



A Step Toward Racial Equity: Part 1 | Diversity and Inclusion Guide

Build a more diverse and inclusive chapter
starting with your chapter leadership,
membership, and programming

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Introduction to Net Impact's work in Racial Equity

A few years ago, Net Impact began adding content to our annual conference around racial equity because we realized that it was often missing from our dialogues around social and environmental issues. Based on the positive response from our community, we knew we had discovered a real need to engage meaningfully around issues of racial equity. While we are still on the learning journey of how to best unite our community on campuses and in cities around this topic, today Net Impact is strongly committed to engaging our Chapters around racial equity. This is one of the most prominent social issues of our time and we need new energy, perspectives, and commitment from every citizen to tackle this issue. From hate crimes on college campuses to white supremacist rallies and more, the time is now for you to engage your Chapter and make a difference.

We recognize that some Chapters are already steeped in this work and others are newer to it. We are committed to providing tools and resources for your Chapter to take its next step toward racial equity, no matter where your starting place. Regardless of where you are in this work, there will always be more to learn and more to do. We hope that the Step Toward Racial Equity program supports you in building a foundation to start, or continue taking action around racial equity on your campus and in your community.



What is Racial Equity?

Racial equity refers to what a genuinely non-racist society would look like. In a racially equitable society, the distribution of society's benefits and burdens would not be *skewed by race*. In other words, **racial equity** would be a reality in which a person is no more or less likely to experience society's benefits or burdens *just because of the color of their skin*. This is in contrast to the current state of affairs in which a person of color is more likely to live in poverty, be imprisoned, drop out of high school, be unemployed and experience poor health outcomes like diabetes, heart disease, depression and other potentially fatal diseases. **Racial equity** holds society to a higher standard. It demands that we pay attention not just to individual-level discrimination, but to overall social outcomes.

- From the Aspen Institute Roundtable
on Community Change

Chapter Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit: Building a foundation

You are currently engaging in part one of the Step Toward Racial Equity program, the Chapter Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit. Congratulations for taking this step as a Chapter! We recognize and acknowledge that working on racial equity is complex, challenging, and emotional work and we commend your courage for taking this first step. We have the responsibility to look at groups of people that have the least opportunity and the greatest disparities, and how our work can help amplify systems and institutions that are addressing their needs. As a Net Impact member and leader, it may seem that the impact of your efforts may be small but collectively we can truly create a **net** impact.

To help your Chapter on this journey towards racial equity, we have developed this toolkit about diversity and inclusion. We highly recommend that as a Chapter you reflect on your diversity and inclusion practices internally before you begin organizing or advocating for change externally. Diversity and inclusion is an essential first step toward racial equity. We strongly believe that creating large scale, systemic change around racial equity is essential, and believe that starting with yourself and your Chapter is a necessary first step. It is important to get your “house in order” before doing this work in the community. Once your Chapter itself promotes and sustains a diverse and inclusive culture, you will be more readily equipped to take on wide-scale change.



What is Diversity and Inclusion?

At Net Impact Central, we are committed to supporting you in advancing your Chapter's mission, goals, and work to be as effective and successful as possible. To start, it's important to understand what we mean by "diversity and inclusion."

di·ver·si·ty

The term **diversity** is used to describe both individual differences and group/social differences. For example, diversity includes life experiences and personality types as well as race, socio-economic status, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc. In other words, diversity is about who is invited to the table- who is part of your leadership team, board of advisors, expert panelists, and others who are directly involved in your Chapter? Just to be clear, diversity is not only about race or gender (the identities that are often initially thought of as diversity) but also includes ability, sexual orientation, religion, and all other aspects of one's identity within the definition of diversity.

in·clu·sion

The term **inclusion** is used to describe a state of being valued, respected, and supported. It's about focusing on the needs of every individual and ensuring the right conditions are in place for each person to achieve his or her full potential. Inclusion should be reflected in an organization's culture, practices and relationships to support a diverse membership. In other words, inclusion is about how your Chapter intentionally engages individuals who are associated with your Chapter so that their full selves and perspectives are embraced, respected, and integrated into the everyday fabric of your Chapter.

