NAVIGATING EQUITY-CENTERED INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: A REFLECTION GUIDE

For Leading Institutional Change in Schools and Programs of Public Health

November 2026

Transforming Academia for EQUITY

AN INITIATIVE BY CHANGE MATRIX

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About This Guide

This guide is designed to support institutions beginning their equity journey from wherever they are and to be revisited as their equity work evolves. Equity-centered institutional change is adaptive, relational, and shaped by local context. Rather than offering a linear process or a checklist to complete, this guide provides reflective questions, practical ideas, and adaptive principles to help individuals and teams navigate change within their own context. The principles in this guide are intended to help individuals and teams understand where they are, identify meaningful next steps, and navigate complexities of leading equity-centered change+ within their own institutions.

The guide draws lessons from the **Transforming Academia for Equity (TAE) initiative**, in which seven schools and programs of public health are pursuing equity-centered change in different ways and from different starting points. While each institution's journey was unique, common principles emerged that helped guiding teams build relationships, strengthen leadership, adapt to changing conditions, and embed equity within their institutions over time. These principles have been translated into reflective questions, practical ideas, and common challenges to anticipate and navigate, offering guidance for others beginning or deepening their own equity work. The seven principles you will work through in this guide are:



About This Guide

As you explore the seven principles, consider not only what it takes to advance equity-centered change, but also how the work is shared and supported. Meaningful participation requires time, resources, and institutional support. Without intentional attention to these conditions, equity work can become an additional burden, particularly for students, junior faculty, and individuals from historically marginalized groups. How this work is carried out should reflect the equity values it seeks to advance. This means recognizing differences in people's capacity and influence, creating protected time for participation, and sharing responsibilities in ways that allow everyone to contribute meaningfully. Those with greater institutional authority or resources can help create these conditions by removing barriers, redistributing responsibilities, and advocating for equity work to be recognized and supported as part of institutional roles rather than an added obligation.

Each principle includes the following sections to support reflection and action:

- **Why This Principle Matters:** Explore why the principle is important and how it emerged through TAE.
- **Reflection Questions:** Engage your team in dialogue to deepen understanding, build trust, and identify opportunities for change.
- **Pause and Confirm:** Assess your team's readiness and alignment before moving into planning or implementation.
- **Practices to Try:** Explore practical ways to put the principle into action within your institutional context.
- **Common Tensions to Navigate:** Anticipate challenges and use tensions as opportunities for reflection, learning, and stronger relationships.

Our Commitment to Learning and Transparency

This Reflection Guide is seen as a living document that should and will be updated as we learn from institutional changemakers beyond the TAE grantees. **This guide was originally published in November 2026.**

Definitions

Equity-Centered Adaptive Institutional Change: An approach to institutional change that keeps equity and belonging at the center while recognizing that transformation is complex, contextual, and nonlinear. It involves understanding where an institution is, investing in relationships, establishing shared purpose, sharing leadership, creating structures for learning and adaptation, recognizing multiple forms of progress, and embedding what matters into institutional culture, operations, investments, policies, and everyday practices.

Adaptive Leadership Practices: Ways of leading that help people navigate complex challenges for which there is no single, known solution. These practices emphasize understanding context, engaging diverse perspectives, learning through action, experimenting and adapting, navigating uncertainty and resistance, and maintaining a shared purpose as conditions change.

Guiding Team: A cross-role team within each TAE institution that helps guide and advance equity-centered, adaptive institutional change. A guiding team brings together different perspectives, experiences, and levels of influence to build shared ownership, make sense of challenges, identify opportunities, and adapt the work as conditions change.

Adaptive Change Specialists (ACSs): Coaches, facilitators, and thought partners who work alongside TAE institutions as they navigate equity-centered, adaptive institutional change. Rather than prescribing solutions, ACSs help teams reflect on their context, surface adaptive challenges, strengthen relationships and leadership capacity, and identify approaches that fit their institution and where they are in the change process.

TAE Coordinating Center: Led by Change Matrix, the TAE Coordinating Center creates the infrastructure and conditions that support institutions in learning, adapting, and advancing equity-centered change. The Center provides coaching and consultation through ACSs, facilitates cohort and peer learning, develops shared frameworks and resources, connects institutions to one another, and supports reflection, learning, and dissemination across the TAE initiative.

