

# 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 drive systemic change can fall short if they do not also attend to all aspects of socially just change and engage in activities necessary to achieve the central aim of equity.

**OREGON STATE ADVANCE** aims to serve as a catalyst for advancing the study and practice of equity, inclusion, and justice for women and others from 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 advancement.
- 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 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, etcetera.

As depicted in Figure 1, systems are organized along three reciprocally determined and inter-influential dimensional levels: the institutional, the symbolic, and the individual or personal (Hill Collins, 1993).

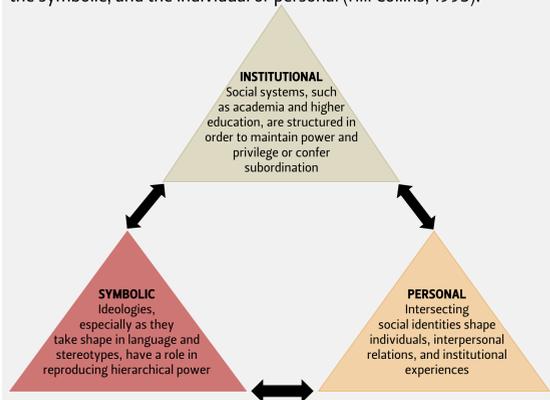
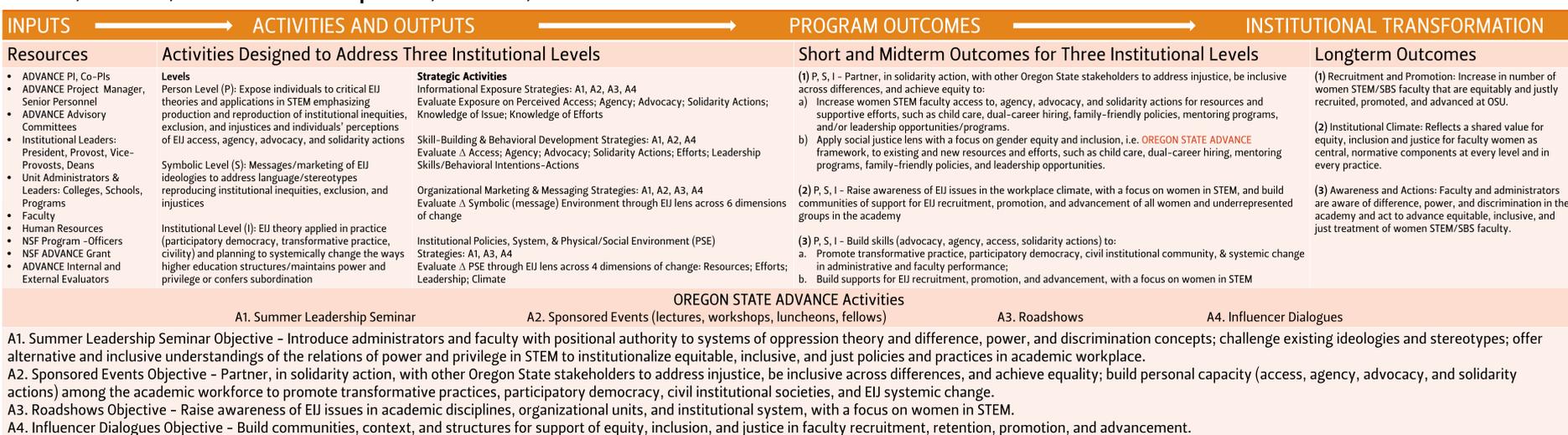


Figure 1: Dimensions of oppressive systems

**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 change 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

## People and Places Framework for Transformation

A social ecologically-grounded, People and Places Framework (Maibach et al., 2007) was adapted to illustrate and guide the organization of activities and outcome assessments that determine successful program implementation (Figure 2). The framework allows conceptualizing change, targeting strategies, and attributing outcomes to attributes of people and/or attributes of the institutional place.

