

Advancing Undergraduate Student Government's Commitment to DEI



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Executive Summary

As a campus-wide governing body, the Undergraduate Student Government possesses resources that can advance the University's goals by enforcing DEI action within all undergraduate student organizations. Upgrading USG's internal protocols elevates DEI standards, enabling USG to more effectively promote DEI to other student organizations. Communication and enforcement procedures will establish accountability to successfully serve marginalized students.

The recommended plan in this report was created using the following methods:

- Auditing current USG initiatives to serve as a baseline for DEI action
- Comparing current initiatives with similar student organizations and other Big Ten USGs to improve understanding of DEI effectiveness

Internal inspection paired with external benchmarking highlighted these areas:

- Static internal diversity and inclusion protocols
- Outdated organizational bylaws and websites
- Lack of insight into campus culture and the DEI status of student organizations
- Insufficient promotion of DEI initiatives and resources to assist student organizations in making DEI advancement

The recommended action plan addresses each exposed weakness through a series of initiatives.

Altering internal protocols enhances USG's ability to lead other campus organizations

By initiating senator diversity training, creating allotted speaking time for minority senators, and updating websites to be more accessible to external users, USG can strengthen current DEI practices to align with University goals. Internal improvement through enhanced accountability and inclusion efforts reinforces USG's ability to model successful DEI to student organizations.

Sharing best practices with other organizations streamlines DEI implementation

By publishing a DEI framework, USG facilitates external DEI implementation by establishing a line of communication with student organizations. Semi-annual progress reports allow USG to provide relevant recommendations and enhance DEI accountability, advancing the goals of the University.

Focusing on University DEI goals produce the most favorable student outcomes

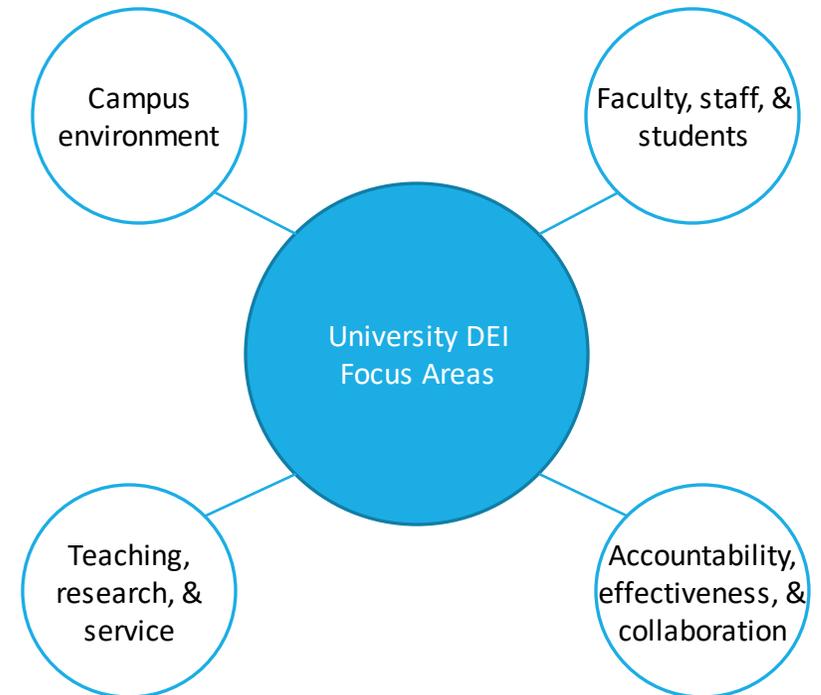
University DEI goals best position USG and students for positive results. The goals allow students to further their growth in various areas, from time and stress management skills to social and academic improvement. The University defines diversity as “all aspects of human difference,” equity as “fair and just practices and policies that allow members to thrive,” and inclusion as “a campus community where people are respected” (University of Iowa, 2021). USG uses these definitions to guide how they view diversity, equity, and inclusion and implement these principles in their everyday actions. The University has four quantifiable areas of focus for its goals:

- The campus environment
- Faculty, staff, and students
- Teaching, research, and service
- Accountability, effectiveness, and collaboration

USG’s continued focus in these four areas produces the most advantageous outcomes for students. Vector solutions discusses a diversity-focused on campus, and the five ways student success is enhanced via this focus. The five benefits are (Vector Solutions, 2016):

1. “Enriched educational experience”
2. “Improved communication and though processing skills”
3. “Challenged stereotypes”
4. “Students see themselves in their leaders”
5. “Prepared students for the workforce”

A diverse campus produces a plethora of positive outcomes, leaving administrations wondering why all college universities do not promote diversity more heavily.



USG strives to represent, serve, and empower all University undergraduate students

USG's mission focuses on accurately representing Iowa's student body, meeting their needs, and providing them with opportunities for growth. A campus that is well-rounded when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion is conducive to student welfare.

A thriving campus environment requires students are heard

Representing, serving, and empowering undergraduate students is vital for a successful campus environment. A successful campus environment sparks innovation and allows students to grow through collaboration with their peers. USG listens to students through idea submissions on their website, along with direct contact in person or via technology. Hearing student opinions gives USG an idea of the student body's feelings and attitudes towards the status quo on campus. Organizations such as the Board of Regents, the State of Iowa, and local and federal legislators address student concerns brought to them by USG and make the necessary changes to ensure improved student representation. Allotting Student Activity Fees towards actions that ameliorate the campus's learning and living environment better also serve student needs, empowering them in and out of the classroom. The *Responding to Diversity Project's* research shows engaging with student views challenges professors' existing diversity practices and creates an opportunity to improve these practices (Lifelong Learning Programme, n.d.). For example, student feedback may influence a teacher to move away from allowing students to select their own groups to instead preselecting groups with members based on different backgrounds. The project showed both students and teachers saw beneficial outcomes when student input was used to improve current practices.

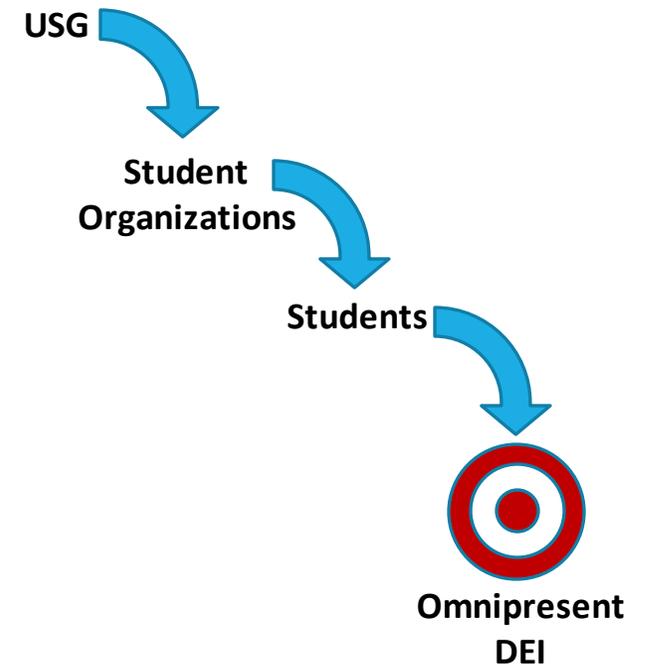
What are USG values, and how do they positively impact behavior?

