

RACIAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK

Advancing racial equity requires attention to the norms and culture of a group, how resources are distributed, who makes decisions and on what basis, to whom the group holds itself accountable, and other issues of power and privilege.

Why lead with race?

Through the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative, the University of Michigan and Taubman College are working to create an institution where all its members (students, faculty, and staff) can achieve their full potential regardless of their social identities (based on race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.) This acknowledges that not everyone has equal access to thrive at the University as well as that forms of oppression including racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and many others are at the root of the inequities our community members encounter. So why lead with race?

- **Disparities are greatest by race.** Across all indicators, including health, housing, income, graduation rates, incarceration, death, etc., people of color, especially Black people, have disproportionate negative outcomes. By leading with race, we are able to focus our resources on the root cause of many of the problems we are trying to solve, internally (through culture and climate) and externally as we prepare the architects and planners of the future.
- **Our students, faculty, and staff are asking us to do so. So is university leadership.** They are organizing, leading, and demanding that we lead with race and racial equity. The Office of DEI is also asking to embed racial equity/anti-racism in our DEI plans. The president is also calling for this.
- **We need to focus.** We recognize that all forms of oppression are important and work towards having an equitable institution and society. While we lead with racial equity, we incorporate all work, tools, and strategies into an intersectional approach that also addresses sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and other systems of oppression. Other areas of disparity will follow if we start with race.

What about our DEI plan?

How do we focus on everyone? We can still accomplish our DEI goals while centering racial equity. Leading with race doesn't mean that we don't work toward addressing other systems of oppression and historically disadvantaged people (people with disabilities, low-income people, LGBTQ+ people, people of color). It means that we do this work intersectionally, because our community may hold multiple oppressed identities at once. Centering on race allows us to make sure that people of color, particularly Black people, don't fall through the cracks and are missed. This also means that we can use tools based on race to understand and address all kinds of systemic oppression, leading to equity for all.

WHO IS REPRESENTED IN DECISION-MAKING? ARE THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE ROOM?

When making decisions, there can be tension between acting quickly and acting equitably. The misconception is that equity-based decisions take time to implement. However, decisions can be made quickly and prioritize issues affecting people of color, specifically Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), if they are in the decision-making table.



HOW ARE WE LEVERAGING RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING TO BUILD TOWARDS A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE?

Racial equity training is critical to develop a racial equity lens. Educating on topics such as racial history, unconscious bias, language access, white privilege, inclusive engagement and teaching, and racial equity tools are all vital. This improves outcomes for all, including people of color, specifically BIPOC.

HOW DO WE INCREASE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY?

Knowledge is power. Transparency and genuine community engagement allow for people to be in control of their lives. An organization should share how processes work and how outcomes are identified to advance racial equity. This should be done in partnership with people of color, particularly BIPOC and anti-racists. People who are affected by a decision should have access and a meaningful part of the decision-making process.



HOW ARE WE INVESTING IN RACIAL EQUITY?

To advance racial equity, resources must be invested. This could be time or funding, or both. Time needs to be allocated to develop new ways of teaching, working, and learning. Funding must be invested in scholarships, accessible ways of teaching, materials, etc. In addition, time and funding must be allocated to develop new policies, creating a new culture that dismantles white supremacy to advance racial equity and benefit all, including people of color, particularly BIPOC.

Key Questions:

- Am I uplifting the experiences, knowledge, and contributions of people of color in this decision? How so?
- Am I involving people affected by this decision in the decision-making process? How so?
- If I don't know how to embed racial equity into this decision, am I reaching out to someone who can help me? Who?
- Am I learning about racial equity and how embedding it could change this decision? How so?
- Am I investing time and/or resources into this decision? If not, how would doing so change my decision?



If the answer to any of these questions is **NO**, go back to the drawing board until you are able to say **YES**.

Embedding racial equity is doing your work with people of color for people of color

to undo the damage racism has done to us all.