



# Standards of Professional Practice for Chief Diversity Officers in Higher Education 2.0

---

National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education  
March 2020

## **Task Force Members**

Roger L. Worthington, PhD, Chair

Christine A. Stanley, PhD

Daryl G. Smith, PhD

Executive Summary .....	2
Standards of Professional Practice for Chief Diversity Officers in Higher Education 2.0 .....	4
Preamble.....	4
Standard One .....	7
Standard Two .....	8
Standard Three .....	8
Standard Four.....	9
Standard Five.....	10
Standard Six .....	10
Standard Seven .....	11
Standard Eight.....	12
Standard Nine.....	12
Standard Ten.....	13
Standard Eleven .....	14
Standard Twelve .....	14
Standard Thirteen .....	15
Standard Fourteen .....	16
Standard Fifteen .....	16
Standard Sixteen .....	17
References .....	18
Acknowledgments.....	20

## Executive Summary

The National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) has established standards of professional practice for chief\* diversity officers (CDOs) in higher education. Given the complexities of differing institutional types, missions, historical legacies, and current contexts and the varied professional backgrounds and trajectories of CDOs, institutions will inevitably differ in the details of the application of these standards in terms of critical features including, but not limited to, (a) the organizational structure in the portfolio of the CDO, (b) the allocation of human, fiscal, and physical resources, (c) the optimal degree of centralization versus decentralization of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) efforts, (d) the processes of building institutional and organizational capacity, (e) the unique organizational manifestations of institutional change, and (f) the specific focus and metrics related to mechanisms of accountability. CDOs play the central administrative role in guiding, facilitating, and evaluating these processes on behalf of the institution (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007, 2013). The highest levels of commitment, responsibility, and accountability reside throughout institutional leadership, in which cabinet-level CDOs serve as the principal administrators to advance mission-driven efforts through highly specialized knowledge and expertise. Through the standards of professional practice that follow, NADOHE provides guidance and support to individuals serving as CDOs, as well as to the institutions where they work.

**Standard One:** *Chief diversity officers have ethical, legal, and practical obligations to frame their work from comprehensive definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion—definitions that are inclusive with respect to a wide range of identities, differentiated in terms of how they address unique identity issues and complex in terms of intersectionality and context.*

**Standard Two:** *Chief diversity officers work to ensure that elements of equity, diversity, and inclusion are embedded as imperatives in the institutional mission, vision, and strategic plan.*

**Standard Three:** *Chief diversity officers are committed to planning, catalyzing, facilitating, and evaluating processes of institutional and organizational change.*

**Standard Four:** *Chief diversity officers work with senior campus administrators and, when appropriate, governing bodies (e.g., trustees or regents) to revise or remove the embedded institutional policies, procedures, and norms that create differential structural barriers to the access and success of students, faculty, and staff who belong to marginalized and oppressed groups.*

---

\* The National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) acknowledges that the term *chief diversity officer* is controversial, and NADOHE will appoint an independent task force to assess and to make a recommendation as to an official association position on nomenclature regarding the use of the word *chief*. The terms *chief diversity officer* and *CDO* are used in this document as a historically common referent.

**Standard Five:** *Chief diversity officers work with faculty, staff, students, and appropriate institutional governance structures to promote inclusive excellence in teaching and learning across the curriculum and within cocurricular programming.*

**Standard Six:** *Chief diversity officers work within a community of scholars to advocate for inclusive excellence in research, creativity, and scholarship in all fields as fundamental to the mission-driven work of the institution.*

**Standard Seven:** *Chief diversity officers are committed to drawing from existing scholarship and using evidence-based practices to provide intellectual leadership in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion.*

**Standard Eight:** *Chief diversity officers work collaboratively with senior campus administrators to plan and develop the infrastructure for equity, diversity, and inclusion to meet the needs of the campus community.*

**Standard Nine:** *Chief diversity officers strive to optimize the balance between centralization and decentralization of efforts to achieve equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the institution.*

**Standard Ten:** *Chief diversity officers work with senior administrators and members of the campus community to assess, plan, and build institutional capacity for equity, diversity, and inclusion.*

**Standard Eleven:** *Chief diversity officers work to ensure that institutions conduct periodic campus climate assessments to illuminate strengths, challenges, and gaps in the development and advancement of an equitable, inclusive climate for diversity.*

**Standard Twelve:** *Chief diversity officers work with senior administrators and campus professionals to develop, facilitate, respond to, and assess campus protocols that address hate-bias incidents, including efforts related to prevention, education, and intervention.*

**Standard Thirteen:** *Chief diversity officers work with senior administrators and campus professionals to facilitate and assess efforts to mentor, educate, and respond to campus activism, protests, and demonstrations about issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion.*

**Standard Fourteen:** *Chief diversity officers are committed to accountability for advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the institution.*

