all other groups and outcomes are compared? • To what degree are system data analyzed with the intent to drive change and eliminate equity gaps? • Do system analyses empower campus and community professionals to use the data to improve their work?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #3: DATA	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
e. System data reporting and dissemination practices take into account the needs of the diverse audiences they must communicate with	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• What kinds of data reports are shared by the system? Who are the primary audiences these reports are created for? • Are there others who should be receiving system data reports but currently do not? • Does the system use a variety of reporting forms—written documents, infographics, data visualizations or websites—or does it rely on one form of output? • Are the reports that the system provides for its various audiences easy to access? Easy to understand? • Is the system clear about the limits of what its reports can speak to and what they cannot? • Prior to dissemination, does the system take into consideration the impact their reports will have on the individuals or groups referenced in their findings?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #3: DATA	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
f. Data are routinely used in the creation of systemwide and institutional equity goals with meaningful metrics	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Has the system reinforced its commitment to eliminating equity gaps through data-driven goals? • Are specific metrics designed to track and assess progress towards these goals? • Is progress towards these goals recognized in strategic planning and resource allocation? • Are these data used to ensure accountability for meeting system or institutional equity goals?		
g. System specific element:	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	•		

Policy

How the system ensures that system and institutional policies are equity-minded in terms of their design, implementation and impact

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #4: POLICY	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
a. Equity-minded policy analysis is an ongoing function of the system office	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Are system policies that structure priorities, outcomes and resource allocation regularly reviewed with an equity focus? • Does the system policy review protocol include specific equity-minded indicators? • Does the Governing Board require a regular audit of system policies in regards to diversity, inclusion and racial equity?		
b. Equity-mindedness is a guiding paradigm for the design of system policies[i]	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Is equity treated as a comprehensive strategy with broad impact? • Do relevant policies position participation and success of students from underserved communities as system and institutional responsibilities? • Are institutional and systemic barriers that limit access, retention, persistence and completion recognized?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #4: POLICY	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
c. Attention to bias in language is considered in crafting system policies	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Are biased or stereotyped assumptions made about students within system policies? • What types of words are used to describe the beneficiaries of policies? • Do policies target a specific group or groups of students? If so, how are these groups identified?		
d. Criteria, premises and intent of system policies are evaluated to safeguard against disproportionate impact	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Do system policies build in safeguards to protect against potential negative effects on equity in access or success? • Are the beneficiaries of policies considered? • Are those excluded from or ineligible for policies considered?		
e. System specific element:	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	•		

Curriculum and Co-curriculum
How the system supports institutions in the development, delivery and assessment of equity-centered curricula and co-curricula

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #5: CURRICULUM AND CO-CURRICULUM	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
a. System commits to equitable access, participation and outcomes in the curriculum and co-curriculum for students from underserved communities	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system communicate expectations for equitable access, participation and outcomes in the curriculum and co-curriculum for students from underserved communities? • Are there system goals for increasing representation across majors? • Does the system leverage and distribute resources to institutions in support of equity-centered curricula and co-curricula? • Does the system hold institutions accountable to ensure this commitment is visible and operationalized with appropriate evidence?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #5: CURRICULUM AND CO-CURRICULUM	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
b. System provides support for institutional research and data analytics to identify and address equity gaps by student populations in the curriculum and co-curriculum	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system collect and analyze disaggregated data to identify equity gaps and ensure equitable access, participation and outcomes for gateway courses, Gen Ed, HIPs, Honors programs, and majors? • Does the system provide institutional research and data analytic support to the institutions in these areas? • How are these data shared with institutions—administrative leadership, faculty, staff and students?		
c. System academic program review policies include attention to equity and inclusion	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Do indicators of excellence include both equity and quality? • Are student learning outcomes assessed across student demographic groups? • Do indicators of program quality include access to, retention in, and completion of academic programs across student demographic groups analyzed? • Is diverse faculty composition considered an important element in program quality?		