Leading Through Change Framework™: A Change Matrix framework for understanding and navigating organizational change through three interconnected domains: Creating Conditions for Change, Engaging Diverse Voices for Action, and Implementing and Sustaining Change. Rather than treating change as a linear sequence, the framework recognizes that institutions may move between or work across these domains as their context, learning, and needs evolve.

1 Principle 1: Meet Your Institutional Unit Where It Is and Build Forward

Why This Principle Matters

Principle 1 aims to build **contextual awareness**. Every institutional unit begins its equity journey from a different place with different pressures. Some schools have long-standing equity initiatives, supportive leadership, and strong community partnerships. Others may be building the relationships needed for change and starting dialogue around diversity and belonging for the first time. Additionally, institutions are constantly navigating leadership transitions, competing priorities, budget shortfalls, and changing sociopolitical environments. Due to institutions having different starting points and shifting priorities, there is no single roadmap for equity-centered, adaptive institutional change.

One of the most important lessons from the TAE initiative was that sustainable change begins with understanding your own institutional unit's context rather than trying to replicate another institution unit's approach. Institutional units made the greatest progress when they took time to understand where they were, recognized existing strengths, acknowledged current challenges, and identified meaningful next steps that fit their context. Throughout TAE, Adaptive Change Specialists (ACSs) helped institutions make sense of their unique environments rather than prescribing solutions. They encouraged teams to ask, "What is possible here, right now?" instead of "What should we be doing?" This adaptive approach helped institutions continue moving forward even as leadership changed, priorities shifted, and unexpected challenges emerged.

Meeting your institutional unit where it is does not mean lowering expectations of what is possible to change. It means building from a realistic understanding of your current conditions so that change can be meaningful, achievable, and sustained over time.



Reflection Questions

- What strengths, relationships, or existing equity efforts can we build upon? Who has already been leading this work, and how can we build on rather than duplicate their efforts?
- What recent institutional, institutional unit, national, and/or regional events, leadership changes, and/or institutional realities are shaping this work?
- How have students, staff, faculty, and community partners experienced previous equity initiatives?
- What opportunities currently exist that could help move this work forward?
- What challenges or barriers should we anticipate?
- If we were successful one year from now, what would meaningful progress look like in our context?

1 Meet Your Institutional Unit Where It Is and Build Forward

Pause and Confirm

- We have a shared understanding of our institution's current context.
- We have an understanding of what institutional unit we are looking to transform.
- We have identified existing strengths and relationships to build upon.
- We understand the opportunities, priorities, challenges, and pressures influencing this work - both internal and external to our institutional unit.
- We are starting to discuss a shared vision of what meaningful progress could look like in our institution or institutional unit.

Practices to Try

- Conduct listening sessions with students, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, and community partners to better understand your institution's current context.
- Map existing equity initiatives, committees, partnerships, and resources before creating something new.
- Identify existing relationships that can serve as a foundation for your work.
- Discuss your institutional unit's readiness for change and identify realistic next steps rather than ideal end states.
- Revisit your shared understanding of your institutional units context regularly, recognizing that priorities, leadership, and conditions will continue to change.
- Celebrate progress that reflects movement from your institution's starting point rather than comparing your work to another institution's journey.

Common Tensions to Navigate

- Assuming every institutional unit should follow the same pathway toward equity.
- Comparing your progress to institutions with different histories, resources, or political contexts.
- Feeling de-motivated by challenges or pushback instead of inspired to navigate the barrier.
- Launching new initiatives without understanding existing efforts or relationships.
- Viewing adaptation as a sign that the work is off track rather than a natural part of leading change and a measure of progress/success.
- Waiting for perfect conditions before taking the next meaningful step.

2 Principle 2: Invest Time in Relationships That Make Change Possible

Why This Principle Matters

Principle 2 aims to build **relational capacity**. Principle 2 aims to build relational capacity. Policies, programs, and strategic plans are important, but lasting change depends on the quality of the relationships that support them. Trust, belonging, vulnerability, and authentic connection create the conditions for honest conversations, shared learning, and collective action.

Throughout the TAE initiative, relationships were not treated as a preliminary step before implementation. They were intentionally cultivated as the foundation for change. For example, each grantee institution identified a guiding team of individuals who would move the work forward. Additionally, guiding teams also found that building relationships among students, faculty, staff, leaders, and community partners helped sustain momentum during periods of transition and change.

Building relationships requires time, intention, and consistency. It means creating opportunities for people to authentically connect, listen before offering solutions, and recognize that trust develops over time and from shared experiences. While relationship-building is not easily measurable in the day-to-day, TAE demonstrated that it is one of the strongest predictors of whether equity-centered institutional change can be sustained over time. Without a dedicated team with a strong foundation, challenges seem more daunting and abandoning efforts sometimes feels like the only option.