**Standard Fifteen:** *Chief diversity officers work closely with senior administrators to ensure full implementation of and compliance with the legal and regulatory requirements for the institution.*

**Standard Sixteen:** *Chief diversity officers engage in their work in ways that reflect the highest levels of ethical practice, pursuing self-regulation as higher education professionals.*

# Standards of Professional Practice for Chief Diversity Officers in Higher Education 2.0

## Preamble

The National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) has established standards of professional practice for chief\* diversity officers (CDOs) in higher education (Worthington, Stanley, & Lewis, 2014; Worthington, Stanley, & Smith, 2020). Institutional and individual members of NADOHE recognize the imperative for colleges and universities to reflect their espoused values and to deliver on their commitment to make their institutions inclusive learning and working environments for all. As members of NADOHE and through the appointment of CDOs, colleges and universities make a commitment to the pursuit of inclusive excellence as a mission-driven edict at all levels of the institution. The standards are written to reflect application at the highest operational level and, where appropriate, to provide guidance regarding how these standards can be applied at other levels (e.g., division, college, school, department, program).

These *standards* reflect definitional aspects of a profession rather than specific content of knowledge, awareness, and skills that characterize the *competencies* of an individual. Standards focus at a high level on the work of those in the profession rather than on specific job roles. Permeating themes such as specialized expertise, professional judgment, ethics, self-regulation, and professionalism are written into the standards to ensure they apply across the breadth of practice and to discourage their being treated as separate topics or areas of competence. Whereas CDOs may (or may not) have specific competencies to carry out a comprehensive campus climate study or deliver a workshop focused on implicit bias for faculty search committees, they are committed to the standards of practice that ensure the competent delivery of such critical activities within an institution. Within that context, CDOs must recognize the scope and limits of their unique set of competencies in advancing institutional objectives and must be able to build capacity from within or outside the institution to ensure the progress of EDI efforts.

Given the complexities of differing institutional types, missions, historical legacies, and current contexts and the varied professional backgrounds and trajectories of CDOs, institutions will inevitably apply these standards in different ways, with details and critical features that might include, but are not limited to, (a) the organizational structure in the portfolio of the CDO, (b) the allocation of human, fiscal, and physical resources, (c) the optimal degree of centralization versus decentralization of EDI efforts, (d) the processes of building institutional and organizational capacity, (e) the unique manifestations of institutional change, and (f) the specific focus and metrics related to accountability. CDOs play the central administrative role in guiding, facilitating, and evaluating these processes on behalf of the institution (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2007, 2013).

The highest levels of commitment, responsibility, and accountability reside throughout institutional leadership. Cabinet-level CDOs serve as the principal administrators to advance mission-driven efforts through highly specialized knowledge and expertise. Institutional commitment to the work of CDOs is characterized by leadership, evidence, resources, and coordination; that is, executive administrators (e.g., trustees, presidents, provosts) seek out and examine evidence that reflects institutional strengths and weaknesses, allocate resources accordingly, and empower their CDOs to promote coordinated efforts toward institutional growth, change, and accountability related to EDI issues.

Over the past seven decades, the work toward access, nondiscrimination, equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice has been continuously evolving. Diversity in higher education has progressed from an almost singular focus on increasing access for protected groups to a comprehensive conceptualization of institution-wide social integration across all functions of colleges and universities. Whereas early efforts toward access primarily focused on compositional diversity in terms of race and gender, and in turn affirmative action, the subsequent recognition of the need to retain and promote the success of students, faculty, and staff from marginalized and oppressed groups led the field to aim above and beyond numerical diversity toward issues of equity, inclusion, and justice. Whereas, compositional diversity—especially in terms of critical mass—is in some sense a necessary (though insufficient in and of itself) precondition for achieving equity and inclusion, the vast majority of institutions have not reached even that precondition. The shift from monoculturalism toward nondiscrimination in turn has led to a focus on multicultural organizational development (Espinosa, Turk, Taylor, & Chessman, 2019; Jackson, 2014; Jackson & Hardiman, 1997). With an increasingly diverse population, inclusive excellence has become an imperative for institutions across the curriculum, cocurricular programs, research and scholarship, leadership development at every level, and community engagement. From the framework of inclusive excellence, higher education institutions are compelled by the abundance of evidence that diversity is a critical factor in the quality of educational outcomes—the educational benefits of diverse learning and working environments—such that excellence is unachievable without diversity. Inclusive excellence is related to the educational benefits for students and for learning. It has become increasingly clear that diversity is critical for excellence in scholarship, research, and the resulting curriculum and leads to better knowledge for all fields in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, as well as in medicine, business, public affairs, and law. Indeed, the evolution of focusing on inclusive excellence emerges from the institutional level, requiring capacity-building throughout the institution in the context of its mission. As the complexity of the work increases, higher education leaders must recognize the essential need for highly specialized knowledge and expertise and foster the development and application of evidence-based practices. In that context, the professional development

needs of CDOs must be understood to expand the depth, breadth, and scope of their expertise, while the professional development of faculty, staff, and administrators is promoted throughout the institution.