They focus on implementing advocacy, collaboration, community, impact, equity, innovation, and integrity into their day-to-day actions to create lasting change. A code of value augments positive improvements and reduces cynical behavior, as student organizations are put before USG themselves. According to the Ethics and Compliance initiative, "a code articulates the values the organization wishes to foster in leaders and employees and, in doing so, defines desired behavior" (Ethics & Compliance Initiative, 2021). USG members view these values as a benchmark for acceptable behavior that effectively guides their day-to-day actions. The organization is privileged to be the University's voice, and these principles influence USG to appropriately represent, serve, and empower student bodies.

Organizational relationships facilitate the dispersion of DEI practices to student bodies

Relationships expedite the diffusion of DEI practices to student organizations, and accelerated distribution makes DEI more ubiquitous across campus. According to the authors from Learn to Love Networking, "a mountain of research shows that professional networks lead to greater status, authority, and broader and deeper knowledge" (Casciaro et al., 2016). Networking has many benefits, and USG has a large network on campus, enabling them to have a strong understanding of the organization's current DEI practices.

Student bodies view USG as a model for DEI, financial literacy, sexual assault prevention, and sustainability implementation. Preexisting relationships create a positive domino effect on campus. For example, an improvement to USG's DEI plan travels through its relationship web, eventually making beneficial changes in other organizations. These organizations directly impact their members. USG is also an advocator of various student organizations that focus on black power, LGBTQ+, and sexual assault, and expanding their network further penetrates DEI to students.



Reserved minority senate seats grant inclusive decision-making

Reserved seats for marginalized senators promote decision-making that involves all backgrounds. Drawing on different backgrounds produces more well-rounded and thought-out decisions.

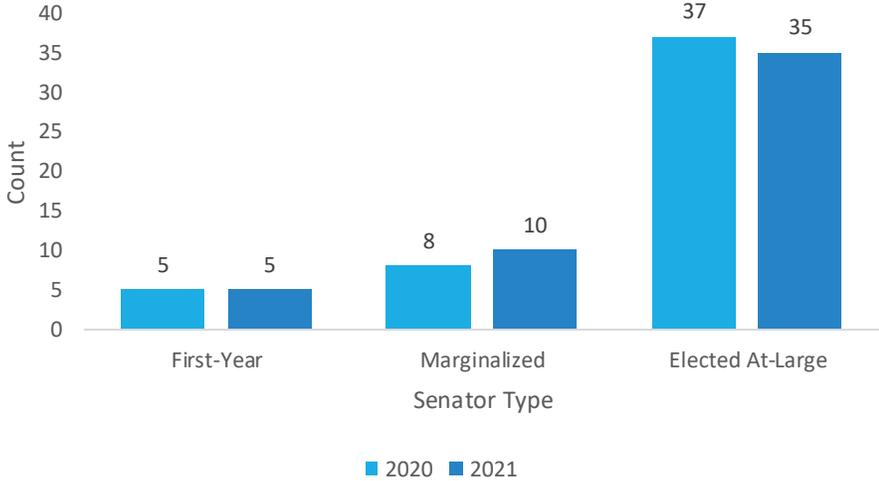
Enhanced representation improves inclusivity

Allocating senate seats for marginalized students promotes inclusive decision-making. Minority representation displays the campus demographic and provides a more accurate representation of the student body's thoughts. USG reserves 10 of its 50 senate seats for the following minorities: Asian, black, first-generation, international, Jewish, LGBTQ+, disabled, Latinx, Native American, and veteran. USG currently fills five of these seats, augmenting inclusive decision-making that is not yet maximized. According to Heidi Grant and David Rock in the Harvard Business Review, "one of the best ways to boost their capacity to transform themselves and their products may involve hiring more women and culturally diverse team members, research suggests" (Grant & Rock, 2016). Reserving seats for minorities produces positive outcomes, and allotting ten senate seats for marginalized students makes beneficial results. Filling the open five seats encourages the remaining marginalized groups to share their ideas with their respective senator to create a more inclusive campus. Marginalized senator input affects decisions ranging from the distribution of funds to petitions to relocation of police off-campus.

Quotas galvanize minorities

Reserving seats for marginalized students inspires other minority students to run for senate. More marginalized students running for senate increases the chance of winning an "elected at large" senate seat. A senate occupied by many minorities encourages marginalized students to believe they can also achieve winning a senate seat. This belief improves the chances of more minority students holding a senate seat, increasing decision-making from various backgrounds. A set count of diversity seats promotes inclusive decision-making.

Elected at-large seats show the greatest opportunity for a larger minority presence



Broad diversity statements in organizational bylaws hinder diversity, equity, and inclusion progress on campus

Broad statements, when taken at face value, appear to address issues relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion, but these statements serve to slow DEI progress.

Big Ten universities rely heavily on blanket statements

University student governments across the Big Ten rely on blanket statements. Recognizing that most of their peers overuse broad terms can position USG to be one of the first in changing their language to be more actionable. 11/14 Big Ten universities depend on overly broad statements in their constitution and bylaws (Big Ten website review, 2021).

An example of a broad statement would be:

- “The J&E committee should work to better serve and represent the unique needs of students from historically marginalized groups.”

An example of a more effective statement would be:

- “The J&E committee should work to serve marginalized groups by conducting DEI training for new USG members, enforcing DEI standards, and annually publishing USG’s DEI framework.”

Broad statements can be a “cop-out” when faced with adversity

Blanket statements prevent meaningful actions from taking place. Broad statements seem like good places to start, but an article from the Harvard Business review written in the wake of the death of George Floyd criticizes broad statements, “Blanket and abstract statements that merely denounce police brutality sound more like a politician trying to get votes than an institution prepared to take action. Perhaps now more than ever, talk is cheap” (Roberts, 2020). Sweeping statements let organizations like USG simply point towards their statement when issues arise, rather than gathering community input and working to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus environment. More specific words and commitment to actions are a better way to approach DEI.

11/14 Big Ten universities rely on overly broad statements

Big Ten website review

Appealing and updated website and social media pages show commitment to improving the campus environment

Updated, visually appealing communication outlets show DEI is taken seriously

An organization that cannot take the time to make their DEI web pages and social media content attractive and updated appears as if they don't have time for DEI. A research article published in the Review of Economic and Business Studies Journal says that a user's first impression of a website will determine if they navigate the website further and if they find the information on the site trustworthy (Robu, 2014). If the first impression of an organization's DEI initiatives and protocols is how lackluster the website is, the organization is at a disadvantage from the beginning.

What does an out-of-date, unappealing website look like?

There are many examples across the Big Ten of ineffective web pages. Things like links not working (The University of Minnesota, 2021), a visual layout that appears to have not been updated since 2008 (The University of Maryland, 2021), annoying popups that occur on every page (Michigan State, 2021), and hard to read color schemes (The University of Michigan, 2021). All these items make web pages difficult to understand, difficult to navigate and hinder DEI goals.