Reflection Questions

- Who are the people and groups whose trust is essential for this work to succeed?
- What relationships already exist that we can strengthen?
- Where are there opportunities to build new relationships across roles, departments, or communities?
- Do people feel safe sharing concerns, uncertainty, or disagreement within our team? If no, what would it take to build this level of trust and safety?
- How are we creating opportunities for connection beyond meetings and project tasks?
- Are our relationships transactional, or are we building long-term partnerships grounded in trust and mutual respect?
- How are we intentionally creating a sense of belonging for everyone involved in this work?

2 Invest Time in Relationships That Make Change Possible

Pause and Confirm

- We have invested time in building trust before asking people to engage in change efforts.
- People feel comfortable raising concerns, asking questions, and sharing different perspectives.
- We are intentionally building relationships across different roles and levels of the institution.
- Our meeting time includes opportunities for casual connection, celebration, and shared learning.
- We recognize relationship-building as an essential part of advancing equity, not something separate from the work.

Practices to Try

- Schedule dedicated time for relationship-building before moving into planning or implementation.
- Begin meetings with personal check-ins or reflection prompts that encourage authentic connection.
- Create opportunities for people to share their experiences, perspectives, and aspirations for the work.
- Build recurring opportunities for informal connection, celebration, and joy alongside formal project activities.
- Practice active listening by asking questions before offering solutions.
- Follow through on commitments consistently to strengthen trust over time.
- Recognize and celebrate contributions from individuals across all roles within the institution.

Common Tensions to Navigate

- Moving too quickly into action before trust has been established within the guiding team.
- Treating relationships as a means to accomplish a project rather than as a long-term investment.
- Assuming trust exists because people are participating in meetings.
- Prioritizing efficiency over opportunities for connection and reflection.
- Overlooking joy, celebration, and relationship-building because they seem less "productive" than task completion.
- Expecting vulnerability from others without first creating psychological safety.

3 Principle 3: Create a Shared Purpose and Embrace Flexibility

Why This Principle Matters

Principle 3 aims to build **adaptive capacity.** Institutional unit change rarely unfolds exactly as planned and teams will need to be flexible to shifting conditions like Leadership changes, funding shifts, political climates evolve, new opportunities emerge, and unexpected challenges require teams to reconsider their original plans. Equity-centered institutional change depends on a guiding team's ability to respond thoughtfully to changing conditions, all while remaining clear and focused on in its bigger purpose.

Throughout the TAE initiative, guiding teams needed to adapt their approaches, who their target audience was, and the programs they were leading as they learned more or circumstances changed. This flexibility allowed teams to pursue opportunities they had not anticipated and respond to challenges without viewing these adjustments as failures. At the same time, TAE demonstrated that flexibility works best when people have a shared understanding or 'north star' of what they are working towards. Rather than relying on rigid work plans or predetermined outcomes, the shared understanding included discussions on definitions (e.g., institutional equity, shared leadership), developing shared language, and envisioning what would look or feel different when change occurred. In this way, flexibility was not the absence of accountability, but rather it was an expression of continuous learning and anticipated the need to adapt programs or logistics over time as conditions changed.



Reflection Questions

- What is the shared purpose that guides our work, even when our strategies need to change?
- How can we support each other driving the work forward and still be mindful of the emotional weight of this work?
- How will we create opportunities to pause as a team before making changes?
- How comfortable is every individual with revising plans when new information or circumstances emerge?
- How do we communicate changes so that everyone understands why they are happening?
- What assumptions about planning, budgeting, or success might we have and potentially need to reconsider?
- How will we maintain accountability while allowing room for learning and adaptation?

3 Create a Shared Purpose and Embrace Flexibility

Pause and Confirm

- Our guiding team has a shared understanding of the purpose and goals of this work.
- We regularly reflect, in a group and as individuals, on what we are learning and use those insights to inform our next steps.
- We view adaptation as part of the process rather than a sign that we are off track.
- Changes to our plans are communicated openly and connected back to our shared purpose.
- We have created a culture where learning and accountability reinforce one another.
- We are discussing or feel confident about how we can communicate our shared purpose and goals with a wider audience.

