**Gathering Your Team**

One of the first steps in completing a strategic planning process is figuring out who will be on the team. The people selected will help drive the work forward and shape what the ultimate outcome is.

Because of this, it’s really important to think and reflect deeply on who you will ask. There are a couple things and questions to consider as you do this and this video will help get that process started.

There’s a solid amount of research that shows diversity and inclusion in a team leads to a lot of benefits. Increased creativity, performance, and productivity are just some of things you can expect from an inclusive and diverse team. A quick google scholar search can give you a more in-depth explanation of how and why that happens. Unfortunately, that’s more than we can explain in this quick video.

So what does a diverse and inclusive team look like? Well, much like diversity, there are layers to it. One of the first layers to think about is positions or roles within your campus, college, department or unit. It’s important to include people from a variety of levels - not just upper management. Think about entry level positions. Think about classified vs unclassified. Think about tenure track vs non-tenure track. Think about full-time or part-time. Think about students. Think about people who are not often tapped to serve on committees. Having people from all or most levels will help you see issues on all or most levels.

The next aspect to think about is a diversity in identity. Oftentimes when we think of diversity, two or three identity categories come to mind: race, gender, sexual orientation. That’s not all of it though. Pay attention to ability (both visible and invisible), age, veteran status, religious affiliations, socioeconomic status, national origin, first language, and other identities not listed here.

When inviting people to join and gathering your team, it’s important to work really hard not tokenize or overburden individuals. We shouldn’t invite someone to join the team simply because they are LGBTQ+ or because they’re a person of color. It’s important to think about the whole person and all that they bring to the table. What skills do they have? What are their passions? What are their career goals? Are they already serving on multiple committees? What insights could they potentially provide?

After reflecting and answering these questions, you’ll be headed in the right direction.