Historically, CDOs have come from a variety of career tracks, including tenured academic faculty positions and nonacademic staff positions (e.g., student affairs, human resources, business sector, government; Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013; Witt/Keiffer, 2011) and from a wide variety of professional backgrounds and educational credentials (e.g., law, psychology, higher education administration, business, engineering, humanities, medicine). Very few CDOs have specialized educational credentials or foundational professional experiences that directly inform their EDI roles and responsibilities, and there is substantial variation in the levels and types of qualifications required to perform the duties of the CDO, as well as in the titles that are attached to the role (e.g., director, assistant/associate vice provost, vice president).

Broadly, CDOs have multiple responsibilities and allegiances to (a) their institutions, (b) divisions or units within the institution, (c) individual institutional constituents, (d) individuals and organizations outside their institutions, and (e) the profession. In some instances, allegiance to the institution may require CDOs to work with powerful individuals who might be averse to the EDI mission of higher education and with others who might attempt to advocate or legislate against their efforts. In that context, the work of CDOs can be inherently fraught with challenges, threats, incongruities, and conflicts in their allegiances and their advocacy for the interests of those with whom they work. Whereas CDOs have an obligation to identify their multiple allegiances openly in the spirit of transparency, institutional members of NADOHE recognize and understand the inherent tensions that may arise when CDOs advocate for accountability in areas of real or perceived deficit of individual leaders, units and divisions, or the institution more broadly. It is incumbent on institutions to respond to these potential tensions with the utmost fairness and professionalism for all parties and to act in concert with the mission-driven imperative for advancing inclusive excellence in higher education.

Through the standards of professional practice that follow, NADOHE provides guidance and support to individuals serving as CDOs as well as the institutions where they work. This document is directed to individual CDOs, and a separate document (in the future) will provide more specific guidance for institutions. Where appropriate we have delineated the boundaries between responsibilities of institutions and the individuals serving in the roles of CDOs.

## Standard One

*Chief diversity officers have ethical, legal, and practical obligations to frame their work from comprehensive definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion—definitions that are inclusive with respect to a wide range of identities, differentiated in terms of how they address unique identity issues and complex in terms of intersectionality and context.*

Comprehensive definitions and framing of equity, diversity, and inclusion vary widely in the literature and have evolved to become more inclusive of marginalized identities, to account for shifting conceptualizations of identities, to incorporate changing language regarding identities, and to respond to changes in legal and regulatory requirements in federal and state laws. Figure 1 provides a description of the multitude of dimensions of social identity characteristics inherent to the work of diversity in higher education (Worthington, 2012). Furthermore, Crenshaw (1989) defined the concept of intersectionality to account for multiple identities when considering how the different ways systemic social inequities, discrimination, and oppression interact to shape the experiences of marginalized people and, indeed, contemporary research and scholarship through structural, political, and representational processes.

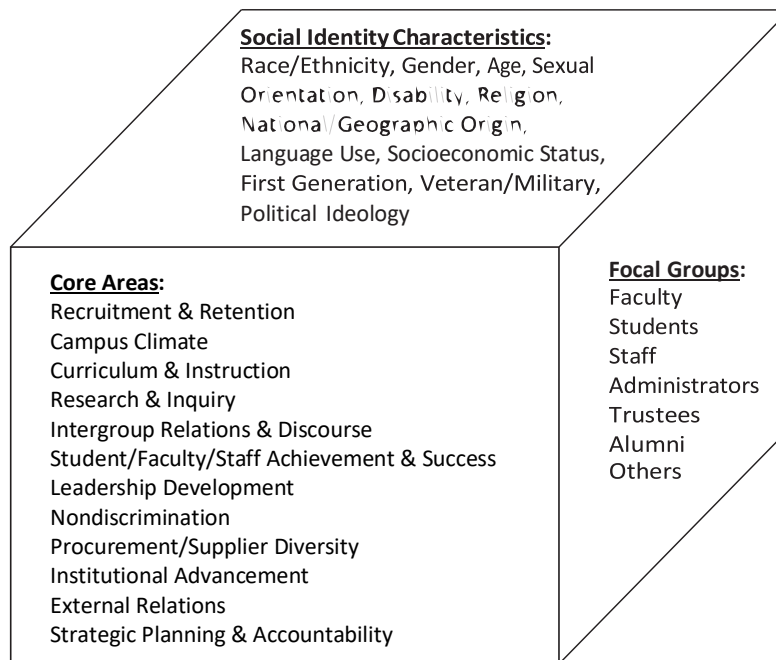


Figure 1: Three-Dimensional Model of Higher Education Diversity  
Adapted from Worthington (2012).