Practices to Try

- Begin planning conversations by revisiting your shared purpose before discussing activities or timelines.
- Build regular reflection points into your work to assess what is changing and whether your approach still fits your context.
- Document important adaptations and the learning that informed them.
- Create opportunities for your team to discuss uncertainty openly rather than feeling pressure to have all the answers.
- Revisit budgets, timelines, and implementation strategies as living tools that can evolve alongside the work.
- Celebrate thoughtful adaptations as evidence of learning rather than departures from the original plan.
- Regularly communicate how changes continue to advance your long-term goals.

Common Tensions to Navigate

- Balancing consistency and clarity with the need to adapt.
- Knowing when to stay the course and when changing circumstances call for a different approach.
- Maintaining momentum while allowing space for reflection, learning, and life.
- Responding to external pressures without losing sight of your shared purpose.
- Helping people become comfortable with uncertainty or discomfort while still providing enough structure to support the work.
- Distinguishing between adapting thoughtfully and continually changing direction or disruption without intention.

4 Principle 4: Share Leadership and Garner Broad Support

Why This Principle Matters

Principle 4 aims to build **shared ownership**. No single person, office, or department can transform an institution alone. Equity-centered, adaptive institutional change is strengthened by people with different roles, lived experiences, perspectives, and levels of influence engaging and shaping priorities, together. Collaborating with students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and community partners creates opportunities for richer conversations, better decision-making, and stronger shared ownership.

Throughout the TAE initiative, institutions demonstrated that sharing leadership was not about removing hierarchy or expecting everyone to have the same decision-making authority. Instead, it meant intentionally creating meaningful opportunities for people to contribute their expertise, influence decisions, and shape the direction of the work. Guiding teams became important spaces where participants with different forms of knowledge and institutional influence learned from one another and worked toward shared goals. Institutions also recognized that engaging leadership remained essential. Sustainable change required keeping institutional leaders informed, understanding the realities they were navigating, and creating opportunities for them to champion equity efforts.

Sharing leadership also requires recognizing different forms of expertise and lived experience: students are navigating the structure, supports, and culture; Staff understand organizational systems and day-to-day operations; faculty contribute disciplinary expertise; and community partners offer external perspectives and relationships. When these voices meaningfully inform direction and decisions, guiding teams are better positioned to create change that is both responsive and sustainable.



Reflection Questions

- Who is actively engaged and helping to shape decisions?
- Whose perspectives or lived experiences are missing from the conversation?
- If and how are students, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, and community partners meaningfully involved?
- Do participants understand how they can influence decisions?
- Where does formal decision-making authority reside, and how are leaders being engaged throughout the process?
- Are people being asked to lead without the authority, resources, or support they need to succeed?
- How are we recognizing and valuing different forms of expertise beyond formal titles or positions?

4 Share Leadership and Garner Broad Support

Pause and Confirm

- We are actively working to engage people with diverse roles, perspectives, community ties, and lived experience in our efforts to make change.
- Students, staff, and community partners have meaningful opportunities to shape decisions.
- Institutional leaders are engaged and understand the purpose and progress of the work.
- We recognize lived experience and community knowledge as valuable expertise.

Practices to Try

- Intentionally engage people with different roles, identities, experiences, and levels of institutional influence.
- Invite students and community members as collaborators to identify priorities, design initiatives, and evaluate progress - not just to provide feedback after decisions have been made.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes so everyone understands how they contribute to a shared purpose.
- Create opportunities for institutional leaders to learn about the work, ask questions, and help remove barriers.
- Compensate students and community partners, whenever possible, in recognition of their time, expertise, and contributions.
- Revisit who is represented at the table over time and intentionally bring in new voices as the work evolves.

Common Tensions to Navigate

- Balancing broad participation and shared input with timely decision-making.
- Seeing equal value and learning opportunity by engaging those with varying power: institutional leaders, students, staff, faculty, and community partners.
- Avoiding tokenism by ensuring participants have meaningful opportunities to contribute.
- Asking individuals with less institutional power to lead change without providing adequate support, authority, or resources.
- Assuming that simply having diverse representation at the table automatically leads to shared ownership or equitable decision-making.

5 Principle 5: Create Structures That Support Learning and Adaptation

Why This Principle Matters

Principle 5 aims to build **endurance and learning capacity.** Equity-centered institutional change depends on more than committed individuals. It requires creating intentional spaces where people can learn together, reflect on what they are experiencing, make sense of complexity, and adapt as new challenges and opportunities emerge. Additionally, structures can represent community agreements and role clarity for the guiding team members and beyond.