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ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #5: CURRICULUM AND CO-CURRICULUM	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
d. System provides professional development and other support to aid in the design and implementation of equity-centered curricula and co-curricula	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Do institutions receive support to ensure curricular design and integrity with an equity lens, i.e., sequencing of gateway courses, Gen Ed requirements, pre-requisites and majors that support students from underserved communities? • Do institutions receive data support for deans, chairs, faculty, and student affairs and support staff to identify and address equity gaps in the design and implementation the curriculum and co-curriculum?		
e. System supports equity-centered assessment of curricula and co-curricula	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system communicate to institutions expectations for equity-centered assessment of curricula and co-curricula? • Is student data disaggregated in the assessment of academic and co-curricular programs? • Is assessment practice asset-based, not deficit-minded by considering and valuing lived experiences, cultures and identities of students?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #5: CURRICULUM AND CO-CURRICULUM	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
f. System supports institutions in developing and reviewing curricula to ensure culturally inclusive, relevant and responsive content	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system convey expectations that the curriculum and co-curriculum should be culturally inclusive, relevant and responsive to students from underserved communities? • Does the system provide professional development to institutions to advance culturally inclusive pedagogy and content?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #5: CURRICULUM AND CO-CURRICULUM	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
g. System supports institutions in selecting required course materials and learning resources that are accessible, affordable and responsive	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system communicate expectations and provide support that course materials and learning resources are accessible by students in terms of devices, broadband and service providers? • Does the system communicate expectations and provide support in ensuring that course materials and learning resources are accessible in terms of universal or inclusive design? • Is the availability of Open Educational Resources (no-cost to students) and other low-cost course materials communicated and supported? • Does the system communicate expectations and provide support in ensuring that course materials and learning resources are responsive to student needs?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #5: CURRICULUM AND CO-CURRICULUM	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
h. System supports institutions in deepening equity and student engagement in the co-curriculum	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Are resources deployed and aligned with an equity lens to organize learning opportunities outside the classroom across student populations, with a focus on those from underserved communities? • Are co-curricular activities resourced and evaluated to ensure they do not perpetuate cycles of inequities and exclusion? • Is student engagement in co-curricular activities tracked and assessed across student populations to ensure equitable access and participation?		
i. System specific element:	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	•		

Student Success Interventions and Treatments

How the system supports institutions in designing, delivering and assessing equity-centered student success programs to ensure equitable access, participation and completion

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #6: STUDENT SUCCESS INTERVENTIONS AND TREATMENTS	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
a. Student success interventions and treatments are an important component of the system's commitment to equitable access, participation and outcomes for students from underserved communities, including Black, Latinx, Indigenous and low-income populations	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system articulate goals for student success interventions as part of a strategic plan to close equity gaps? • Is the student success agenda set system-wide? • Does the system communicate expectations for equitable access, participation and outcomes in student success programs for students from underserved communities? • Does the system hold institutions accountable to ensure that this commitment is visible and operationalized with appropriate evidence? • Does the system contribute to national student success initiatives?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #6: STUDENT SUCCESS INTERVENTIONS AND TREATMENTS	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
b. System provides support to institutions to develop, implement and assess high-impact student success interventions and treatments	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system coordinate student success initiatives across the system? • Does the system leverage and distribute resources to institutions in support of equity-centered student support programs? • Does the system distribute resources equitably, to those institutions that need more support in terms of student populations, size, capacity? • Does the system convene and/or provide professional development to student success program leads? • Does the system have a process for bringing successful programs to scale?		
c. System expects institutions to consider input from diverse stakeholders in the design and implementation of student success programs and interventions	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Are there regular meetings between student and academic affairs? • Are students brought into the design, implementation and assessment process?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #6: STUDENT SUCCESS INTERVENTIONS AND TREATMENTS	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
d. System provides periodic review and/or assessment of institutions' academic supports and services	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system have a process to regularly review institutions' academic support services? • Do these support resources include both faculty and student affairs? • How is data collected and used? • Does the system have a process for bringing successful programs to scale?		
e. System-wide recruitment and admissions policies intentionally consider the assets and challenges of student from underserved communities	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Are system-wide recruitment programs designed to reach students from underserved communities? • Do system-wide admissions requirements take into account variations in opportunities for students from specific demographic groups? • Does the system support admissions policies that consider holistic approaches, valuing the full range of potential contributions from individual students?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #6: STUDENT SUCCESS INTERVENTIONS AND TREATMENTS	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
f. System-wide developmental education and transfer policies are responsive to the challenges of students from underserved communities	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Are barriers for specific student populations considered and addressed? • Does the system have a process for bringing successful programs to scale? • How often does the system review developmental education and transfer programs? • What kind of data is used to review programs, and how is it used and acted on? • Are there incentives for effective programs or consequences for ineffective programs?		
g. System recognizes and rewards institutions that outpace their national institutional peers in improving or eliminating equity gaps for students from underserved communities	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system have a mechanism for identifying institutional peers? • Does the system have a mechanism for recognizing, rewarding and providing scaling support for institutions that outpace peers in eliminating equity gaps? • Does the system hold institutions accountable to short and long-term goals and plans?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #6: STUDENT SUCCESS INTERVENTIONS AND TREATMENTS	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
h. System specific element:	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	•		