Your Chapter will be better poised to tackle the most pressing social and environmental issues of our time when you dedicate the time, energy, and resources into understanding and fostering authentic diversity and inclusion.

Key things to keep in mind:

1

We all have multiple identities from our race to our gender to our religion and more. Some identities are not visible. It is important to understand that identity is complex and intersectional. Some identities experience more power in society and some are more marginalized.

2

Avoid tokenism. This is the practice of doing something only to give the appearance that diversity is important to your Chapter. An example of this would be choosing someone to join your leadership team who belongs to a minority group just for appearance. People should not participate in your Chapter to meet any particular quotas that help your branding.

3

This work is challenging. When embarking on this work with your Chapter, you will likely come across people with differing views and/or ideas about how these concepts should or shouldn't play out in your Chapter. Take it one step at a time, and try to balance a strong conviction for this work with a listening ear.

4

You will make mistakes. Making mistakes is unavoidable in this work, and the goal is not perfection. The goal is to strive towards creating an increasingly diverse and inclusive Chapter. Know that at times someone might correct you and you might want to correct someone else. Assume everyone's best intentions and keep an open mind.

5

Reflect throughout the entire process (and for the rest of your life)! You will learn a lot throughout this process so build in time individually and as a team to reflect on what you are learning and what you could do differently as you progress.



How to use this toolkit



Establish your “why”: The very first step down this journey toward building a more diverse and inclusive Chapter is to meet as a leadership team and dedicate time to discuss why diversity and inclusion is important to your Chapter. The answer will help guide you to work towards action and communicate your plans and intentions to your members. Once you are clear on your Chapter’s “why”, use this guide to identify specific recommendations of actions that your Chapter can take to be more diverse and inclusive. In this initial conversation, also discuss:

- What does diversity and inclusion mean to your Chapter?
- How successful have you been at creating a diverse and inclusive Chapter?
- Where have you been unsuccessful in the past?
- What feedback (if any) have you received from members or other stakeholders about this topic?

(these questions are included in the worksheet on pages 15-16)



Get a team together that is committed to diversity and inclusion:

Maybe you already have a culture committee? Or a diversity committee? Find people who are passionate about this topic to engage with you. We encourage you to find members outside of your leadership team to participate in this committee. You may want to consider (if it feels appropriate) having one of your faculty advisors join this committee.



Use this toolkit as a road map:

This is a guide to help you and your Chapter create your own strategies, structures, and processes that address diversity and inclusion. Pick and choose the recommendations that make the most sense for your Chapter and your context. This toolkit is not meant to be exhaustive but rather walks you through some key areas that are relevant to the daily operations and functioning of your Chapter. Similar to how companies hire diversity and inclusion consultants to help them reflect on their current practices and make recommendations for how they can improve as a company, we want this toolkit to serve you in the same way. Reference the resource list at the back of the toolkit for further recommendations.



Set concrete goals for your Chapter about what you are going to

tackle this year: It’s great to skim this toolkit and reflect, but it’s far more powerful if you can complete the worksheet on pages 15-16 as a first step toward putting these recommendations into action. Channel your ideas and intentions into concrete actions.



Process and reflect:

It’s important to look back at the end of the semester and assess how well you did at accomplishing your goals. Celebrating your successes but also discussing and documenting your challenges will be helpful for the diversity and inclusion committee or the next leadership team to pick up where you left off and continue moving forward in this journey.

Key Focus Areas and Recommendations

In every step of Chapter operations, there are critical moments where diversity and inclusion can come to life and take an important role. We have provided recommendations on how to be more diverse and inclusive throughout key components of your Chapter's activities.



Chapter Leadership

Chapter leadership is comprised of a) who is on your leadership team and b) how your leadership is publicly making issues around diversity and inclusion a Chapter priority. Below are five recommendations to get you on your way.