Institutional historical legacies provide a foundational context for how CDOs work within the missions of colleges and universities (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1998). These institutional contexts provide the ethical, legal, and practical considerations for CDOs to address when planning and carrying out their work. When current missions and historical contexts reflect exclusionary practices, CDOs declare their commitment to frame their work from comprehensive definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion and to work collaboratively with the institution towards organizational change.

The history of diversity in higher education has evolved from a narrow focus on compositional, structural, or representational diversity (e.g., counting students, faculty, and staff from underrepresented and minoritized groups) to more fully addressing issues of equity, inclusion, justice, nondiscrimination, climate, and inclusive excellence (Smith, 2015). CDOs advocate for institutions to adopt and frame the work of EDI from comprehensive definitions that recognize compositional diversity as a necessary but insufficient condition for success in addressing the institutional imperative for EDI.

## **Standard Two**

*Chief diversity officers work to ensure that elements of equity, diversity, and inclusion are embedded as imperatives in the institutional mission, vision, and strategic plan.*

CDOs frame their work as mission-driven efforts in service of the institution to achieve its vision, mission, and strategic goals/objectives. Ideally, colleges and universities have articulated how EDI is an imperative within their strategic plans, including their mission and vision statements, which provide guidance for members across the institution in carrying out mission-driven activities (Smith, 2015). In contexts where institutions have not yet integrated the imperative of EDI in their mission, vision, and strategic plans, CDOs work collaboratively toward that goal in accordance with the type, size, mission, and goals of their institution. In larger colleges and universities, CDOs may work with smaller units within the institution to establish localized departmental or divisional diversity plans to tailor localized efforts as needed. Strategic plans should be updated periodically to reflect advancements, accomplishments, gaps, deficits, developmental progressions, and the continuously evolving nature of the institution and the profession of diversity in higher education.

## **Standard Three**

*Chief diversity officers are committed to planning, catalyzing, facilitating, and evaluating processes of institutional and organizational change.*

Leadership of institutional change is central to the work of CDOs. The very foundations of US higher education were established on exclusionary principles of preparing only

affluent White men for positions of access, power, leadership, and governance. There is extensive evidence that higher education institutions continue to maintain the status quo and are slow to change when it comes to equity, diversity, and inclusion (Espinosa et al., 2019; Morphew, 2009; Smith, 2015). The work of diversity in higher education is highly complex, beginning with the expansive scope of the work that needs to be done across focal groups, core areas, and social identity characteristics (see Figure 1). In addition, institutional commitment to EDI requires leadership, coordination, resources, and evidence from the highest levels of administration and across all levels of the organization. Planning organizational change requires an understanding of strengths and deficits across time, collaboration and coordination of efforts throughout the institution, and the appropriate allocation of resources to achieve desired goals. Within that context there is value in working with financial and development/advancement offices to determine specific strategies for providing the resources needed to excel in EDI change efforts. CDOs provide highly specialized knowledge and expertise to help facilitate and catalyze efforts toward institutional change, whereas the responsibility for institutional and organizational change resides more broadly with members across the entire college or university community, which requires commitment from the highest levels of administrative leadership (e.g., president, provost, trustees).

#### **Standard Four**

*Chief diversity officers work with senior campus administrators and, when appropriate, governing bodies to revise or remove the embedded institutional policies, procedures, and norms that create differential structural barriers to the access and success of students, faculty, and staff who belong to marginalized and oppressed groups.*

Virtually all higher education institutions were established in contexts that limited access to education and employment based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, financial means, and other marginalized and minoritized identity statuses. Whereas institutions of higher education uniformly tend to seek to attract and retain students, faculty, and staff from a wide diversity of backgrounds, systemic societal forces are known to influence norms, procedures, and policies that create barriers to access and success for members of marginalized and oppressed groups. It is clear now that these barriers have also limited academic scholarship, research, and the applications of that knowledge in society. One prominent and ongoing focus of institutional change is to identify and remove or revise policies and procedures that create differential structural barriers to access and success. These efforts on the part of CDOs are often in collaboration with the shared governance structures which have direct authority to create, change, and eliminate existing institutional policies and procedures.

## **Standard Five**

*Chief diversity officers work with faculty, staff, students, and appropriate institutional governance structures to promote inclusive excellence in teaching and learning across the curriculum and within cocurricular programming.*

Inclusive excellence is a sine qua non of diversity in higher education teaching and learning. Academic excellence in the 21st century requires attention to issues of EDI integrated across the curriculum, in the classroom, on the part of instructors at every level of status and experience, on the part of many staff with responsibilities for cocurricular programming, on syllabi, in faculty development programs, and in relation to students of every background. Issues of EDI are fundamental to the teaching and learning mission of higher education institutions in ways that permeate and transcend disciplinary fields of study, academic programs, and instructional methods. In addition, CDOs also work to emphasize how a curriculum and teaching that are inclusive are essential for all students. Students are often most vocal about troublesome experiences they have inside the classroom in relation to their peers and their instructors, in addition to problematic content and pedagogical approaches. CDOs are often called upon to address complaints related to virtually every facet of teaching and learning across the curriculum and cocurricular programs and to identify ways to advance the professional development of faculty and staff in their instructional roles. CDOs need to work closely with faculty, centers for teaching excellence, and other teaching professionals to become a resource to them.