Faculty and Staff Hiring, Retention, Promotion and Rewards

How the system supports and shares responsibility with institutions to ensure equity-minded hiring, retention, promotion and rewards practices

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #7: FACULTY & STAFF HIRING, RETENTION, PROMOTION, AND REWARDS	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
a. System has clear and publicly stated goals to diversify leadership, faculty and staff hiring, aligned to reflect the diversity of the state and regions served	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system have goals to ensure compositional diversity across the system administration and the institutions? • Does the system regularly report progress against these goals for its own administration and the system as a whole? • Do the institutions regularly report progress against these goals?		

NASH
National Association
of System Heads

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #7: FACULTY & STAFF HIRING, RETENTION, PROMOTION, AND REWARDS	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
b. System tracks faculty and administrative leadership hires, retention, promotion and salaries based on race/ethnicity and gender to measure progress on stated goals	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system work with institutions to collect and analyze disaggregated data on hiring, retention, promotion and salary? • How is the data shared and is it made public? • Is the data evaluated in line with system goals and/or used in performance evaluations for institutional leadership? • Is the data discussed with the governing board? In the context of system goals? • Is the data used to set or revise equity goals for hiring, retention, promotions and salaries? • How are identified equity gaps in hiring, retention, promotions and salaries addressed?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #7: FACULTY & STAFF HIRING, RETENTION, PROMOTION, AND REWARDS	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
c. Systemwide awards programs (teaching, research, service, etc.) include consideration of diversity and equity among the quality criteria in nominating and making awards	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Do awards programs have diversity and equity criteria included in nomination materials? • Do awards programs reference diversity and equity criteria in awards announcements? • Are awards programs regularly analyzed to ensure awards are made equitably to historically under-represented and faculty/staff of color? • Do awards programs recognize non-traditional and newer kinds of teaching, research and service focused on diversity, equity and inclusion?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #7: FACULTY & STAFF HIRING, RETENTION, PROMOTION, AND REWARDS	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
d. Hiring practices and decision-making demonstrate commitment to diversifying the workforce at all levels, within the system administration and across institutions, aligned with system goals	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system provide and follow resources/best practices for diversifying and deepening applicant pools? • Are demonstrated achievements in advancing equity clearly identified as necessary qualifications in job posting for system and campus leaders? • Are candidates required to submit an equity statement? • Are interviews for system and campus leaders structured to give full attention to issues of equity, by both the hiring committee and decision-makers and those being interviewed? • Do hiring practices and decisions recognize non-traditional and newer kinds of teaching, research and service focused on diversity, equity and inclusion? • Does the system require or recommend equity training for the chair and other members of search committees? • Is diversity considered in approving pools of finalists and making the hiring decision?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #7: FACULTY & STAFF HIRING, RETENTION, PROMOTION, AND REWARDS	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
e. Retention practices and decision-making demonstrate commitment to diversifying the workforce at all levels, within the system administration and across institutions, aligned with system goals	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system convey expectations through policy or other means that recognize the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion in retaining administrative leadership, faculty, and staff? • Does the system publicly articulate and recognize the contributions of diversity, equity and inclusion work and engagement in teaching, service and research in decision-making about retaining administrative leadership, faculty and staff?		
f. Tenure & Promotion practices and decision-making demonstrate system and institutional commitment to diversifying the professoriate, aligned with system goals	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system convey expectations through policy or other means that recognize the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion in tenure and promotion? • Does the system publicly articulate and recognize the contributions of diversity, equity and inclusion work and engagement in teaching, service and research?		