1 Recommendation: Recruit diverse leadership

Rationale: A diverse leadership team enables you to develop more effective approaches to some of the problems your Chapter is trying to address and also helps demonstrate to your members that you truly value diversity.

How to get started: Critically reflect on how diverse your leadership team is and remember that diversity is not always visible. Does it reflect the diversity of your campus or community? What additional kinds of perspectives would your Chapter benefit from? Who is being left out of these leadership conversations? You may consider reaching out to faculty and student organizations on your campus to support your efforts in recruiting new leadership members so that you can broaden your pool of potential Chapter Leaders and better reflect the campus and community you work in.

2 Recommendation: Facilitate leadership development

Rationale: It's not enough to just have a diverse leadership team. It's crucial to invest in the growth and development of the leadership team that you recruit so that they can apply their full selves to the Chapter.

How to get started: Go to your career development department or student affairs office and see if they are offering any leadership training programs or workshops that your leadership team could attend. Net Impact Central also offers a number of great ways to develop leadership skills through our programs [here](#). Another suggestion is to research local leadership development organizations and see if there are any workshops that your leadership team could attend together. Additionally, consider arranging a leadership retreat to strengthen your relationship with each other.

3

Recommendation: Develop your Chapter’s mission, values, and goals

Rationale: Develop a mission statement, list of values, and goals that include your intention on building a diverse and inclusive Chapter. This is important for your leadership team to do (along with other Chapter members if possible) because it communicates to members and external parties your Chapter’s intention in addressing diversity and inclusion.

How to get started: Developing a meaningful and succinct mission statement, list of values, and goals (or adapting the content that you currently have), can take time and effort. Schedule dedicated time in your leadership team meetings to draft a mission statement that includes your commitment to diversity and inclusion. Before finalizing it, send it to your members for review at a Chapter meeting or online. Create a safe space where members can give feedback on the statement. We recommend reading mission statements from other organizations to get inspired. Examples can be found [here](#). It’s also important to note that the conversations that your leadership team will have about your commitment to diversity and inclusion will be equally as fruitful as the final product itself.

4

Recommendation: Solicit feedback from members

Rationale: Receive honest and confidential feedback from your membership about how they perceive and feel about your diversity and inclusion efforts. Soliciting this feedback from your membership will give you insight into how diverse and inclusive your members perceive your Chapter to be. This is important because you may think that your Chapter is diverse and feels inclusive to members, but this may not be the case. Through this process, you will learn which specific areas your Chapter can improve upon.

How to get started: First, we recommend creating an entrance survey for new members that includes collecting demographic information which allows you to have a better sense of the current diversity of your Chapter (note: these questions should be optional for members who don’t feel comfortable sharing this information). Next, incorporate anonymous surveys into regular Chapter meetings and/or share surveys via your newsletter or social media outlets. You may consider including questions where participants can state how much they agree with statements like: “My Chapter creates opportunities for all members, regardless of x,” “I feel like my voice and perspective are included in Chapter decision making,” “I feel like my Chapter makes its commitment to diversity and inclusion clear to members and beyond.”

5

Recommendation: Invest in the long game

Rationale: Play the long game by understanding that diversity and inclusion is not a destination but a journey. When entering into this work we all need to understand that change will not happen overnight. Prioritizing what kinds of changes your Chapter is ready to make and holding yourselves accountable to those changes is an important first step.

How to get started: Be specific in selecting and articulating your team’s plan for progress and how you will measure success. We recommend that you identify 3-5 main areas of growth and then rank them by feasibility. Begin with the “low hanging fruit” or changes that you can start making right away while beginning to have conversations and conduct research about how to strive towards more ambitious goals.



Chapter Membership

Committing to an inclusive culture signifies your investment in your members as whole people who bring their full selves to their work. A diverse Chapter is not enough, the true work is in maintaining systems of inclusion that create a space where members of all identities feel that they have just as much stake in your Chapter as you do. Below are four recommendations for creating a more diverse and inclusive culture for your members.

