



Diversity and the Law: 2021

Model Charter & Diagram for a Multi-Office DEI Team¹

Jamie Lewis Keith

Art Coleman



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This document provides an adaptable model that can inform the development of charters for DEI-focused teams established within colleges and universities.

Charter of the Team to [Insert name, e.g.: Advance Mission-Critical Diversity and Equity]

To realize [Insert University Name]’s (University) mission-driven strategic priorities dedicated to the [Insert overarching statement of core attributes of the University’s educational mission, goals and contributions to society], University must pursue accountable institution-wide strategies to advance our diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) objectives. Our overall DEI goals and objectives are reflected in [Insert key documentation of DEI associated mission, e.g., a mission statement, strategic plan, faculty, or board resolution].

To further these aims, I am chartering the [Insert team name], as a standing [Insert “cabinet level” or “senior level” —but designate a role that has influence, authority and resources/staffing] team reporting to the [Insert top level administration, with decision-making and fiscal authority, e.g., “the President” or “the President, Provost and Chief Operating Officer (Executive Team)”]. This team will assume the responsibilities and be accountable for the outcomes specified below, while maintaining operational responsibilities and authorities of each academic and administrative operating unit.

Priority Outcomes

The institutional goals to shape the team’s work:

1. Enhanced welcome, respect, and ability to fully participate for all in the University community, including a focus on identifying and diminishing systemic barriers and implicit bias;
2. Enhanced DEI-associated educational experiences and outcomes for all students, including, e.g., opportunities to meaningfully engage in diverse living, learning and work endeavors that
 - a. Elevate understanding of issues of [Specify the institution’s diversity and equity interests and issues, e.g.: “race, ethnicity, gender, poverty, homelessness, hunger, different abilities, different spirituality and faith, service of the entire state by our flagship state university, identity-based systemic inequity” etc.],
 - b. Engender empathy for others in a broadly diverse academic community and society, and
 - c. Enhance readiness and commitment to serve the [Insert all that are applicable: “local community, state, nation and world”], contribute to, and thrive in personal [insert any specialized area of interest applicable to the institution’s mission] and work life in a global and diverse world during college or graduate school and after graduation;
3. Enhanced DEI-associated professional development and work-related experiences for, and enhanced teaching, research and service contributions by, faculty and staff;
4. Increased compositional diversity, as a necessary setting for diverse educational, professional, research, and service experiences; and
5. Identifying, and remedying any underutilization of faculty or staff of particular races, ethnicities, or gender (inclusive of sexual identity and orientation).

Correspondingly, as a matter of process, the team should assure that its work reflects:

6. Effective and efficient use of resources to advance DEI;
7. Evidence (data) based decision-making in the design, resourcing, and execution of DEI policies and initiatives, as well as enhanced ability to track progress; and
8. Appropriate assessments of legal, reputational, financial, and operational risk.

Key Actions

To achieve these aims, I am requesting that the team take, or coordinate with and assist appropriate operational academic and administrative units to take, the following actions, with an overall systems orientation:

1. Establish and periodically update a recommended University DEI Strategic Plan for approval by the [Specify, e.g., “President” or “Executive Team”] that will:
 - a. Include specific, annual, mid-term and long-term priority goals and associated systems, policies and initiatives across the University that are aligned with and advance its overarching mission [Insert if applicable, “and Strategic Plan”] and coordinated to leverage investments for maximum impact;
 - b. Be backed by data (qualitative on the student, faculty, and staff experience, as well as quantitative) and strategic mission-aligned rationales;
 - c. Include key definitions;
 - d. Include metrics to define success and track progress; and
 - e. Include regular reporting on goals, systems, initiatives, outcomes, and follow-up actions;
2. Create, annually update, and deploy the University Affirmative Action Plans for equal employment opportunity, including strategies to both address issues of underutilization or any presumed discrimination and advance the University’s DEI-associated mission;
3. Identify/inventory and evaluate/model the potential effects of existing and prospective policies—barrier removal, race-, ethnicity- and gender-neutral policies, as well as race-, ethnicity- and gender-conscious policies—in enrollment, educational and employment programs to inform advancement of DEI-associated interests and satisfy legal requirements;
4. Collect and evaluate actionable data (disaggregated at a minimum by race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, geographical background, and academic credentials) in support of DEI endeavors and to enhance evidence-based decision-making at all levels of the University;
5. Communicate effectively and regularly, and encourage dialog, with the full range of internal and external stakeholder audiences about difficult issues of DEI and DEI’s connection to the University mission’s [Insert if applicable: “and overall Strategic Plan’s”] success, and the supporting policies and initiatives being pursued at the University;

6. Create systems and processes to design, undertake, evaluate, document and report on this work on an ongoing basis [to stakeholders to be identified];
7. Advise on prioritizing initiatives and associated resource allocation; and
8. Identify any need for additional internal expertise (for quality work that can be done internally, where there is an ongoing need) or for occasional external expertise (when specialized knowledge or additional workload capacity is needed, particularly when high-risk issues are implicated, or nation-wide perspectives are important).

Composition

The team members and their current incumbents are:

- [Insert offices, positions, and individuals—include representatives of the functions in the diagram below, among any others of relevance at the University. Indicate which position will be the coordinating leader.]

The University community is encouraged to engage with the team and commit best individual and organizational efforts to advancing the DEI outcomes addressed in this charter.

[Insert Name]

[Insert Title, e.g., “President” or “Chancellor”]