Where does USG stand?

USG is a leader among its peers in its website and social media design. The website is easy to look at, easy to navigate, and easy to understand. Most pages are updated with relevant information. In the demographics section under the about tab, the last report was for 2018, and the page states the 2019 report is "Coming October 2019" which is over two years outdated (The University of Iowa, 2021). Some updates are needed, but USG's website has the potential to become not only a leader in the Big Ten but a leader nationwide.

USG's website has the potential to become not only a leader in the Big Ten but a leader nationwide.

Addressing minority needs requires continual insight into campus culture

Meaningful information continuously gathered from University of Iowa students combined with actions based on that input can be a tremendous asset to DEI progress. But why is this continuous information gathering so important, and what does it look like in practice?

Continually probing the campus environment supplies timely feedback

Determining DEI weaknesses enables relevant actions to be taken. Actions taken not based on feedback tend to be less effective than actions based on community input. There is sometimes an illusion that people can be grouped and what is good for one member of the group must be good for all members of the group. Laurent Dubreuil, a Cornell University professor, published an article in Harper's Magazine highlighting this illusion. He called this thought "identity determinism", and said that grouping people together based on appearances, desires, or any other identity doesn't allow for conversations that let people grow and be altered for the better (Dubreuil, 2020). Laura Roberts and Ella Washington, both University professors, and leaders on issues relating to DEI, said in a Harvard Business Review article that individuals of the same group have different experiences and different ideas, and therefore the best way to get their viewpoint is to ask them (Roberts, 2020). While these articles were referring to different situations in the workplace and academic study, they relate directly to USG's purpose of representing and empowering all Iowa undergrads. Getting direct input from the student body, and specifically from minority students, will allow USG leaders to gain a better idea of where those students feel the most change is needed. Consistently gathering feedback will allow USG to keep up with rapidly changing campus environments.

What does continual insight look like?

The Ohio State University appears to be the gold standard in gathering input from diverse groups. They use that input to create actionable plans to improve campus diversity, equity, and inclusion. In 2020 they launched a campus-wide investigation relating to University resources and the environment surrounding the LGBTQ community. They then published their findings and the steps they were going to take to improve that environment. They also host regular community conversations through their Black Caucus, where students of color can voice issues they are concerned about and have dialogue on how to improve campus DEI. Ohio State's USG also consistently asks for feedback on social media, encourages students to attend meetings, and is vocal about their support for DEI initiatives (Undergraduate Student Government, 2021). Large annual studies like the LGBTQ Campus Climate report allow for deeper research and more in-depth understandings to take place. Frequent feedback through community conversations and regular meetings ensures that the organization stays up to date on new developments, and promotes quicker, more responsive actions to be taken when needed.

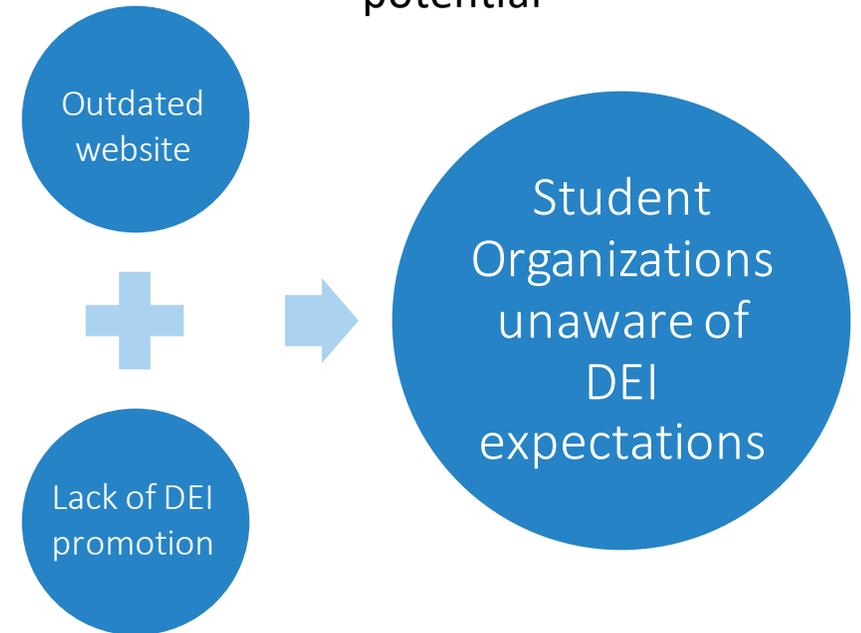
USG's DEI action plan weaknesses create deficiencies within other student organizations' plans

USG's DEI weaknesses create a domino effect of similar weaknesses within other student organizations. While USG has several advanced DEI initiatives in place, including inclusive student service programs and the Justice and Equity platform, a lack of effective marketing prevents external organizations from seeing successful actions and results. Additionally, outdated and unquantifiable website reports hinder the comprehension of external viewers. Another student governing body, Tippie Senate, fails to include a DEI report on their website, despite funding many diversity events within the Tippie College of Business. Although Tippie Senate pursues DEI advancement within Tippie, by not publishing a DEI progress report on their page, students lack awareness of their efforts and minority students may feel unsupported by senators.

USG Lacks Effective DEI Promotion

USG's current DEI initiatives fail to advance campus-wide DEI if they are not accessible to student leaders, organizations, and students. While USG currently funds several successful DEI programs on campus, effective marketing and promotion will take these initiatives to the next level. Communicating efforts, logistics, and progress of DEI are crucial factors in making progress internally (Meade, 2021), but taking the next step to market these efforts creates a credible reputation. Better external communication strategies will also improve accessibility to USG's DEI plans and resources, so students do not have to navigate through lengthy reports to find the resources available to them.

USG's DEI initiatives fall short of their potential



Utilizing Corporate America's tactics for DEI implementation positions USG at the forefront of change

Corporate America's implementation of DEI practices is effective, and mimicking their approach situates USG as the vanguard for change. Successfully leading the movement on campus inspires other organizations on campus to make changes that favor marginalized students. According to Robin Ely and David Thomas, who writes in the Harvard Business Review, "companies have adopted a slew of initiatives as a result: affinity groups, mentoring programs, work-family accommodation policies, and unconscious-bias training" (Ely & Thomas, 2020). There is a disparity in US corporations via the unequal representation of different backgrounds in the workplace, and these corporations are actively making changes to level the playing field for all backgrounds. USG can follow suit by simply implementing a few of Corporate America's practices to prepare students for the workplace and further DEI on campus.

Increased attention towards unconscious-bias training furthers USG member growth. Members become more aware of their unconscious tendencies that adversely affect minorities. For example, the affinity bias elucidates that similar people gravitate to one another, unfavorably affecting minorities during organizational recruitment processes. Unconscious-bias training reduces this tendency, vitalizing members to engage marginalized students in the recruitment process advancing diversity actively. Following Corporate America's DEI practices will position USG at the forefront of effective change.