## **Standard Six**

*Chief diversity officers work within a community of scholars to advocate for inclusive excellence in research, creativity, and scholarship in all fields as fundamental to the mission-driven work of the institution.*

Academic history is replete with examples of monocultural, exclusionary, exploitative, and oppressive research and scholarly works, which are often exacerbated by the glacial pace of diversifying the faculty and staff at many predominantly White institutions (PWIs; Kumashiro, 2000; Smith, 2015). Although extreme examples of racist, sexist, ableist, and other exploitative and oppressive forces continue to surface—not only historically but into current times—the vast majority of institutions continue to struggle with more pervasive and hidden practices that hinder scientific advancement through works and overgeneralizations from methodologies that are not inclusive and have ignored important differences and disparities. Inclusive excellence at its core reveals that embedding diversity issues into almost every knowledge domain will increase excellence in knowledge research for the 21st century. Understanding the ways diversity contributes to excellence requires a deep

understanding not only of the particular mission of the institution but of disciplinary practices and questions. CDOs need to develop diversity champions to assist with this process, so they can become more knowledgeable from engagement with deans and department chairs as well as faculty champions across different disciplines. Ultimately, not only does this serve particular communities, but it advances knowledge for all whether in engineering, medicine, business, or the arts.

## **Standard Seven**

*Chief diversity officers are committed to drawing from existing scholarship and using evidence-based practices to provide intellectual leadership in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion.*

An abundance of scholarship provides the basis for evidence-based practice among CDOs and contributes to the continuing evolution of the profession and field of study (Chang, Witt, Jones, & Hakuta, 2003). With burgeoning scholarship around EDI, the field evolves and CDOs must progress in their own professional development, advance the professional development of others, and improve the effectiveness of the work being done throughout their institutions.

Over the past several decades, scholarly inquiry has yielded substantial evidence for the educational benefits of diversity in higher education, which has become the basis for U.S. Supreme Court rulings upholding the practice of affirmative action in higher education admissions (Buckner, 2003; Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Hurtado, 2007). Within that context there are requirements for localized evidence-based demonstration of the need and the impact of affirmative action practices. CDOs work collaboratively with admissions and enrollment management professionals to tailor their efforts within legal requirements to advance the educational benefits of diversity through evidence-based practices, which are not just to defend the work of diversity but to advance excellence in a pluralistic society. Indeed, CDOs draw from a wealth of scholarship for evidence-based practices in a multitude of core areas, such as, but not limited to: recruiting and retaining underrepresented students, faculty, and staff; assessing and improving the campus climate for diversity and inclusion; assessing and improving classroom climate and instruction; promoting inclusive excellence in scholarly and creative activity; encouraging intergroup relations and discourse; developing leadership; countering bias and discrimination; engaging the community; raising financial support.

## **Standard Eight**

*Chief diversity officers work collaboratively with senior campus administrators to plan and develop the infrastructure for equity, diversity, and inclusion to meet the needs of the campus community.*

Planning, assessing, and building the infrastructure necessary to accomplish the work of diversity in higher education is a major focus of CDOs. Wide variations in the type, size, mission, and goals of higher education institutions require careful assessment and planning across organizational and divisional lines to recognize and understand the physical, human, and fiscal resources needed to carry out the multifaceted work of EDI. Collaboration within and across organizational units is essential in the design of the institutional infrastructure for EDI efforts. Planning and developing for EDI to meet the needs of the campus community necessitate collaboration and building of strategic relationships (e.g., senior cabinet administrators, academic college deans, student affairs personnel, faculty and staff councils and leaders, external community leaders).

## **Standard Nine**

*Chief diversity officers strive to optimize the balance between centralization and decentralization of efforts to achieve equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the institution.*

The work related to inclusive excellence requires balance between activities that are localized within different units across institutions and work that is implemented and guided at a central level. With the increasing complexity and specialization of many institutions—that might include, for example, medical centers or multiple campuses—this balance is important to consider. Centralized administrative units on college campuses are responsible for providing an overarching conceptual framework and vision for developing an institutional plan for EDI, as well as specific campus-wide efforts related to planning, programming, assessment, evaluation, and reporting. Monitoring progress and communicating areas where progress is being made or is needed are essential for substantiating the work as imperative throughout an institution. Inclusive excellence efforts at the campus level must target recruitment, retention, campus climate assessment and response, faculty and staff development, research, accessibility, nondiscrimination and antibias efforts, and equity policies, processes, and practices, among others. CDOs work with campus constituents to optimize the balance between centralization and decentralization for EDI efforts, in which larger institutions are likely to have a network of decentralized diversity professionals connected to the diversity strategic plan through a shared framework and direct or indirect reporting lines. Achieving balance between centralized and decentralized organization can translate into the difference between disconnected, siloed, incongruous, and