A significant lesson from the TAE initiative was that change does not happen because people simply 'work hard'. The guiding teams created practical structures like regular meetings, community agreements, and even annual climate surveys. Across TAE, guiding teams, Adaptive Change Specialists (ACSs), peer learning opportunities, site visits, and shared frameworks gave guiding team members and participants opportunities to make sense of what they were learning and adjust their approach to the work. These structures were not designed to ensure compliance or simply monitor progress. Instead, they strengthened the capacity of individuals and teams to learn together, respond to complexity, and move their equity work forward with greater confidence and intentionality.

Structures will also need to change as conditions evolve: institutional priorities or budgets shift, a new challenge or conflict emerges, people transition to different jobs or roles, or simply it is finals week or summer break. The guiding team should reevaluate the current structures and logistics. The goal is not to design perfect structures that never change, but to build the scaffolding for keeping your work moving forward and be open to re-evaluating structures.



Reflection Questions

- What structures currently support collaboration, reflection, relationships, and shared decision-making?
- How do new ideas, lessons learned, or community feedback influence future decisions?
- When challenges arise, do we have opportunities to collectively make sense of what is happening before deciding how to respond?
- What process do we want follow or who do we want to engage with to help facilitate adaptation or conflict transformation?
- If and how are we integrating learning from peers, partners, or other institutions that are doing similar work?
- Which existing meetings or communications are spaces for problem solving, celebrating wins, or deepening relationships?

5 Create Structures That Support Learning and Adaptation

Pause and Confirm

- Our guiding team has regular opportunities to reflect on what we are learning, problem solve challenges together and find moments of joy.
- We intentionally create processes and practices to adapt our approach or implementation as our context changes.
- Our community agreements and roles are understood by all guiding team members and in the face of transitions or conflict, we have considered what should be a next step.
- We are actively seeking out information from external sources and bringing in ideas to the guiding team to discuss, idea generate, learn together, and apply to our context.
- Our structures support communication, collaboration, and coordination.

Practices to Try

- Create recurring opportunities for your team to reflect on what is working and what is not.
- Check in (at least) bi-annually about meeting structure, meeting times, and individual roles to see if they are still working or need to shift.
- Identify trusted facilitators, coaches, or thought partners who can help your team ask better questions rather than provide all the answers.
- Participate in communities of practice or peer learning networks to exchange ideas, challenges, and promising practices.
- Build time into meetings for reflection and sensemaking, not just status updates and task management.
- Encourage experimentation by viewing new ideas as opportunities to learn rather than initiatives that must immediately succeed.

Common Tensions to Navigate

- Trying to quickly move to action before trust has been established within the guiding team or the structures to support ongoing work.
- Treating relationships as a means to accomplish a project rather than as a long-term investment.
- Assuming trust exists because people show up to meetings or conflict will resolve on its own.
- Prioritizing efficiency over opportunities for connection and reflection.
- Overlooking joy, celebration, and relationship-building because they seem less "productive" than task completion.
- Expecting vulnerability from others without first creating psychological safety.

6 Principle 6: Redefine What Progress Means

Why This Principle Matters

Principle 6 aims to build **reflective capacity.** Institutional unit transformation rarely happens all at once. Before policies change, strategic plans are revised, or new initiatives become embedded; something else begins to shift.

Throughout the TAE initiative, grantee institutions demonstrated that these early shifts were meaningful indicators of change and systemic or cultural shifts. Teams built stronger relationships, created new opportunities for student leadership, developed shared language around equity, strengthened institutional readiness, and expanded leadership commitment long before many of their larger institutional goals were realized. Recognizing these developmental changes helped institutions maintain momentum and acknowledge the important work happening beneath the surface of organizational change. Although even these forms of progress ebbed and flowed – progress is never a straight line.

When guiding teams recognize only large accomplishments or completed initiatives, they risk overlooking the progress that makes long-term transformation possible. Paying attention to learning, relationships, trust, and growing capacity helps teams understand how change unfolds over time and reminds them that meaningful progress often begins long before the most visible outcomes appear.



Reflection Questions

- How do we currently define success in this work?
- What changes are happening beneath the surface that deserve our attention?
- How have relationships, trust, or collaboration changed since this work began?
- In what ways are students, faculty, staff, or community partners engaging differently than they were before?
- How has our institution's readiness or capacity for equity-centered change grown?
- What have we learned that is changing how we think about the work?
- Are we celebrating only major accomplishments, or are we also recognizing the smaller shifts that make larger changes possible?