Benchmarking leadership diversity with top companies reveals room for improvement

The 2021 results of Fortune and data-giant Refinitiv's yearly ranking of companies' DEI experiences place Microsoft as the top US company as far as diversity and inclusivity. USG can benefit from using Microsoft as a benchmark for internal diversity and how it contributes to overall success.

According to public disclosures, in 2020 Microsoft's board consisted of 39.7% racial and ethnic minorities (Fortune, 2021). It is under this team that Microsoft was able to do billions in revenue and push Microsoft to be the second publicly traded company to ever hit a market capitalization of 2 trillion dollars in June 2021 (Clark, 2021).

According to USG's most recent publicized demographic report, from 2018, the senate is comprised of 34.1% racial and ethnic minorities. Presently, USG has a solid minority presence, but clearly the 62.5% majority of white students leaves room for improvement (2.3% preferred not to share)(Schmidt, Sanchez, Herrera, & Meisner, 2018).

Why does leadership diversity matter?

It has been proven time and time again, diverse teams outperform homogenous ones. According to a 2015 McKinsey report included in David Rock and Heidi Grant's article, "Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter", public companies "within the top quartile for ethnic and racial diversity in management were 35% more likely to have financial returns above their industry mean, and those in the top quartile for gender diversity were 15% more likely to have returns above the industry mean" (Rock & Grant, 2016). Although USG is not a company, the real message behind these statistics is that diversity in backgrounds and ideas allows groups to push their thinking further and accomplish more than they knew was possible.

Even if a population is primarily one race, such as the 72.3% white student population at the University of Iowa, the population may still benefit from having a diverse board (Sanchez, et al., 2018). In the United States and at the University of Iowa, leadership has been primarily white throughout history, disproportionate to the actual populations of minorities. Diversity of ideas in leadership was lacking for many years, and it will take many more than the recent DEI pushes in order to fix unethical policies that may be engrained in establishments. Beyond the idea of representation for the minority groups, simply having people of different backgrounds brings new perspectives and insight to the decision-making table.

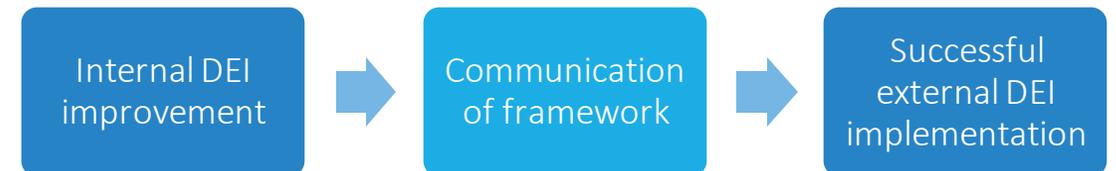
Internal DEI upgrades and enforceable external implementation create actionable DEI progress and results

Through the initiation of a multi-step action plan aimed toward internal DEI advancement and effective communication of best practices, USG can implement DEI protocols internally and externally. By updating internal systems to align with University DEI goals, USG will become a DEI model to student organizations through the publication of a DEI framework. Subsequently, student organizations will have an accessible guide outlining DEI recommendations and expectations. Accountability measures will enforce external implementation, and semi-annual reports from student organizations will provide USG with relevant data to drive DEI progress forward throughout the next three years.

Internal DEI advancement provides framework for other student organizations

By initiating senator diversity training and creating allotted speaking time for minority senators, USG promotes an inclusive environment in which all members feel valued. With more diverse perspectives, USG can focus more resources on DEI research on campus to create quantifiable goals. Then, by updating websites to be more accessible to external users, USG lays the groundwork for effective enforcement of student organization DEI implementation. These Internal improvements will reinforce USG's ability to model successful DEI to other student organizations.

Communication links USG's advancements to action within student organizations



Providing DEI frameworks for student organizations upholds USG's commitment to serve the student body

Creating a DEI framework regarding diverse recruitment and equitable leadership allocation provides student leaders with specific expectations. Then, by updating the current diversity training programs for student organizations and launching monetary incentive programs, USG establishes accountability for student organizations. Once the framework has been established, communication will ensure external accessibility and knowledge of DEI expectations. Requesting end-of-semester reports from student organizations heightens USG's awareness of external progress and supplies the data needed to produce an updated DEI framework every semester.

Timely implementation of recommended action plan advances DEI progress

Providing a schedule of actions for USG senators grants the specificity necessary to accomplish improvements in DEI in a timely manner. Furthermore, breaking a large list of actions down into categories and phases makes the objectives less overwhelming and motivates progress. The actions can be broken into internal, external, and continuous revision categories, where USG focuses on improving internal DEI practices before expanding their reach and helping organizations across campus to do the same.

Phase 1: Internal

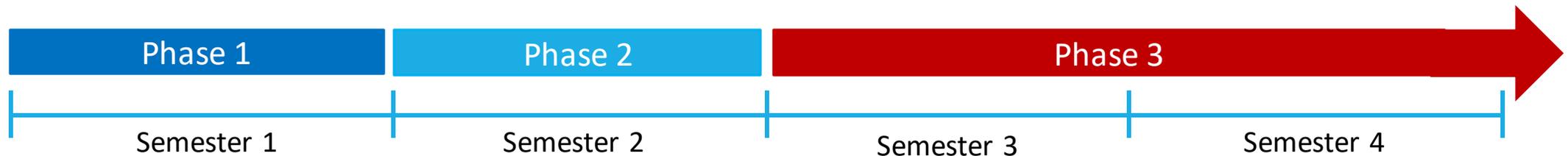
- Develop and implement senator diversity training program
- Implement allotted speaking times for minority senators
- Conduct diagnostic research to discover DEI improvement opportunities
- Create quantifiable DEI goals
- Publish DEI goals and progress reports on the USG website and social media

Phase 2: External

- Distribute DEI recruitment and leadership framework for student orgs
- Update ORGTIP\$ and launch monetary incentives
- Request DEI progress reports from student orgs after each semester

Phase 3: Continuous reflection and revision

- Evaluate and tweak senator diversity training program
- Continue diagnostic research efforts
- Publish updated, quantified DEI goals and progress reports
- Monitor ORGTIP\$ program and student org progress reports and alter support where necessary



DEI training prior to senator terms establishes a foundation for understanding

By incorporating DEI language and action training for newly initiated senators, USG can build a board of understanding individuals and hasten DEI policy workflow. If senators already have the background knowledge on DEI issues necessary to speak and act on them, they can be less hesitant and accomplish a higher volume of DEI and minority-group projects. Creating a short, mandatory training with media on a variety of DEI discussion points exposes participants to diverse perspectives on issues potentially faced by the University students they hope to govern.

Minority delegates are not responsible for teaching DEI to other senators

The designated minority senators are not the only ones who can advocate for DEI policies. The challenges of being a minority can be draining as they are constantly having to raise their voice to be heard by the majority. USG can advance by educating every senator so they don't require as much guidance, and therefore the minority senate members may hold the same responsibility as standard senators.

