



# **REJI Institutional Equity-minded Indicators (IEIs)**

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## **Introduction**

Higher education has a long history of failing to support Students of Color as well as students from a range of other vulnerable groups (Bensimon, 2020; Bensimon & Malcom; Dowd & Bensimon, 2015). Recognizing this, Dr. Estela Bensimon created the theory and practice of equity-mindedness intended to aid higher education in identifying and closing racialized and other disparate outcomes and supporting the success of all students (Bensimon, 2024; Dowd & Bensimon, 2015; Mc Nair, et al., 2020 ). Equity-minded practice is characterized by five synergistic practices including: 1) being evidence-based; 2) recognizing the ways in which systemic racism and other oppressions negatively impact the success of many of our students; 3) assuming personal, departmental and institutional responsibility for disparate outcomes instead of blaming students for inequities; 4) examining higher education’s policies, practices and pedagogies for the ways in which racism has been routinized into how we do our work; 5) setting, implementing and assessing our ability to advance measurable goals intended to close racialized and other disparate outcomes and support the success of all students (McNair, et al. 2020).

### **REJI Institutional Equity-minded Indicators (IEIs)**

The work of individual equity-minded practitioners is essential to advancing racial equity in order to redress the long-standing systemic racial inequities that have become routinized in higher education. However, to transform our institutions, this work must be campus-wide and guided by a common set of equity indicators (Center for Urban Education, ND; Gentlewarrior, Gonell, Paredes, Shama, 2024; Kezar & Holcombe, 2024; Liera & Desir, 2023).

## **The Theory of Change for the REJI TEAM Project**

A central tenet of equity-mindedness (Bensimon, 2020; 2024; McNair et al., 2020) is that when enough individuals engage in equity-advancing work, and establish institutional structures that support racial equity efforts, the organizational culture will slowly shift from being race-neutral, which has long disadvantaged Students of Color, to being equity-minded, which leads to the success of all students through race conscious efforts. “As more leaders grow to be equity-minded and learn to work collectively, the force of change toward equity increases, which drives organizational transformation” (Kezar & Holcombe, 2024, p. 29).

This project emphasizes racial equity due to higher education’s long history of racialized disparate student outcomes and with the knowledge that institutional transformation efforts that support the success of Students of Color will support students from a range of other identities as well. Equity-minded practice supports the success of all students.

The Institutional Equity-minded Indicators (IEIs) delineated in this document are meant to offer practical ways that all campuses can demonstrate their progress toward equity-mindedness.

The IEIs have been constructed in a manner broad enough to honor the diversity of institutional types, legislative contexts, and other institution-specific factors that influence our daily work with students.

For this reason, many of the indicators ask for evidence of equity-minded institutional change in that area rather than providing specific definitions of what that evidence must be.

### *Background*

The term **Institutional Equity-minded Indicators** (IEIs) was chosen for use in this project instead of the more commonly used term of key performance indicators (KPIs) for the following reasons:

1. Dr. Estela Bensimon and the Center for Urban Education’s early work in this area discussed equity-minded indicators; as we are deeply informed by this work, building on their term seemed appropriate.
2. KPIs are typically quantifiable indicators; as some of our indicators are more process-oriented in nature we did not use the term.

For more information regarding the Institutional Equity-minded Indicators or other resources from the REJI contact [info@reji-bsu.org](mailto:info@reji-bsu.org), 508.531.1429

## **REJI Equity-minded Institutional Certification**

As campuses and organizations continue their racial equity efforts, they will set and advance measurable racial equity goals. The IEs will aid this effort. When doing so, campuses should align these goals with their mission and view of educational excellence for all students and measure the attainment of the goals by race and ethnicity as well as by any other student groups experiencing disparate outcomes.

Parity on the goals is defined as no more than a three-percentage point difference in goal attainment between students experiencing disparate outcomes and the institution's goal in that area (Center for Urban Education, 2020).

Campuses will soon have the opportunity to apply for the ***REJI Equity-minded Institutional Certification***. This first in the nation certification in the institutional practice of equity-mindedness will signal to students, their families, accreditors, and funders that campuses and organizations who receive the certification are leading for racial equity in higher education.

*Institutional equity-minded indicators provide evidence of progress toward the campus-wide practice of equity-mindedness.* Institutions engaged in campus-wide equity-minded practice will provide evidence of progress in equity-minded transformation in the following broad areas of equity-mindedness:

- 1. Data and Inquiry Practices Utilized to Guide Decision-Making**
- 2. Goal Setting and Implementation**
- 3. Admissions Practices**
- 4. Teaching and Learning**
- 5. Student Support Strategies**
- 6. Strategic Resource Development and Allocation**
- 7. Providing an Affordable Education**
- 8. Human Resources Practices**
- 9. Equity-minded Communication Strategies**

# REJI Institutional Equity-minded Indicators

## Equity-minded Data and Inquiry Practices Utilized to Guide Decision-Making

### Goal

Equity-minded institutions routinize the use of quantitative **and** qualitative data that are disaggregated first by race and ethnicity and then by other groups experiencing disparate outcomes; inquiry practices are regularly engaged in by campus members to determine how to utilize this data to advance institution-focused change intended to advance equity.