| g. System fosters and supports an equitable, diverse and inclusive climate within its own administration and across institutions | ☐ Not Present
☐ Beginning
☐ Emerging
☐ Established
☐ Systemness | • Does the system encourage and facilitate dialogue around equity, diversity and inclusion issues among leadership, faculty and staff, within its own administration and with institutions?
• Does the system conduct and/or provide resources for the regular assessment of climate, within the system administration and at the institutions?
• Does the system make public and/or share with relevant system and institutional stakeholders the results of climate assessments, including leadership, faculty and staff?
• Does the system act on and address real and perceived climate issues identified by faculty and staff through surveys and other channels?
• Does the system hold itself and institutions accountable in addressing real and perceived climate issues identified by faculty and staff?
• Does the system sponsor or support employee affinity or resource groups and/or related resources structured around dimensions of faculty and staff identity? | | |

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #7: FACULTY & STAFF HIRING, RETENTION, PROMOTION, AND REWARDS	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
h. System specific element:	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	•		

Professional Development

How the system supports, promotes and provides equity-informed professional development to faculty, staff and administrative leaders across the system

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #8: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
a. System provides and promotes professional development to faculty, administrative leadership and academic/student support staff in equity-minded ways	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system articulate the connection between faculty success and student success? • Does the system establish an expectation of continuous professional growth and development for all faculty and staff, including part-time, contingent, and tenured faculty? • Does the system encourage discussion around career growth and mobility? • Is participation disaggregated to ensure equitable representation? • How are professional development opportunities promoted? How do you know who knows about these opportunities?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #8: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
b. System provides professional development to faculty, administrative leadership and academic/student support staff that includes attention to equity, anti-racism, and equity-mindedness	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Is professional development on equity and anti-racism offered in stand-alone formats, embedded in other offerings, or both? • Is the equity- and anti-racism-related professional development offered beyond what is covered in mandatory compliance training? • Is there a long-term vision and plan for equity- and anti-racism-related professional development, including measurable outcomes?		
c. System brings constituent groups together to engage with equity and anti-racism and identify how they can take responsibility for reducing equity gaps and promoting equity-mindedness across their spheres of influence	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Are there adequate resources dedicated to this strategy? • How is equity-mindedness embedded into these gatherings? • Do constituent groups have compositional diversity?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #8: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
d. Within current resource constraints, the system makes equity- and anti-racism-related professional development a priority	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system invest in this essential practice? • Does the system encourage campuses to dedicate resources to this essential practice?		
e. System supports and engages with campus centers for faculty development	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system convene faculty development leads for best practice conversations? • Does the system facilitate access to 3rd party development and training resources?		
f. System supports the professional development needs of professionals such as staff from advising, financial aid, career center, library, and more	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system convene the staffs of key student service or other departments? • Does the system facilitate access to 3rd party development and training resources?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #8: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
g. System specific element:	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	•		

Community Engagement

How the system supports institutions and organizations in developing, delivering and assessing equity-informed community engagement practices and programs

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #9: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
a. System mission, vision statement and strategic plans include clear expectations for inclusive community engagement	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system explicitly callout equity as a goal in its relevant mission, vision, and strategic planning documents? • Are these documents clear about what the system means when it uses the term "Equity"? • Does the system set specific goals and targets for equity related to community engagement?		
b. System provides resources to assist institutions in acknowledging and understanding historical context and community engagement	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system host and facilitate ongoing convenings or workshops? • Has the system identified specific staff leadership whose portfolio includes community engagement? • Does the system promote consideration of historic legacies, artifacts and land issues in the context of local and regional communities?		

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ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #9: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
c. System leaders are visible with state, local, and national organizations that address the needs of students from underserved communities	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Do system leaders assume leadership roles in organizations that address eliminating equity opportunities and gaps in higher education? • Do system leaders collaborate with leaders of underserved communities in intentionally developing solutions to challenges?		
d. System's community engagement partners, funders and collaborators know of the System's equity commitments and goals	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system specifically (or regularly) identify or name its equity goals in meetings and presentations?		