DEI training in a new format provides opportunity for higher learning to senators

All University of Iowa students undergo basic DEI training in their Success at Iowa course completed in their first semester of freshman year, but USG can provide higher-level DEI training by opting for education in a different format than online modules and quizzes. The top-ranked diversity training program for small businesses in 2021 is actually a game format with a variety of activities from a company called HRDQ (Treece, 2021). Titled "Diversity Works", this program provides a stimulating DEI training format for small groups where participants complete a variety of activities catered to their learning styles and conclude with an educational board game (HDRQ,2021). The learning objectives are for students to learn about themselves, others, and how to communicate respectfully. A proven program catered to the masses provides deeper learning that is easy to implement.

Inclusivity of learning styles in activity format creates a personalized, meaningful training experience

Interaction Types	Learning Experiences	Technology Types
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual• Partner• Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual• Auditory• Kinesthetic• Reflective• Competitive• Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low Tech• High Tech

HRDQ, 2021

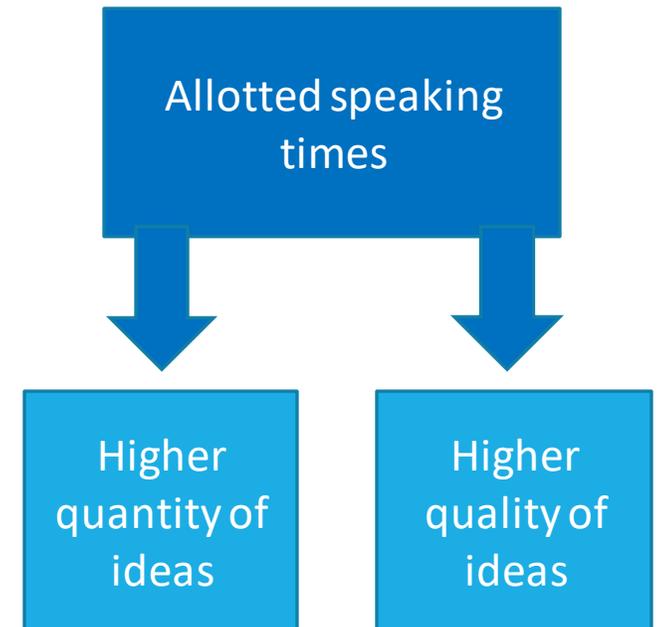
Allotted speaking times create space for minority seat voices and ideas

While each minority has a seat at the table, USG can encourage input from these seats by designating allotted speaking times, even just two minutes, for each senator in meetings. Even if the minority senator has nothing to say, simply having a time where they are called upon to share ideas and concerns could bring new insight to USG. As aforementioned, minority students often must advocate for themselves among the noise of the majority, and allotted speaking times are just one way to make room for their voices.

Responsibility to speak prompts higher idea formulation

Not only could it give an opportunity to share thoughts and opinions, but simply having the responsibility of an assigned speaking time could prompt senators to actively work to fill that speaking time with ideas for improvement. Assigning senators a window to speak could increase not only the quantity of ideas shared, but the quality as well, as the senators are on a stage in front of their peers and surely want to put their best foot forward.

Two minutes per meeting for each senator over the span of an academic year would provide 680 minutes allotted to the minority senators' ideas.



Addressing specific community requests yields impactful DEI policy formation

Instead of approaching DEI with broad mission statements, diagnostic research can be used to identify problems that require attention. By choosing to target specific areas for DEI improvement, USG can solve the issues that are relevant to the livelihoods of students on campus, and therefore make a significant impact.

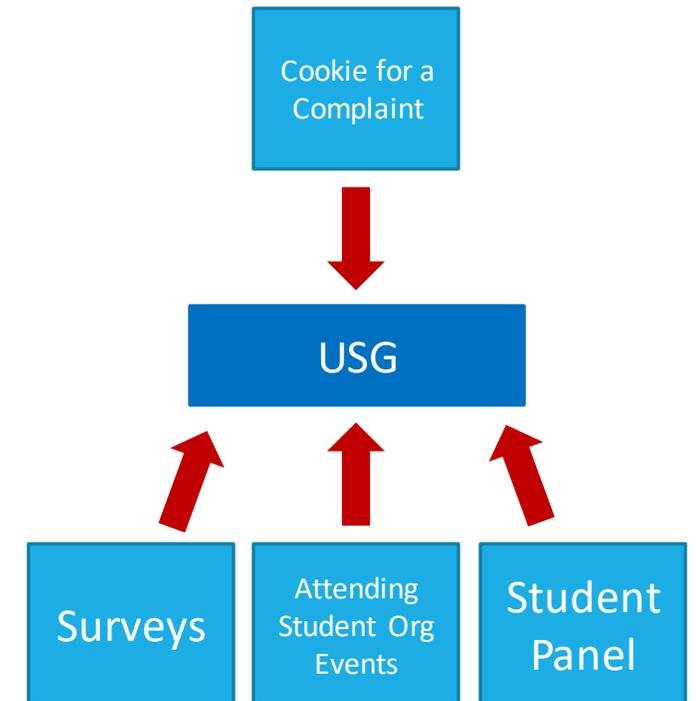
Greater insight requires a greater number of tactics

USG currently employs several practices such as Cookie for a Complaint to gather feedback from the student body, but with slightly more tedious research tactics USG could frame the student body's feedback to include the specific information USG needs for policy formation.

Examples of diagnostic research include:

- Surveys, both experience and demographic-based
- Attending student organization events, especially multicultural organizations, to ensure each one has the resources it needs to thrive
- Constructing a diverse panel of senior students to reflect on what could have improved their campus experience

Surveys, observational research, and focus groups provide USG with more control over the feedback process than current tactics. Switching to framed feedback mechanisms allows for relevant data collection on matters USG actually has the power to alter, providing the senators with content for ideation on policy improvements.



Quantifying goals and reporting results display DEI practice feasibility and raises the likelihood of goal achievement

Without clear examples, actions towards tackling DEI issues can seem daunting to students and organizations. As leaders on campus, it is the role of USG to provide peers with the tools to work towards DEI progress. Current website and social media publications lack specific, measured goals and updated progress reports, and as a result it is difficult to recognize USG's efforts and leadership in the innovation of DEI on campus. USG can help themselves and other organizations on campus towards achieving DEI progress by quantifying goals and reporting results.

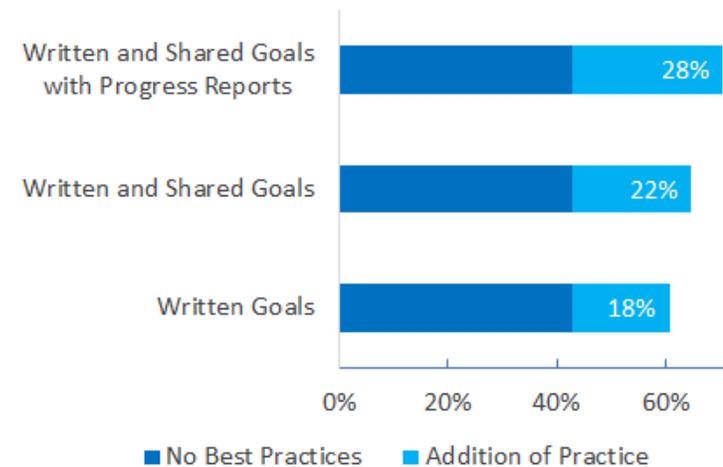
Does setting and publicizing goals lead to success?