### Evidence

Provide evidence of how equity-mindedness is being advanced through the use of disaggregated data use and inquiry practices by describing campus activity and progress in at least **two** of the following indicators:

#### Disaggregating Data

Disaggregate data by race and ethnicity for key student success metrics including but not limited to:

- passing gateway courses at first attempt,
- on-time-credit accumulation,
- retention, persistence,
- graduation/completion.

Continue to disaggregate this race and ethnicity data with attention to other social identities of Students of Color (Pell eligibility, first-generation status, LGBTQIA+ identity, linguistic abilities, gender, full and part-time status, disability status, veterans/military connected students, caregiver status, etc.) for key student success metrics.

## **Disaggregated Data Informs Decisions**

Disaggregated race and ethnicity student outcome data shared with major campus constituencies and used to inform key campus decisions. This includes:

- Disaggregated race and ethnicity student outcomes data discussed on at least an annual basis by presidents, campus leadership teams, trustees, academic department chairs and used to inform campus decisions.
- Equity-minded data are utilized as part of academic and administrative program review.

## **Professional Development**

Participation in professional learning and development on equity-minded data use and inquiry processes are engaged in by an increasing percentage of faculty, librarians, staff, administrators, and trustees year over year.

## Equity-minded Goal Setting and Implementation

### Goal

Equity-minded institutions set institutional transparent, ambitious and measurable goals intended to eliminate institutional racialized performance gaps.

### Evidence

Provide evidence of how equity-mindedness is being advanced through equity-minded goal setting and implementation by describing campus activity and progress in at least **five** of the following indicators:

#### **Institutional Strategic Plan**

Measurable racial equity goals are included in the institutional strategic plan.

- Multiple constituencies inform racial equity goals with special emphasis on informing the goals with the assets, lived experiences, cultural wealth, and needs of Students, Faculty, Librarians, and Staff of Color.

#### **Institutional and/or State Policies**

Development and/or implementation of institutional and/or state policies intended to mitigate the impact of inequitable prohibitions/legislation focused on curtailing racial equity work in higher education.

#### **Equity-minded Trustee Leadership**

The Board of Trustees has a formal structure and/or process focused on racial equity that is established to aid the campus in ensuring that racial equity goal setting, implementation and progress are institutional priorities.

## **Annual Reporting**

An annual report on measurable campus-wide racial equity goals is completed and disseminated to multiple campus constituencies. Information in the report includes progress made and obstacles identified in advancing the goals.

## **Measurable Racial Equity Goals**

Senior leadership including trustees, the president, cabinet members, and academic deans are required to set and advance measurable racial equity goals aligned with the institutional strategic plan. Information on the progress made on these goals is included in the institution's annual racial equity report shared with the campus.

## **Campus Climate Survey**

A campus climate survey is conducted no less than every three years and data is widely disseminated and utilized to inform racially equitable action planning and implementation. (Strategies to assess campus climate can include but are not limited to climate surveys, focus groups, etc.)

- Use campus climate results when setting campus-wide racial equity goals.
- Include progress on these goals in annual racial equity report.

## **Annual Auditing**

At least 10% of institutional policies and practices are audited and refined from a framework of equity-mindedness on an annual basis.

## Equity-minded Admissions Practices

### Goal

Equity-minded institutions engage in admissions practices intended to provide equitable and accessible matriculation to our campuses.

### Evidence

Provide evidence of how equity-mindedness is being advanced through equity-minded admissions practices by describing campus activity and progress in at least **four** of the following indicators:

#### **Multilingual Admissions Material**

Admissions information is available in both written and verbal form in multiple languages.

#### **Diverse Pipeline Partnerships**

Prioritize the development of enrollment partnerships and pipelines in K-12 school systems and communications that are diverse along multiple domains.

#### **Admissions Data Shared Annually**

Disaggregated race and ethnicity data are shared annually with senior leaders on admissions applications, acceptance, and yield tying this information to the institution's enrollment goals.

#### **Data Shared on Service Area**

Disaggregated race and ethnicity admissions data are shared annually with senior leaders and compared to the race and ethnicity of the institution's service area.

## **Enrollment Plans**

Enrollment plans are shared in an ongoing manner with senior leaders linking equity-minded admissions practices with equity-minded retention, persistence and graduation strategies helping to ensure that once admitted students are supported in succeeding.

## Equity-minded Teaching and Learning

### Goal

Equity-minded institutions utilize teaching and learning strategies intended to advance racially equitable student belonging, learning, and outcomes.