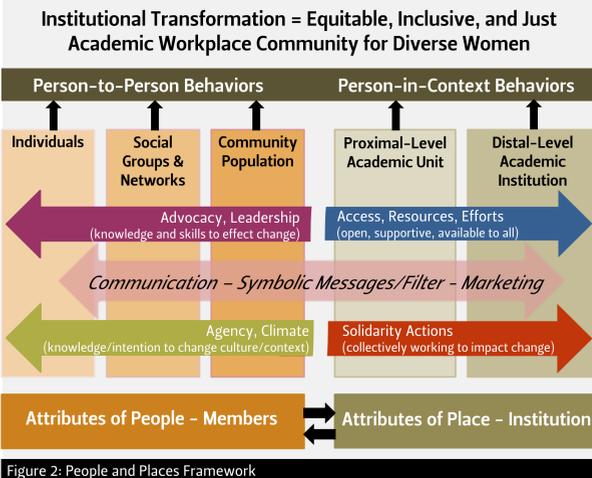


Figure 2: People and Places Framework

## Stages and Dimensions of Transformation

Community Readiness Model (Edwards et al., 2000) purports that empowering and catalyzing changes that are community owned and systemic requires a similar stage of readiness to take action on an issue across all institutional levels (see Figure 1) and all six dimensions of change (Figure 3). The dimensions of change provide areas for action and assessments of progress, including a mechanism for transforming qualitative data (activity artifacts) into a numerical score to indicate readiness, measure change and advance the study and practice of equity, inclusion, and justice in the academy.

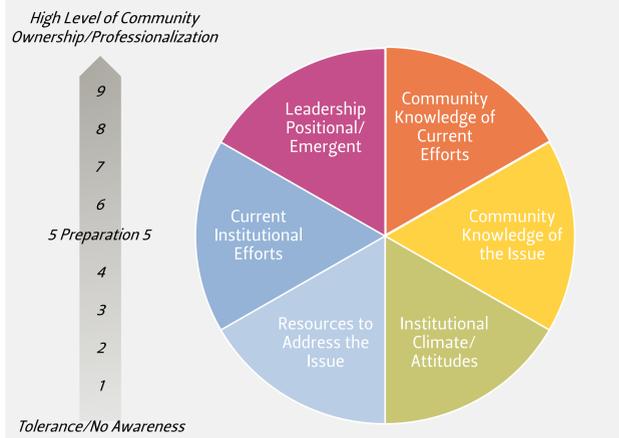


Figure 3: Stages of Readiness and Dimensions of Community Change

## Components of Socially Just Transformation

Application of a social justice lens (BCTF, 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.



Figure 4: Integrated Lens for Equitable, Inclusive and Just Institutional Transformation

OREGON STATE ADVANCE is supported by the National Science Foundation, Award #1409171

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## Evaluated Status-to-Date and Next Steps

Application of a social justice lens with a focus on gender equity and inclusion combined with an institutional readiness for change model provides a guide for developing policy, planning innovative actions, and evaluating resources and practices. This framework can be employed across partner institutions to develop a common language to communicate about our shared goal of a more diverse STEM workforce and to ensure we are centering social justice to create deep and lasting institutional transformation.

### Successes to-date

- OREGON STATE ADVANCE** has reached administrators (n=40) and faculty (n=250) in organizational units (n=10) across the institution through leadership seminars (n=3), sponsored events (n=10), roadshows (n=17) and influencer dialogues (n=5).
- The effectiveness of **OREGON STATE ADVANCE** activities is exemplified through documented adoption of policies and practices that reflect EJ principles as central to implementation and personal and symbolic effects.

### Challenges to-date

- Institutional changes occurring without provocation such as the transition of the Provost, the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and two deans, which impacts the connection between the project and central administrative leadership.
- Project leadership changes including departures/additions of co-investigators and senior personnel, which impacts project momentum and coordination.

As we prepare to move into Year 3 of our project, we will continue to identify opportunities to build institutional readiness and capacity for sustainable change that is equitable, inclusive, and just. Outcomes of sponsored activities aimed at catalyzing change across all dimensions of the system will be systematically evaluated employing our **OREGON STATE ADVANCE** framework, which centers on equity for diverse women in STEM through the lens of social justice in order to develop a common language and shared ideologies, and catalyze changes that produce deep, just, and lasting institutional transformation.