Goal-setting is a widely recommended practice, but clinical psychologist Dr. Gail Matthews conducted research to discover if the way in which you set your goals has an impact on your success towards those goals. She studied businesspeople from various organizations and observed three trends that supported her final conclusion that "writing one's goal enhances goal achievement" (Matthews, 2015).

- Those who wrote their goal down were 18% more likely to achieve their goal than the baseline of those who did not.
- Those who wrote their goal down and publicized their commitment towards the goal to a friend were 4% more likely achieve the goal than those who just wrote it down.
- Those who submitted weekly progress reports to a friend on top of telling a friend their goal and writing the goal down were 6% more likely to achieve the goal than those who only wrote the goal down and told a friend.

Similar to the participants in Dr. Matthews' study, USG could accomplish much more as an organization by writing down goals, publicizing them via the USG website and social media, and consistently performing and publicizing progress checks on those goals.

Writing and sharing goals with progress reports increase goal success rate by 28%



Matthews, 2015

Updating USG's website expresses commitment to supporting the student body and furthering DEI on campus

Updating various components to USG's website exhibits dedication to the student body and improves DEI practices. USG's commitment to positively impacting organizations and furthering DEI on campus is dependent on how well their website incorporates the latest developments and trends. According to YouGov, a market research and data analytics company, "updating the website and offering a seamless user experience can help brands win consumer trust, as 94% of users no longer trust outdated sites" (YouGov, 2020). Obsolete websites lose credibility, and USG's website lacks the most recent information. Updating the constitution, filling the remaining constituency senator seats, and performing various reports for 2021 (e.g., demographic / student services) renovates the website.

A less updated website suggests a weakening desire to serve Iowa's student body and improve DEI on campus, especially with the significant progress made in DEI within the last two years. An outdated website erodes USG's credibility. On the other hand, an updated website exhibits a devotion towards improving students' lives on campus and further DEI across campus.

”
94% of users no longer trust outdated sites

YouGov, 2020

Advocating equitable recruitment strategies improves student organizations' ability to acquire diverse candidates

Providing student organizations with procedures that support more equitable recruitment methods elevates accessibility for diverse candidates. Altering recruitment strategies to appeal to a broad scope of students will help diversify student organizations that struggle to meet the diversity expectations of the University. Suggested equitable recruitment strategies include (NPCWomen, 2020):

- Using inclusive language on website and social media platforms
- Widening the candidate search
- Providing necessary accommodations

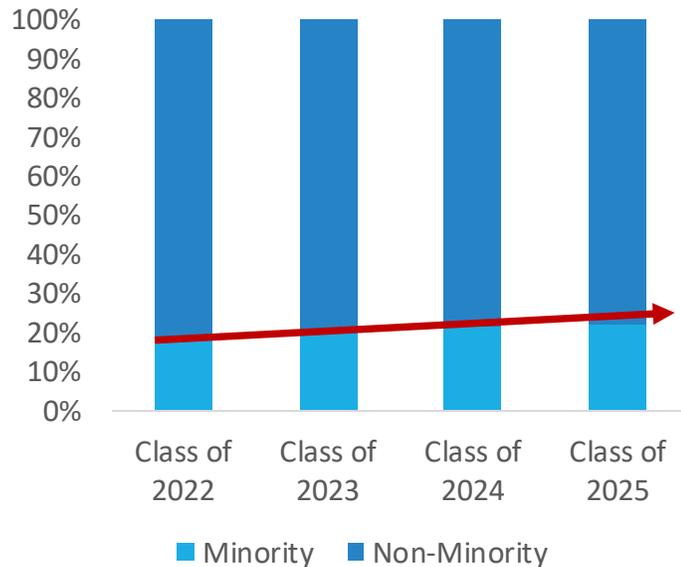
By incorporating these recruitment strategies into their current recruitment system, student organizations can create a more equitable process for all students, promoting diversity.

Outlining recruitment best practices equips student organizations with DEI knowledge

Creating a recruitment guide for student organizations spreads awareness of the best practices to recruit diverse candidates. The guide can explain each recruitment strategy, how to implement it, and why it matters. The first strategy to highlight is inclusive language use. Words and phrases used during recruitment should welcome everyone. By considering the potential negative connotations of certain words and avoiding exclusive phrasing, individuals will feel more included (Zandan and Shalett, 2020). Next, shifting perspectives on what a candidate "should be" helps widen the candidate search to increase the recruitment of diverse individuals into student organizations. Altering acceptance standards to value character, individuality, and authenticity promotes equitable candidate selection. Additionally, student organizations can reach out to minorities to welcome a wider candidate pool. Stephanie Creary, diversity scholar at UPenn, suggests in a Harvard Business Review article that taking the initiative in reaching out about opportunities helps minorities overcome barriers and feel included in their communities. The final strategy, providing accommodations to candidates, advances accessibility and equity. Accommodations include adjusting schedules, providing disability services, and creating virtual options (Moss, 2017). By outlining these strategies on a recruitment guide, USG provides student organizations with best practices for improving equity within recruitment.

Allocating leadership roles for minorities within student organizations promotes University equity goals

Minority students make up increasing % of students



From The University of Iowa Office of Admissions

Spreading minority leadership to other student organizations advances DEI

USG's foresight to establish a policy of allocating senate seats to minority students was prudent and turned out to be ahead of its time. Widening that framework to student organizations campus-wide would directly support the University's goal of recruiting, retaining, and advancing a diverse and equitable campus community (Iowa, 2021). There are over 500 registered student organizations (RSOs) at the University of Iowa (The University of Iowa, 2021). If all 500+ RSOs were under a framework to allocate leadership spots to minority students, that would instantly increase the number of minority voices heard and uplifted.

How should seats be allocated?

Seats need to be allocated fairly and equitably. A minority presence needs to be established in leadership positions without unintentionally reserving an unproportionate number of seats, too many or too few. One way to do this allocation would be for all student organizations to poll their groups' demographics and allot a corresponding number of leadership positions to minorities. According to the University's admissions page, 22% of Iowa's 2021 freshman class identifies as a minority, up from 19% from the class of 2022 (Office of Admissions Class of 2025 & Class of 2022). This increasing percentage of minorities highlights why a flexible number based on an annual poll of group demographics might be a better approach than a fixed number. It lets the reserved seats adjust for increasing minority membership in RSOs. The University of Iowa's definition of equity says that only when everyone starts with equal access to opportunities can equal treatment lead to equity (The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2021). This move will ensure that everyone starts with equal leadership opportunities and therefore can be a springboard to enhanced equity across campus.