redundant EDI activities, programs, and operations versus those that are coordinated, integrated, conceptually consistent, and supportive. When EDI efforts are too highly centralized, the danger is that collective responsibility does not take shape within an institution and progress flounders instead of flourishing through actively engaged, collaborative efforts. Alternatively, decentralized organization can result in poorly communicated efforts, activities and programs that are disconnected and hidden within silos, promising and effective practices that function in isolation, and outdated or ineffective programs that continue without accountability or in competition with other siloed units working at cross-purposes within the same institution. Fundamentally, the work of EDI is about embedding the work throughout the institution and building capacity in every unit. It is also about how the centralized CDO helps facilitate the sharing of evidence-based and promising practices, as well as problems and challenges across otherwise siloed units, departments, and campuses. The planning, prioritizing, resourcing, and coordination of decentralized responsibilities occurs from within a centralized conceptual framework.

### **Standard Ten**

*Chief diversity officers work with senior administrators and members of the campus community to assess, plan, and build institutional capacity for equity, diversity, and inclusion.*

Institutional capacity for the work of EDI depends on highly specialized expertise, planning, resources, assessment, accountability, and coordination. CDOs help members of the campus-wide community increase their competencies to address EDI, and they are committed to their own ongoing professional development as well. Organizationally, building institutional capacity requires professional development for diversity professionals throughout the institution, but also the development of competencies among all institutional constituents to build strong, high performance teams and to cultivate leaders who inspire inclusion and promote diversity. CDOs are often asked to deliver or oversee professional development programming as one way to help build institutional capacity for EDI. Capacity building within institutions is intricately tied to leadership, vision, strategy, resources, communications, measurement, assessment, and accountability. Successful capacity building ultimately results in an organizational culture characterized by a system of shared beliefs, values, norms, habits, and assumptions to advance EDI efforts.

## **Standard Eleven**

*Chief diversity officers work to ensure that institutions conduct periodic campus climate assessments to illuminate strengths, challenges, and gaps in the development and advancement of an equitable, inclusive climate for diversity.*

Campus climate assessments are an integral component of the work of diversity in higher education (Worthington, 2008, 2012). CDOs commonly have the principal responsibility for planning, implementing, and utilizing campus climate studies to (a) assess the climate for equity, diversity, and inclusion, (b) advance a plan of action to enhance or improve areas of concern regarding EDI, (c) assist campus leaders and constituents in recognizing and addressing issues that are illuminated by climate assessments, and (d) incorporate findings of campus climate research into strategic EDI planning for the institution. Periodic, iterative campus climate assessments are generally the norm for institutions of higher education. In some cases, for institutions large and small, there are needs for assessments that are either comprehensive (broad-based, institution-wide) and more narrowly focused (local, tailored to specific issues). The nature and methodology of campus climate research differs substantially from most other forms of research inquiry, and even the most advanced scholars sometimes do not recognize the conceptual frames from which climate studies are conducted. CDOs must stay current with the literature on campus climate research to keep abreast of the methodological and conceptual frameworks for this work as it continues to evolve, especially in terms of how it differs from other forms of research and in light of the conceptual debates that may occur with advanced scholars unfamiliar with climate inquiry. Institutional research offices as partners for the CDO can be critical for securing available data, obtaining IRB approval, and receiving assistance with the proper distribution of data from climate surveys.

## **Standard Twelve**

*Chief diversity officers work with senior administrators and campus professionals to develop, facilitate, respond to, and assess campus protocols that address hate-bias incidents, including efforts related to prevention, education, and intervention.*

College and university campuses are some of the most common settings for hate and bias incidents to occur (Anti-Defamation League, 2018; Jones & Baker, 2019). Perpetrators of hate and bias incidents can be students, staff, or faculty within an institution or may come from outside the institution, sometimes by invitation from one or more campus constituents. Many higher education institutions have formed bias response teams comprised of institutional professionals (e.g., CDOs, counselors, medical personnel, law enforcement officers, residential life staff, student conduct staff) with responsibilities for efforts designed as

prevention, education, intervention, and response. CDOs often play a key leadership role in overseeing the appointments, training, and functioning of bias response teams on college and university campuses. Based on how social media operates on and off campus, dealing with hate crimes and bias incidents often requires that the CDO work with presidents and media relations teams to determine protocols for notifying both the internal and external communities about incidents.