ESSENTIAL EQUITY PRACTICE #9: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	Stage of Adoption in Our System	Questions to Consider	Evidence for Current Stage of Adoption	Easy Wins, Opportunities for Long-Term Improvement, and Next Steps
e. System tracks and supports the number, quality and impact of community engagement strategies and initiatives	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	• Does the system include community engagement in its annual or periodic reports? • Does the System highlight or otherwise recognize best practices related to community engagement? • Does the system provide outreach to local school systems about the value of higher education, majors and courses of study? • Does the system have a process for bringing successful programs to scale?		
f. System specific element:	☐ Not Present ☐ Beginning ☐ Emerging ☐ Established ☐ Systemness	•		

Selected Resources

General

- NERCHE Self-Assessment Rubric for the Institutionalization of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education. New England Resource Center for Higher Education, University of Massachusetts Boston, 2016: https://www.wpi.edu/sites/default/files/Project_Inclusion_NERCHE_Rubric-Self-Assessment-2016.pdf

- From Equity Talk to Equity Walk; Expanding Practitioner Knowledge for Racial Justice in Higher Education. Tia McNair Brown, Estela Mara Bensimon & Lindsey Malcom-Piques. Jossey-Bass, 2020.
- An Unpaid Debt: The Case for Racial Equity in Higher Education. Change Magazine 52:2, 2020 (entire issue).
- Step Up & Lead for Equity: What Higher Education Can Do to Reverse Our Deepening Divides. American Association of Colleges and Universities, 2016: https://secure.aacu.org/imis/ItemDetail?iProductCode=E-GMSSU&Category=
- Seal of Excelencia Framework. Excelencia in Education, 2020: https://www.edexcelencia.org/seal-excelencia
- Campus Pride Index; National Listing of LGBTQ-Friendly Colleges and Universities, Campus Pride 2007:   http://www.campusprideindex.org/

Public Commitment

The Association of Governing Boards has several useful resources on board roles:

- Increasing Diversity on the Boards of Colleges and Universities (AGB 2020)
- Statement on Campus Climate, Inclusion, and Civility (AGB 2016)
- Trustees Need to Address Racism (AGB 2020)

Data

- A Toolkit for Centering Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration: https://www.aisp.upenn.edu/centering-equity/#:~:text=A%20Toolkit%20for%20Centering%20Racial%20Equity%20Throughout%20Data,community%20needs%2C%20improve%20services%2C%20and%20build%20stronger%20communities

Policy

- Protocol for Assessing Equity-Mindedness in State Policy.   University of Southern California, Center for Urban Education, 2017: https://cue.usc.edu/files/2017/02/CUE-Protocol-Workbook-Final_Web.pdf

Curriculum and Co-Curriculum

- Equity-Centered Assessment:
  https://www.campusintelligence.com/2020/08/21/practicing-equity-centered-assessment/
- Equity and assessment: Moving toward culturally responsive assessment. Erik Montenegro & Natasha Jankowski. University of Illinois and Indiana University, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA), 2017: http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/OccasionalPaper29.pdf
- Student Engagement in the Co-curriculum: https://www.campusintelligence.com/2020/07/10/the-essential-role-of-co-curricular-programs-in-student-success-retention-persistence-and-graduation/
- Antiracist-Pedagogy in Higher Education—Antiracism Resources. McQuade Library, Merrimack College, 2020: https://libguides.merrimack.edu/antiracism/HE

Student Success Interventions and Treatment

- The USC Race & Equity Center administers a campus climate survey to undergraduates focused on equity, diversity and inclusion: https://race.usc.edu/colleges/

Faculty and Staff Hiring

- The Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has a set of resources to advance equity and diversity in hiring, retention and promotion at: https://wiseli.wisc.edu
- The USC Race & Equity Center has a number of resources for colleges and universities: https://race.usc.edu/colleges/
- The Center's Prism Network is a recruitment and job search tool that matches IHEs with diverse talent: https://www.prismnetwork.org/why-prism

Community Engagement

- Community Engagement Rubric Pilot: http://www.ejournalofpublicaffairs.org/6_1027_community-engagement-pilot-rubric/
- Assessment Rubric for Institutionalizing Community Engagement in Higher Education: https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/213717/UMNCommunityEngagementInstitutionalizationRubric.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

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[i] Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California. Protocol of Assessing Equity-Mindedness in State Policy, 2015.