### Evidence

Provide evidence of how equity-mindedness is being advanced through equity-minded teaching and learning by describing campus activity and progress in at least **four** of the following indicators:

#### **Parity in Student Outcomes**

Institutional levels of excellence are established for all students and progress is demonstrated toward parity for Students of Color and for those from other vulnerable groups in outcomes including:

- student retention, persistence, graduation/completion;
- on-time credit accumulation;
- course-level success;
- participation and student success benefit derived from the institution's high impact practices;
- skills needed to succeed in our diverse and global world;
- civic engagement in the democratic process through the application of anti-racist and justice-oriented practices.

#### **Faculty Care**

Data shows that Students of Color report faculty care for them as people and students.

## **Academic Belonging**

Data demonstrates that Students of Color report a sense of academic and general belonging and/or empowerment.

## **Program Review**

Measurable program-level racial equity academic outcomes are assessed in program review and plans for measurable action created and implemented based on review.

## Equity-minded Student Support Strategies

### Goal

Equity-minded institutions utilize student success and support strategies intended to advance racially equitable student belonging, co-curricular learning and equitable outcomes.

### Evidence

Provide evidence of how equity-mindedness is being advanced through equity-minded student support strategies by describing campus activity and progress in at least **eight** of the following indicators:

#### **Rates of Parity in Student Success Programs**

Disaggregated race and ethnicity data demonstrate progress towards parity in rates of participation and student success benefit derived from student success/student support programs.

#### **Disaggregated Data & Student Physical and Mental Health**

Disaggregated race and ethnicity data demonstrate parity in students' mental and physical health indicators.

#### **Respect for Students' and Families' Cultures**

Campuses demonstrate respect for and appreciation of racially and ethnically diverse students' and their families' cultural wealth.

#### **Student Services Practitioners Care**

Data shows that Students of Color report Student Services Practitioners care for them as people and students.

## **Campus Belonging**

Data demonstrates that Students of Color report a sense of general belonging and/or empowerment in non-academic spaces.

## **Policing Practices**

Racially just and community policing practices are utilized as demonstrated by data and policies.

## **Students' Identities Visible**

Students' diverse and intersectional identities are reflected in campus art, food choices available to students, outside speakers hosted by campus, etc.

## **Student Conduct**

Disaggregated race and ethnicity data demonstrate parity in student conduct referrals and dispositions.

## **Programming to Support Student Belonging**

Ongoing programming is offered to support Students of Color in their diverse and intersectional identities.

## **Institutionalized Structures Designed for Students**

Students of Color are provided welcoming and accessible means to share about their campus-based experiences of racial inequity and receive support and redress beyond legally mandated Equal Opportunity reporting.

## **Student Leadership Opportunities**

Disaggregated race and ethnicity data indicate parity in involvement in student leadership opportunities on campus.

# Equity-minded Strategic Resource Development and Allocation

## Goal

Equity-minded campuses prioritize a range of resources to advance the work for racial equity.

## Evidence

Provide evidence of how equity-mindedness is being advanced through the use of equity-minded resource allocation by describing campus activity and progress in at least **two** of the following indicators:

### **Allocate Resources**

Allocate resources for budgetary, space, personnel and other resources needed to support the success of Students of Color on campus that are explicitly aligned with the campus' racial equity goals.

### **ROI**

The return on investment of racial equity efforts on campus are prioritized to help scale racial equity efforts at the institution.

*(For example, the retention/persistence/graduation rates of students participating in programs designed to support their success are compared with similar students that have not done so; this differential in outcomes is monetized. A proportion of the funds secured due to equity efforts are used to scale effective equity interventions.)*

## **Fundraising**

Commitment to raising funds for racial equity is demonstrated by applying for and securing funds from grants, private philanthropy, and foundations.

## **Institutional Budgets**

Percentage of institutional budget relative to the overall institutional budget spent to advance institutional strategic racial equity goals increases year over year.

# Equity-minded Strategies Utilized to Provide an Affordable Education

## Goal

Equity-minded institutions engage in strategies to help address the racialization of poverty experienced by many Students of Color

## Evidence

Provide evidence of how equity-mindedness is being advanced through strategies intended to provide an affordable education by describing campus activity and progress in at least **five** of the following indicators.

### **Tuition & Fees**

Campus' tuition and fees are available free or at discounted rate to students with costs assumed by the institution and/or state.

### **Gateway Cities**

Undertake outreach to Gateway Cities (communities with high populations of racially and ethnically diverse people) to provide assistance focused on completing the FAFSA.

### **FAFSA Completion Rate and Scholarship Data**

Disaggregated data is provided annually about FAFSA completion rates and scholarship recipients.

### **Finish Line Grants**

Finish line grants are available to students to aid in paying outstanding tuition and fee bills preventing them from registering.