6 Redefine What Progress Means

Pause and Confirm

- We recognize learning, trust, and relationship-building as meaningful forms of progress.
- We create opportunities to reflect on what has changed—not just what has been completed.
- We acknowledge growth in leadership engagement, shared understanding, and institutional readiness.
- We celebrate incremental progress that builds the foundation for systemic change.
- Our definition of success reflects both outcomes and the conditions that make those outcomes possible.

Practices to Try

- Regularly pause to ask, What has changed since we began this work?
- Document examples of growing trust, collaboration, leadership engagement, or institutional readiness alongside traditional project milestones.
- Invite students, faculty, staff, and community partners to reflect on changes they are experiencing—not just the activities they have participated in.
- Celebrate developmental milestones, such as new relationships, stronger partnerships, or increased participation, as important achievements.
- Build reflection into meetings so your team can identify emerging changes that may otherwise go unnoticed.
- Revisit your goals periodically and discuss whether your understanding of success has evolved.
- Share stories that illustrate how smaller changes are contributing to broader institutional transformation.

Common Tensions to Navigate

- Valuing both long-term cultural change while responding to expectations for short-term outcomes.
- Recognizing important shifts that are difficult to quantify or measure.
- Getting lost in the heaviness of the work and feeling like change will never happen.
- Remaining patient with the pace of institutional change while continuing to create momentum.
- Helping others see the significance of changes that may not yet be visible through traditional metrics.

7 Principle 7: Institutionalize What Matters

Why This Principle Matters

Principle 7 aims to build **institutional capacity.** Equity-centered institutional unit change becomes sustainable when it is no longer dependent on a single grant, champion, committee, or moment in time. While new initiatives can spark change, lasting transformation happens when equity becomes part of how an institution makes decisions, allocates resources, develops leaders, engages students, and defines success.

Throughout the TAE initiative, grantee institutions worked to move beyond stand-alone projects by embedding equity into university-wide strategic plans, leadership structures, mentoring programs, student experiences, partnerships, and everyday institutional practices. Rather than asking whether a program would continue after funding ended, many institutions began asking a different question: How can this become part of the way our institution operates? This shift represented an important transition from implementing individual activities to strengthening the systems and structures that would allow equity work to continue over time.

Institutionalizing equity does not mean the work is finished at some magic moment because the people within institutions will continue to learn, experience challenges, and respond to changing needs or pressures. Instead, institutionalization can be seen as creating systems that make equity part of everyday decision-making so that progress is less dependent on individual champions and more deeply woven into the fabric of the institution.



Reflection Questions

- Which aspects of our work are becoming embedded in how our institutional unit operates?
- If key leaders, guiding team members, or champions left tomorrow, how would we come together or engage to keep it going?
- How are equity priorities reflected in our strategic plans, budgets, policies, and decision-making processes?
- Where have we moved beyond one-time initiatives toward ongoing institutional practices?
- How are students, faculty, staff, and community partners continuing to influence institutional decisions?
- What systems or structures still rely too heavily on individual commitment?
- How are we building the next generation of leaders who will continue this work?

7 Institutionalize What Matters

Pause and Confirm

- Equity priorities are reflected in institutional planning and decision-making.
- Responsibility for this work is shared across multiple people and roles.
- Our institution has committed resources to sustain this work over time.
- We have created structures that will continue beyond individual leaders or funding opportunities.
- We regularly use feedback from students, faculty, staff, and community partners to guide ongoing improvement.

Practices to Try

- Align equity initiatives with your institution's strategic priorities, planning processes, and decision-making structures.
- Identify opportunities to embed successful initiatives into existing institutional practices rather than creating parallel systems.
- Secure dedicated staff time, funding, or leadership responsibility to support long-term implementation.
- Build succession planning into your work by developing leadership across multiple roles and career stages.
- Use data, stories, and community feedback to inform ongoing institutional decisions.
- Revisit institutional policies, procedures, and routines to identify opportunities to better reflect your equity commitments.
- Regularly ask, What would it take for this work to continue if we were no longer leading it?

Common Tensions to Navigate

- Working to embed equity into traditionally inequitable systems.
- Being innovative while working to establish stable institutional practices.
- Understanding that equity work and community engagement takes a significant amount of time, compromise, commitment, and flexibility.
- Expanding responsibility across the institution and knowing everyone shares a different level of commitment or understanding.
- Understanding that institutionalization is an ongoing process.