Catalyzing Equity and Inclusion: Provoking Institutional Transformation through the Application of a Social Justice Lens

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**Introduction**

Members of the ADVANCE community have been influential in developing effective and innovative strategies to diversify the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) workforce. Yet efforts to achieve systemic change can fall short if they do not also attend to aspects of socially just change and engage in activities necessary to achieve systemic change.

OREGON STATE ADVANCE aims to serve as a catalyst for advancing the practice and study of equity, inclusion, and justice for women and other historically underrepresented groups who are faculty in the academy. Through this goal we focus on STEM at three levels of influence within the academic system: personal, symbolic, and institutional.

Progression toward this goal is guided by three major objectives:

1. Recruitment and Promotion—Influence academic recruitment and promotion policies and practices to assure equitable, inclusive, and just outcomes.
2. Institutional Climate—Contribute to an academic workplace climate that reflects a shared value for equity, inclusion, and justice.
3. Awareness and Action—Provoke faculty and administrators’ personal awareness of difference, power, and discrimination in the academy and the actions that contribute to more equitable, inclusive, and just system.

**Theoretical Application**

Systems of oppression theory explains institutions, such as Oregon State University, as contextualized within larger intersecting systems of sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, and ageism that reproduce and maintain hierarchies based on gender, race, class, sexual identity, ability, etc. As depicted in Figure 1, systems are organized along three reciprocally influencing dimensions: the institutional, the symbolic, and the individual or personal (Hill Collins, 1993).

**OREGON STATE ADVANCE** activities work at one or more levels with the goal of disrupting systems of oppression by challenging the dominant paradigm, that is, changing the system to be equitable and just through transformative practices, participatory democracy, and civil societies.

**Models, Methods, and Measures of Equitable, Inclusive, and Just Institutional Transformation**

**OREGON STATE ADVANCE** program activities and objectives are evaluated using RE-AIM logic: Reach – Efficacy/Effectiveness – Adoption – Implementation – Maintenance.

**Components of Socially Just Transformation**

Application of a social justice lens (BCRT, 2010) with a focus on gender equity combined with an institutional readiness for change model (Figure 4) provides a guide for developing policy, planning innovative actions, and evaluating resources and practices. When examined through a justice lens, activities catalyzing institutional transformation are evaluated relative to increasing access, agency, advocacy, and solidarity actions among institutional members through the application of participatory democracy, transformative practices, societal civility and systems changes across all dimensions of change.

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**References**