Upgrading the ORG TIP\$ diversity training program provides students with a more impactful experience

Adjusting the ORG TIP\$ incentive program to offer increased funding for more effective diversity training will incentivize student leaders to pursue the programs and promote them to the members within their organizations. By requiring more students to participate and consolidating the three-tier system, USG can offer a more substantial monetary incentive with effective results. Instead of awarding student organizations \$75, \$100, \$125 for three separate tiers of completion that only require the participation of three-five students, USG can combine these funds to offer a single, more beneficial training program with increased participation requirements.

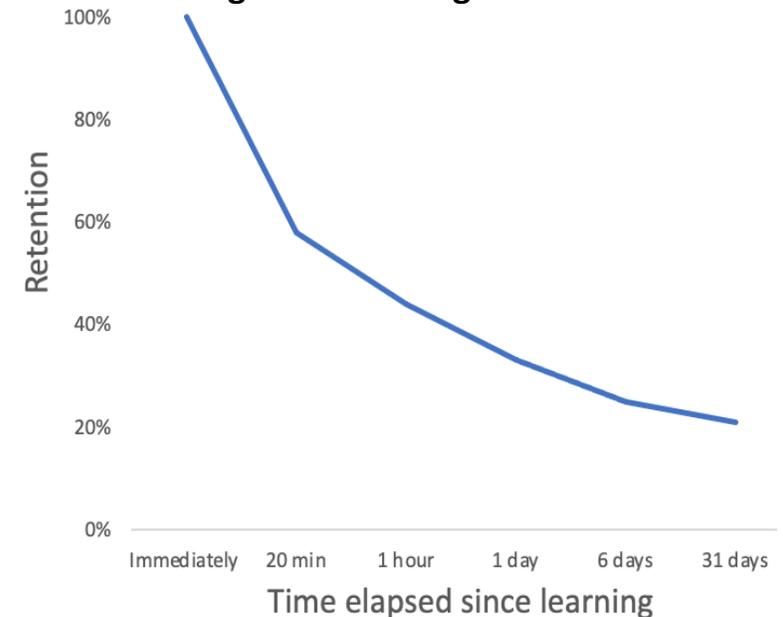
Alterations will mitigate the pitfalls of diversity training programs

The current diversity training programs offered are single-session training programs. While single-session training allows students to gain general knowledge, addressing biases and inequalities, it has proven to be ineffective in creating lasting results. Studies show that over time, "attitudes regressed to what they were before training" (Fernandes, 2020). The "one and done" technique serves as a box to check off rather than an impactful experience with long-term results. Adjusting the ORG TIP\$ program to include long-term training overcomes this common pitfall.

Knowledge reinforcement encourages behavioral changes

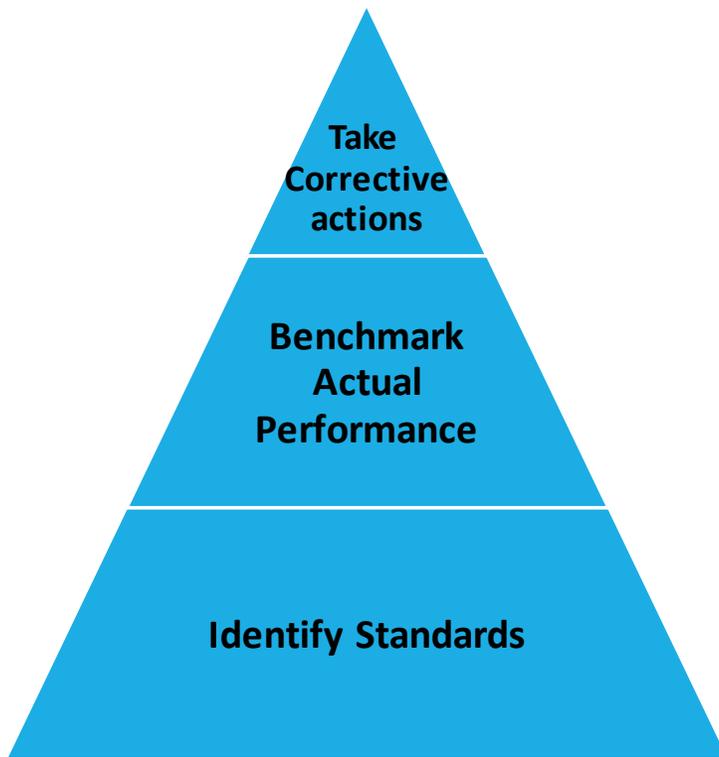
Offering programs that run for an extended period foster information retention, increasing the likelihood that students who undergo training will gain an appreciation for diversity and inclusion. Effective diversity and inclusion training programs utilize regular reinforcement of information through a series of programs and continual learning. Extended programs encourage collaboration, making minorities feel valued and included (Fernandes, 2020). If USG adjusts the ORG TIP\$ program to offer long-term DEI skill development, the program will have more meaningful impacts on students advancing DEI literacy (Lindsey, et al., 2017).

Single-session training fails to stimulate long-term learning retention



(Bagiati, et al., 2017)

Heightened internal controls creates DEI responsibility within organizations



Protocols monitoring DEI progress ensure complacency is never reached

Becoming complacent with adequate measures will kill DEI progress. Installing internal controls will hold leaders accountable to continue to reach organizational goals. The University of Florida's Internal Audit office says that internal controls help "ensure efficient and effective operations that accomplish the goals of the unit" (Office of Internal Audit, 2021). Putting steps in place that measure DEI progress, compare that progress with a benchmark, and then, if necessary, administering consequences will keep organizations in line with campus DEI goals.

Performance benchmarked to standards creates clear expectations

Benchmarking performance to standards will advance DEI progress. Having clear expectations and known consequences if expectations aren't met will prevent complacency from occurring. For example, say organizational leaders are advised to attend 70% of USG meetings. If actual attendance is not 70% or above, the organization could be fined a set amount. Another example could be if an organization doesn't meet a minimum required number of minorities in leadership positions for two semesters in a row, they could lose their status as a registered student organization until they are back in compliance. Having consequences for not meeting DEI standards provides additional encouragement to strive towards DEI goals.

Publishing a framework of DEI best practices clarifies USG's expectations for student organizations

Providing student organizations with a detailed framework outlining DEI recommendations and resources effectively communicates DEI standards. Culminating each best practice into an easily accessible framework spreads campus-wide knowledge of elevated standards and potential penalization for noncompliance. Not only will publishing a framework promote accountability, but it will also inspire student leaders who have struggled to improve diversity and inclusion within their organizations. USG can provide researched recommendations to ease the DEI implementation process for student organizations.

Publicizing recommendations to student organizations streamlines DEI implementation

Marketing a DEI framework to student organizations effectively shares the specific goals of USG to help align internal and external progress. Ineffective communication of DEI initiatives, "led a quarter of employees to believe their company had not done anything to improve diversity and inclusion in the workplace in the last year (Okeh, 2021)." Establishing a consistent communication system will enhance USG's credibility among students. Additionally, communication prevents student organizations from missing out on the DEI resources USG provides. Marketing promotes wide-spread awareness which will align internal and external action to accelerate DEI advancement (Okeh, 2021).