### **Standard Thirteen**

*Chief diversity officers work with senior administrators and campus professionals to facilitate and assess efforts to mentor, educate, and respond to campus activism, protests, and demonstrations about issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion.*

Colleges and universities have long been the locations of social and political activism. Rhoads (2016) described the long history of student activism beginning in the 1960s, highlighting the pivotal roles played by college students in the civil rights, feminist, anti-war, and gay liberation movements, through the anti-apartheid, Occupy Wall Street, and Black Lives Matter movements in subsequent decades. Student activism had a dramatic resurgence on college and university campuses after 2015 with a significant uptick in student demands for revised curricula, diversity among student, faculty, and staff representation, and political protests centered on social justice issues. CDOs need to have close working relationships with the offices of student affairs, campus safety, and general counsel for how students can have their needs and rights protected even as the institution manages matters that can be disruptive. CDOs can play a role in how the institution responds to student concerns in ways to mitigate campus unrest; but they also need to be aware that some protests are about issues of local, national, or global concern outside of campus. Being knowledgeable about how to deploy teach-ins and dialogue sessions is critical for CDOs. There is a great deal of complexity involved in mediating between and among varied interest groups with sometimes dramatically different worldviews, making it important to have an institution-wide response team when protests and demonstrations arise. CDOs are often engaged with student activism on campus, playing central roles in proactive planning and campus responses. Mentoring and safety have become critical focal points of these efforts.



## **Standard Fourteen**

*Chief diversity officers are committed to accountability for advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the institution.*

CDOs have the responsibility and authority to ensure that accountability for EDI efforts are integrated throughout the entire institution. CDOs are not solely responsible and accountable for EDI, but they are expected to identify ways to accomplish the work of the institution, using measurable and realistic metrics of assessment to establish benchmarks, demonstrate progress, measure outcomes, and evaluate institutional change. Accountability often arises from goals and objectives established with the institutional strategic plans or EDI strategic plans of colleges and universities. CDOs must maintain institutional accountability for the commitment to EDI through careful monitoring of goals, objectives, activities, programs, initiatives, benchmarking, measurement, assessments, metrics, and communications across the institution about progress, gaps, strengths, weaknesses, and achievements. Often this will include working with other senior administrators, governing boards, and trustees to include them in the accountability process.

## **Standard Fifteen**

*Chief diversity officers work closely with senior administrators to ensure full implementation of and compliance with the legal and regulatory requirements for the institution.*

Colleges and universities espouse values for equal opportunity and access in their educational programs and activities (Harper, 2008). An educational environment free from discrimination is one of the key elements for an inclusive and safe campus. CDOs must have highly specialized knowledge, expertise, and training to work in collaboration with legal counsel, compliance officers, and other regulatory officials in addressing potential legal issues and threats that influence the work of EDI for the institution. Highly specialized training and expertise include demonstrated knowledge of current state and federal law regulations and trends in education related to legal and regulatory compliance with diversity and equity issues in higher education, which include, but are not limited to working in partnership with senior and system administration such as general and legal counsel, the chancellor, president, provost, and campus and community law enforcement officials, as well as the offices of academic affairs, student affairs, and human resources: (a) to minimize risk and negligence of and to ensure compliance with legal requirements, (b) to oversee, assess, and sustain campus policies that elevate equity, fairness, inclusion, and safety, and (c) to develop, implement, monitor, and make recommendations for nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policies, processes, and practices associated with Equal Employment Opportunity, Title VII and Title IX programs, Americans With

Disabilities Act, affirmative action, and other applicable human rights protections pursuant to local, state, and federal laws and regulations. CDOs will require periodic professional development to stay up to date on the nuances of the law as it relates to protected class areas and related matters.

## **Standard Sixteen**

*Chief diversity officers engage in their work in ways that reflect the highest levels of ethical practice, pursuing self-regulation as higher education professionals.*

Self-governance and accountability are defining features of a profession. As such, CDOs adhere to a set of ethical principles in their work to establish the highest standards of practice, to promote the welfare of those they serve, to maintain competencies, to resolve potential conflicts of interest between constituents and the institutions they serve, to act responsibly, to avoid exploitation, and to uphold the integrity of the profession through exemplary conduct (Welfel, 2016). Within that context, CDOs are committed to principles of civil and human rights, accountability, justice, transparency, veracity, fidelity, respect, and integrity, among others. CDOs face a multitude of moral and ethical dilemmas in carrying out their work, and within that context, they must act with the highest standards of moral and ethical conduct. When they encounter conflicts related to EDI issues that occur between their institution and the interests of those they serve within the institution, CDOs seek resolution in ways that demonstrate fidelity, respect, integrity, veracity, transparency, justice, and accountability in pursuit of higher order human and civil rights. Institutions of higher education have an obligation to recognize and understand the ethical principles inherent to the work of CDOs and to actively support, protect, and facilitate their efforts.