### **Student Stipends**

Stipends are provided to low-income students for participation in key student success programs.

### **Merit-based Aid**

The institution takes an equity-based approach to the allocation of merit-based aid.

### **Emergency Aid & Resources**

An equity-minded approach is utilized when providing emergency aid, basic needs resources, textbook assistance, etc.

### **Fundraising & Advancement**

Advancement and grant functions of the institution raise external funds to help support the racial equity goal attainment of the campus.

### **Social Mobility**

Progress is demonstrated toward racial and ethnic parity in social mobility of recent alumni.

## Equity-minded Human Resources Practices

### Goal

Equity-minded institutions embed racial equity tenets and practices across the entire employee experience.

### Evidence

Provide evidence of how equity-mindedness is being advanced through human resource practices by describing campus activity and progress in the following hiring practices and employee experience and support practices:

#### Equity-minded Hiring Practices

Provide evidence of how equity-mindedness is being advanced through human resource practices by describing campus activity and progress in at least **five** of the following hiring indicators.

- As part of the hiring process, job descriptions are developed that include role-specific ways that positions will advance the campus' racial equity goals.
- As part of the hiring process, proactive recruitment strategies are utilized intended to attract diverse candidate pools.
- Equity-minded hiring training is required of members of search committees that includes equity-minded practices focused on applicant review and interviewing strategies.
- Equity advisors are employed on hiring committees to help ensure that equity-minded processes are considered and utilized.
- Role-specific questions ascertaining the ability of candidates to perform their work in an equity-minded, racially equitable manner required in all searches.

- Cluster hiring practices are utilized to attract a critical mass of new hires with equity-minded competencies in areas needed to advance institutional racial equity goals.
- Feedback is utilized from candidates to enhance equity-minded hiring processes.
- Data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and other identities in support of institutional strategic goals are analyzed by department, division/college, and institutionally and provided to senior leaders and trustees on annual basis regarding applicant pools and hiring decisions.

### **Equity-minded Employee Experience and Support Practices**

Provide evidence of how equity-mindedness is being advanced through equity-minded human resources practices by describing campus activity and progress in at least **three** of the following employee experience and support indicators.

- Role-specific equity-minded competencies are integrated into existing job descriptions. Strategies to utilize in this area could include:
  - Equity-minded competencies are included in president, cabinet, dean and other senior job descriptions and are used to evaluate existing leaders on an annual basis.
  - The proportion of staff job descriptions that include role-specific equity-minded competencies increase at least 10% every two years.
- Equity-minded role-specific work is recognized and rewarded on an annual basis by the institution (i.e. included in faculty portfolio evaluation process, awards and recognition given for equity-minded work, etc.).

- Mentoring and support resources are available and proactively offered to faculty, staff and administrators focused on equity-minded competency development and action.
- Professional learning and development on equity-minded role-specific competencies are participated in by an increasing percentage of faculty, librarians, staff, administrators and trustees year over year. Examples could include the inclusion of role-specific racial equity training in employee onboarding, all-college meetings, divisional meetings.
- Data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, and other identities are provided to senior leaders and trustees on annual basis regarding reappointment, promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review for faculty, and promotion for staff and administrators.

## Equity-minded Communication Strategies

### Goal

Equity-minded institutions routinize campus messaging about their measurable commitment to racial equity.

### Evidence

Provide evidence of how equity-mindedness is being advanced through communication strategies by describing campus activity and progress in at least **five** of the following indicators.

#### **Institutional Messaging**

Provide evidence of the institutional commitment to racial equity in key institutional messaging including but not limited to:

- Mission Statement, vision and values statement, diversity statement
- Written and verbal communications from
  - President/Chancellor
  - Provost and/or Deans
  - Trustees
- Written and verbal communications to
  - students
  - alumni
- Written and verbal communication at divisional, college and departmental levels.

#### **Communication Review**

Website, social media and print material review and revitalization are conducted at least every two years to ensure content on racial equity reflects the institution's goals, values and commitments.

### **Accessible Language**

Institutional messaging is audited in an ongoing way to ensure the language used is accessible to all communities served by the institution.

### **Multiple Languages**

Institutional messaging is provided in multiple languages.

### **Communication Policy**

Institutional communication policy is created and implemented that informs equity-minded campus messaging.

### **Consistent Communications Reporting**

Regularly and transparently report on the campus' racial equity goals, progress and obstacles to the goals.

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## **REJI TEAM Advisory Members**

The Racial Equity and Justice Institute would like to acknowledge and thank the REJI members that served as equity practitioner advisors during the development of the IEIs. The work has been enriched by their thoughtful, committed, and expert counsel. In addition to these advisory members, the IEIs were reviewed and refined by approximately 200 members of the REJI.

**Amanda Colligan**, Executive Director of Institutional Research and Decision Support, Bridgewater State University

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