At the beginning of each academic year, **USG can release a DEI guide that includes:**

- Best practices
- Resources and services offered
- USG's internal action plans and progress

Releasing a framework that touches on each of these subjects ensures student organizations are aware of the actions they can take to align their DEI initiatives with those of USG. Taking on a method of direct outreach ensures student organizations can easily benchmark their progress. Benchmarking performance against external criteria inspires the undertaking of new initiatives (Lenet, 2018). Presenting student organizations with quantifiable, accessible reports promotes the emergence of similar practices within individual organizations based on evidence of successful outcomes (Lenet, 2018). Then, collecting end-of-semester DEI progress reports from student organizations enables USG to produce and communicate the most effective frameworks.

Requesting DEI progress reports from student organizations enables USG to provide relevant recommendations

Requesting up-to-date information regarding DEI progress within student organizations provides USG with data needed to pinpoint areas of weakness and formulate plans to address individual organizations' needs in the future. Gathering data from student organizations regarding DEI action plans, current initiatives, and progress will give senators a general understanding of where to direct resources to effectively meet campus needs.

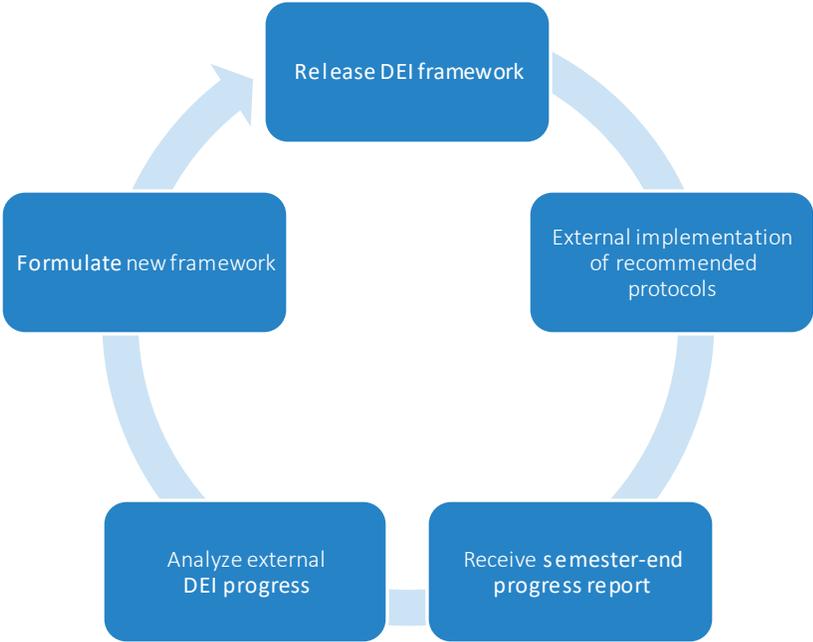
Data Drives Progress

More data access allows for solutions and initiatives tailored to the specific needs across campus. Quantifiable data allows for the identification of implementation gaps. Obtaining and examining DEI data from other student organizations reveals which initiatives were effective and which programs fell short. USG will be able to monitor general trends, encouraging informed decision-making. Additionally, with more data access comes a greater opportunity for learning. DEI goals should constantly shift to align with the current needs of student organizations. Through data collection and analysis, senators can, "inject fresh thinking," into USG initiatives and services (Carlisle, 2019). Annual progress reports provide the data needed to drive DEI forward by preventing progress standstill. Accumulating student organizations' reports and demographic data allows senators to align their policies and resource allocation with the DEI goals of the University to ensure all students have an equitable opportunity to thrive (Carlisle, 2019).

Semi-annual report requests guide future initiatives

At the end of each semester, USG can collect progress reports from student organizations to maintain insight on external DEI progress. Collecting data enables USG to analyze trends and use discovered weaknesses to drive future action.

DEI status reports facilitate the production of relevant frameworks



Action plan execution advances USG's DEI progress generating campus-wide benefits

Internal progress launches campus-wide benefits

Improving DEI standards and initiatives within USG serves as a launching point for promoting DEI externally. Each action plan item provides specific benefits that are detailed in their respective slide. But when combined the benefits of the entire action plan are greater than the sum of their parts. Some of these potential benefits include:

- Increased feelings of inclusion from all USG members
- More equitable opportunities within student government
- Enhanced discussion at weekly meetings
- More thoughtful decision-making

These benefits will make USG a better organization to be a part of and a more effective and efficient organization. After shoring up internal DEI practices, USG can begin to extend benefits to groups and individuals outside of student government.

University DEI improvement creates a more enjoyable and rewarding college experience

Publishing a DEI framework for student organizations to follow will expand the benefits seen internally to students across campus. By extending its framework USG can positively impact thousands of students, not just their members. Benefits that all UI students could see are:

- Heighted feelings of belonging on campus
- Deeper learning due to more thoughtful conversations
- Gaining experiences that might not have happened in the current DEI environment
- Adding DEI knowledge and skills that an increasing number of employers are looking for

The above-mentioned benefits are some of the most prominent the UI community could see from the recommended action plan. Other benefits are mentioned in previous slides, and there are numerous other smaller but still relevant benefits that would be realized.

Conclusion

Initiating this multi-step action plan aimed at internal DEI advancement followed by external implementation grants USG the opportunity to become a DEI leader on campus. USG's internal changes will create an inclusive environment for senators, uplifting diverse perspectives. Advanced internal protocols will exemplify the benefits of DEI. Publishing a framework for DEI implementation provides organizations with a step-by-step plan to achieve DEI fluency, and monetary incentives motivate organizations to take action. Heightened standards and accountability measures will foster a DEI-focused environment, promoting creativity, collaboration, and community. This kind of campus environment enables students to embrace multiple viewpoints, effectively preparing them for the workplace. By taking on a role of leadership in DEI implementation, USG furthers the DEI presence among student organizations on campus producing an environment more conducive to student success.

These recommendations align with USG's values of advocacy, community, impact, and equity. The tenets will be immersed in various areas from the campus environment to instruction, research, and service. As a campus model of DEI, USG gains authority to audit campus organizations on a semesterly basis. USG can review organizational practices and provide guidance for improving diversity, equity, and inclusion. Continued conversations with organizations also supply USG with insights on the effectiveness of current initiatives creating an opportunity for USG to adjust its approaches to DEI.

A DEI-focused campus improves student satisfaction with the campus environment and their experience. According to Laura Wronski, a research science manager, "workers who are satisfied with their company's efforts on DEI issues are actually happier with their jobs" (Caminiti, 2021). Synonymous to Corporate America, students are bound to feel this same sense of contentment since the University and organizations are actively involved in working to make Iowa a better place. If the campus culture embraces all students of any background, the University will become more attractive to potential incoming students and parents. Additionally, equipping students with DEI fluency prepares them for success in any field of work. As industries diversify, University of Iowa students will graduate with an appreciation for DEI and an understanding of how to implement their knowledge into the various industries they pursue.

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