## References

- Anti-Defamation League. (2018). White supremacist propaganda nearly doubles on campus in 2017–18 academic year [Web log post]. New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.adl.org/resources/reports/white-supremacist-propaganda-nearly-doubles-on-campus-in-2017-18-academic-year>
- Buckner, C. J. (2003). Realizing *Grutter v. Bollinger's* compelling educational benefits of diversity-transforming aspirational rhetoric into experience. *University of Missouri at Kansas City Law Review*, 72, 877-947
- Chang, M. J., Witt, D., Jones, J., & Hakuta, K. (Eds.). (2003). *Compelling interest: Examining the evidence on racial dynamics in colleges and universities*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1, Article 8), 139-168. Retrieved from <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8>
- Espinosa, L. L., Turk, J. M., Taylor, M., & Chessman, H. M. (2019). *Race and ethnicity in higher education: A status report*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Gurin, P., Nagda, B. R. A., & Lopez, G. E. (2004). The benefits of diversity in education for democratic citizenship. *Journal of Social Issues*, 60, 17-34.
- Harper, S. R. (2008). Realizing the intended outcomes of *Brown*: High-achieving African American male undergraduates and social capital. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 51, 1030-1053.
- Hurtado, S. (2007). Linking diversity with the educational and civic missions of higher education. *Review of Higher Education*, 30, 185-196.
- Hurtado, S., Milem, J. F., Clayton-Pedersen, A., & Allen W. R. (1998). Enhancing campus climates for racial/ethnic diversity: Educational policy and practice. *Review of Higher Education*, 21, 279-302.
- Jackson, B. W. (2014). Theory and practice of multicultural organization development. In B. B. Jones & M. Brazzel (Eds.), *The NTL handbook of organization development and change: Principles, Practices, and perspectives* (pp. 175-192). Retrieved from <http://equitydiversity.cals.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/39/2017/11/Theory-and-Practice-of-Multicultural-Org-Dev-1.pdf>
- Jackson, B. W., & Hardiman, R. (1997). Conceptual foundations for social justice courses. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook* (pp. 16-29). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jones, C., & Baker, R. A. (2019). *Report on the Uncivil, Hate and Bias Incidents on Campus survey*. Washington, DC: Fund for Leadership, Equity, Access and Diversity. Retrieved from [http://www.aaaed.org/images/aaaed/LEAD\\_Fund/LEAD-Fund-Report-UHBIOC-Report.pdf](http://www.aaaed.org/images/aaaed/LEAD_Fund/LEAD-Fund-Report-UHBIOC-Report.pdf)
- Kumashiro, K. K. (2000). Toward a theory of anti-oppressive education. *Review of Educational Research*, 70, 25-53.
- Morphew, C. C. (2009). Conceptualizing change in the institutional diversity of US colleges and universities. *Journal of Higher Education*, 80, 243-269.
- Rhoads, R. A. (2016). Student activism, diversity, and the struggle for a just society. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 9, 189-202.

- Smith, D. G. (2015). *Diversity's promise for higher education: Making it work* (2nd ed.). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Welfel, E. R. (2016). *Ethics in counseling and psychotherapy: Standards, research, and emerging issues*. Boston, MA: Cengage.
- Williams, D. A., & Wade-Golden, K. (2007). *The chief diversity officer: A primer for college and university presidents* (Occasional paper, 3rd in a series). Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
- Williams, D. A., & Wade-Golden, K. (2013). *The chief diversity officer: Strategy, structure, and change management*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Witt/Kieffer. (Summer, 2011). *Chief diversity officers assume larger role*. Retrieved from <http://www.wittkieffer.com/file/thought-leadership/practice/CDO%20survey%20results%20August%202011.pdf>
- Worthington, R. L. (2008). Measurement and assessment in campus climate research: A scientific imperative. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 1*, 201-203. doi:10.1037/a0014406
- Worthington, R. L. (2012). Advancing scholarship for the diversity imperative in higher education: An editorial. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 5*, 1-7. doi:10.1037/a0027184
- Worthington, R. L., Stanley, C. A., & Lewis, W. T., Sr. (2014). National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education standards of professional practice for chief diversity officers. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 7*, 227-234. doi:10.1037/a0038391
- Worthington, R. L., Stanley, C. A., & Smith, D. G. (2020). Advancing the professionalization of diversity officers in higher education: Report of the Presidential Task Force on the Revision of the NADOHE Standards of Professional Practice. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 13*, 1-23.

## Acknowledgments

The National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education would like to thank the following individuals for their work on the conceptualization, writing, and editing of these standards:

Roger L. Worthington (Chair)  
Christine A. Stanley, and  
Daryl G. Smith

In addition, we would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their feedback and reviews of earlier drafts of this document:

Charlene Alexander  
Nancy Cantor  
Mitchell Chang  
Lisa Coleman  
Di-Tu Dissassa  
Archie Ervin  
Sharon Fries-Britt  
Paulette Granberry Russell  
Kimberly Griffin

Glen Jones  
Marvette Lacy  
Marilyn Mobley  
Candace M. Moore  
Yolanda Moses  
Mathew Lawrence Ouellett  
Rich Salas  
Kelly Slay  
Karan Watson