1 **Recommendation:** Recruit diverse membership

Rationale: It is ideal for your Chapter membership base to reflect your campus or community. With a more diverse membership, you will have the backgrounds and skill sets to address diverse issues.

How to get started: Come up with a strategy for attracting more diverse members. Think about how people currently find out about your Chapter and where else you can advertise on campus to recruit new people. You might consider which cultural, interest, or affinity groups on campus to reach out to where students are passionate about social and environmental impact and who would be interested in the work of your Chapter.

2 **Recommendation:** Form a Diversity & Inclusion committee

Rationale: Create a D&I Committee (beyond just your leadership team) who can be responsible for creating and maintaining a positive Chapter working environment and holding your Chapter to the goals you've outlined. The more people in your Chapter that you can bring into the diversity and inclusion work your Chapter is doing, the more sustainable and impactful the outcome will be. Creating a committee that is intentionally diverse (race, age, sexual orientation, and gender), fosters more opportunities for Chapter growth and inclusion.

How to get started: While the D&I committee doesn't have to be big, it is their job to be aware of some of the suggestions in this guide and to ensure your Chapter implements some of the ideas. As well as moving the needle internally, this can also help other members to start to champion diversity, leading to even more action and impact in the process.



3 Recommendation: Learn about each other

Rationale: Learn about the backgrounds, lives and interests of members outside of Chapter activities. By increasing understanding of one another, not only will this help to create a more inclusive environment, but you might also start to notice areas of diversity within your Chapter you had never realized were there.

How to get started: We suggest that you incorporate a few social events into your year's programming where people can share more about their own backgrounds and identities (this being voluntary, of course). For example, you could host a potluck where people bring food from their cultural backgrounds and share a story behind it. You could also organize a celebration for a specific religious or cultural holiday that includes an educational historical component.

4 Recommendation: Promote sub-committees

Rationale: Give all members the chance to create sub committees to plan social events or other types of programs. By empowering your members to start their own committees when they identify an unmet need in your Chapter, more people will feel like your Chapter is creating an inclusive environment that is welcoming of everyone's ideas and backgrounds.

How to get started: Create a system (whether in person and/or virtual) where Chapter members can propose committee topics and recruit members to join their efforts.

Chapter Programming

Your Chapter expresses your values through the events/programs you put on for your members and beyond (this is what your campus and the public sees about your Chapter). Below are six ways that your Chapter can think critically about making your programming more diverse and inclusive.

1

Recommendation: Develop diverse and inclusive marketing

Rationale: Develop marketing materials that feel inclusive and aim to attract a diverse audience. It's critical to market your programming in a way that is appealing to diverse audiences. Regardless of how awesome your event is, if you don't consider how you are marketing it, you won't get the diverse audience you are hoping for.

How to get started: Think about what language and images you are using to advertise the event. Who is represented in the images used? Is anyone missing? You may consider sampling a small group of diverse Chapter (or campus) members and ask them if the marketing feels inclusive to them. Once you have created marketing material that feels inclusive, brainstorm all of the different places on campus or in the community that you can hang posters and flyers to reach new audiences. For example, you can ask a different student organization if they will help you market the event through their social media or newsletter.

2

Recommendation: Curate inclusive events

Rationale: Start with a lense of inclusion from the beginning so that you design your events with the goal in mind.

How to get started: Here are some examples of ways to make your events more inclusive: If the event includes food, be sure to have options for all dietary needs. Make sure non-alcoholic drinks are provided for people who don't drink alcohol. Strive to have your event be wheelchair accessible. Consider where on campus or in the community you want to hold the event so it feels welcoming to as many attendees as possible.

3

Recommendation: Use inclusive language

Rationale: So much of our values and priorities are reflected in the language that we use, so strive to make sure the language in and around your event as inclusive as possible.

