Advancing Diversity & Inclusion at Cal Poly through Collective Impact FAQ’s

What is Collective Impact (CI)?

Collective Impact is a structured form of collaboration that uses a common agenda, in this case of advancing diversity and inclusion at Cal Poly. CI involves people from different areas of campus coming together to solve complex problems. CI requires centralized infrastructure, or a “container for change”. The Office of University Diversity and Inclusion (OUDI) will serve as the “Container for Change”.

What will Collective Impact look like at Cal Poly?

During the Fall of 2017, a number of Collective Impact open forums were held at Cal Poly in which participants identified key need areas to effect change in the areas of diversity and inclusion. Emergent from these forums came three Strategy Groups that started meeting in Winter of 2018: Campus Climate, Curriculum, and Recruit & Retain. These Strategy Groups have been charged with developing a set of short- and long-term recommendations for the Cal Poly Inclusive Excellence Council to review and move forward to OUDI to enact.

Why was The Collective Impact framework chosen?

Collective Impact was the framework chosen because it is designed to create transformational shift and lasting social change through collaboration and alignment.

How will you know if collective impact is being effective?

One of the pillars of using Collective Impact a framework is to use and/or create shared metrics as a means to measure effectiveness. With the short- and long-term recommendations being put forward by the three Strategy Groups, the expectation is that some key shared and agreed upon metric or data points will be presented as the tool Cal Poly will use to measure positive change.

How will you know if you are making a difference in diversity, inclusion, campus climate and other important areas?

Some of the methods used to measure positive change in diversity, inclusion, and campus climate that may be employed include campus climate surveys, focus groups, course assessments, and tracking collectable demographic information.
What is the process for moving from discussion to actual change?

Any recommendations that come forward from the Strategic Groups will be taken seriously and brought forward to the Cal Poly Inclusive Excellence Council for action. Some of the recommendations may require action by OUDI. OUDI and the Vice President for University Diversity and Inclusion will oversee the transition of recommendations from the beginning stages, to approval, and then to action. As the Container for Change, OUDI also ensure that the recommendations go to the right department for action. OUDI will also be monitoring progress using the shared metrics in achieving the goals and acting on the recommendations made so that there is accountability. A report will be written by OUDI at the end of each year with an assessment of our progress.

What type of budget control does OUDI have over monies spent on the Strategic Group’s recommendations?

OUDI is still functioning under the same budget as it has in the past, however, as the need arises for additional funding to carry out some of the recommendations, it will be the Vice President’s responsibility to make that request for funding. If funding is not available and it impacts OUDI’s ability to act on a certain recommendation, that will be noted on the report. Funding will be critical in meeting some of our goals, however, some of our goals may be met in other ways. The work of the Strategy Groups becomes critically important in identifying places that are already doing some of the work that is being recommended and a recommendation may be to better align the responsibilities of a particular unit.

The Strategy groups use MPP labor and asks for volunteers. Is this a workable ideas as Cal Poly moves forward using collective impact to advance diversity and inclusion?

In order to effect change, University-wide involvement is needed. There already is a great deal of labor focused on diversity and inclusion that gets done on this campus. The Collective Impact work that OUDI is leading is intended to better align some of the things that are already happening. In addition, diversity and inclusion requires continued university-wide involvement if we are to make progress. It is unrealistic to have OUDI be the sole entity responsible for carrying out diversity and inclusion for the whole institution. As the work progresses some of the work will be done by OUDI and the Strategy Groups will identify where some of the recommendations best fit within the organization. The work is also about identifying which entity might be responsible for a particular recommended action. By having that entity already at the table, they will be part of the discussion from the onset. It will not catch them off-guard and will hopefully lead to better buy-in.

How can people get involved?

At this point, the best way to get involved is to join a Strategy Group! There are three strategy Groups and people are welcome to join more than one. Strategy groups meet monthly. More information about the groups and sign up information can be found at: diversity.calpoly.edu/collective-impact