How to get started: We recommend using language that is free from words, phrases or tones that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped or discriminatory views of particular people or groups. Inclusive language doesn't deliberately exclude people from being seen as part of a group. For example, ableist language (language that assumes everyone is able-bodied) such as "Everyone stand up with me," excludes those that are unable to stand. It's a good idea to test your event language with other members before using it on the day of the event.

4

Recommendation: Design inclusive spaces

Rationale: It's important to create a physical space at events that will feel welcoming and inclusive to all participants.

How to get started: Think about how attendees will interact in the space. Is there enough space for them to mingle with one another? Will the space promote open dialogue? In order to continue cultivating an inclusive culture, each event you host is an opportunity to do this further. When choosing a venue, some things to take into account include wheelchair accessibility, parking, and access to public transit nearby. If the existing restrooms aren't already gender neutral, you can convert them by making your own signs and placing them over existing ones.

5

Recommendation: Invite diverse experts and speakers

Rationale: It is ideal for external speakers that you invite to speak at your events to come from a diversity of identities and backgrounds. This is important for a few reasons: 1) it will demonstrate to your members and audience that you have done your due diligence to bring in diverse experts around a particular topic 2) it will greatly diversify the points of view and experiences being shared as experts and 3) It will allow the topics discussed to resonate with a more diverse audience.

How to get started: It is important to not always invite the usual suspects to speak. For example, if you are curating a panel of impact investors, do your best to include women and people of color to speak on the panel. This might be more challenging to do given that impact investing is heavily white and male dominated, but it is certainly possible. We recommend that you reach out to local organizations and faculty on campus to get suggestions of potential speakers who can speak about your chosen topic. Using LinkedIn as a way to connect with speakers who are not in your direct reach can also be an effective tactic. Offering speaker training or extra support, if you are able to, may encourage individuals to participate in your event. If you are having a difficult time finding diverse speakers to participate in your event/panel, consider broadening or re-thinking your topic.

6

Recommendation: Diversify your external events

Rationale: Diversify the types of external events that your Chapter facilitates (ex: social events, tours, volunteering, etc.). When thinking of external events, consider how they align with your Chapter's mission and values as they change.

How to get started: Is your Chapter volunteering with the same non-profit or in the same community each year? Is there a way you could diversify the types of engagements you have with the community to support more diverse communities around your campus and appeal to more diverse students on your campus?



Conclusion

Congratulations! You've made it through the toolkit. Reading about diversity and inclusion is educational, but no change will happen unless you identify goals and then work on taking concrete steps to get there. Use this resource as a guide for your Chapter throughout the year to step towards more diversity and inclusion.

This toolkit is not meant to be exhaustive but is meant to be a good starting place. Please complete the worksheet on pages 15-16 as a way to articulate your Chapter's goals and next steps. We hope you have taken steps on your journey towards creating a more diverse and inclusive Net Impact Chapter!

Net Impact Central is here to support you! Please email steptowardracialequity@netimpact.org with any questions.

Chapter Diversity and Inclusion Worksheet

Use this worksheet with your leadership team to identify your starting place in this journey towards diversity and inclusion as well as your goals and next steps.

Reflect on the current state of your Chapter:

1. Why is diversity and inclusion important to your Chapter?
2. What does diversity and inclusion mean to your team?
3. How successful have you been at creating a diverse and inclusive Chapter in the past?
4. Where have you been unsuccessful in the past?
5. What feedback (if any) have you received from members or other stakeholders about this topic?

Moving forward:

1. Who is on your Diversity and Inclusion Committee?
2. What are you hoping to achieve around diversity and inclusion with your Chapter in 2017-18?
3. How will you work towards achieving your goals?
4. How will you know if you have been successful or made progress in these areas?
5. What other resources and support do you need to be successful in this area?
Where do you think you can find the resources and support?
6. Create a timeline of the next steps your Chapter will take:

Resource List

Resources for Building a More Diverse & Inclusive Chapter

Aspen Institute on how to create a racial equity theory of change for your community

(<http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/Roundtable%20on%20Community%20Change%20RETOC.pdf>)

A guide to inclusive language

(<http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/diversity-language-guidelines.cfm>)

This article has practical suggestions for how to embrace diversity in a group that is already diverse

(<http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/diversity-supportive-environment.cfm>)

Some helpful tips on how to start building a diverse community, also includes lots of background information on diversity and culture

(<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/culture/cultural-competence/culture-and-diversity/main>)

More background information and examples of activities you can do to create a more diverse Chapter environment:

(www.diversitycentral.com/tools_and_resources/mtb/The_Manager's_Toolbox.pdf)

“Promoting Diversity and Inclusion in Student Groups” - A comprehensive guide from the Education Advisory Board

(https://www.mga.edu/student-affairs/docs/Promoting_Diversity_and_Inclusion_in_Student_Groups.pdf)

Page 8 has an interesting summary of 11 D&I trends from 2016 (full report costs \$39.99)

(http://www.wintersgroup.com/TWG_GlobalD&ITippingPoint_Preview_2016.pdf)

A series of video recordings on a variety of subjects relating to diversity and inclusion

(<http://www.wintersgroup.com/vll/archives/>)

The Inclusion Solution blog from the Winter's Group - a variety of blog posts relating to D&I issues

(<http://www.theinclusionsolution.me/>)

Penn State Guide to Diversity - an excellent introduction to diversity, culture and associated issues

(<http://www.collegesuccess1.com/Documents/ui362.pdf>)

Resource List (continued)

Recruiting Chapter Members

The Public Relations Student Society of America has some tips on how to recruit diverse members

(<http://progressions.prssa.org/index.php/2011/08/17/recruit-diverse-members/>)

The Corporation for National and Community Service - This link will download a word document on how to recruit diverse volunteers

(<https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/recruitment/encorps/recruiting-diversity>)

Running Inclusive Meetings

Harvard Business Review article on how to run a meeting that includes women, remote workers and introverts

(<https://hbr.org/2016/04/run-meetings-that-are-fair-to-introverts-women-and-remote-workers>)

HBR article, “Who’s Being Left Out on Your Team?”

(<https://hbr.org/2014/08/whos-being-left-out-on-your-team>)

Building Diverse and Inclusive Leadership Teams

A Stanford Social Innovation Review article on building diverse and inclusive leadership teams

(https://ssir.org/articles/entry/five_ways_to_build_diverse_inclusive_leadership_teams)

An inspiring TEDx talk on Everyday Leadership which challenges the idea of leadership as an intimidating thing

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVCBrkrFrBE>)

Society for Human Resource Management - This article is very workplace oriented, but many of the principles for creating a diversity and inclusion initiative could be applied to your Chapter

(<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/how-to-guides/pages/how-to-develop-a-diversity-and-inclusion-initiative.aspx>)

A guide to Peer to Peer Mentoring - in pairs you can take turns playing the role of mentor and mentee

(<http://www.mentoringpittsburgh.org/media/>)

General Sources

“Women of Color are a Third Working Women, But They Aren’t in Corporate America”, Bryce Covert, Think Progress

(<https://thinkprogress.org/women-of-color-are-a-third-of-all-working-women-but-they-arent-in-corporate-america-41bbcafdbba/>)

Illustrating Equality vs. Equity

(<http://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/>)

NET IMPACT

Our mission

Net Impact mobilizes new generations to use their skills and careers to drive transformational social and environmental change.

Sign up

Our community

Net Impact is a global community of students and professionals who want to become the most effective change agents they can be. Over 100,000 strong, our emerging leaders take on social challenges, protect the environment, invent new products and orient business toward the greater good. In short, we help our members turn their passions into a lifetime of world-changing action. Start a chapter.

Start a chapter

Our programs

Many people want to make a difference, but turning good intentions into tangible impact can be hard. Net Impact is an accelerator. Our programs—delivered from our headquarters, as well as globally through our student and professional chapters—give our members the skills, experiences and connections that will allow them to have the greatest impact now and throughout their careers.

Lead a program



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