

SEA Change (or STEMM Equity Achievement Change) is a comprehensive institutional transformation initiative of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). SEA Change uses an adaptation of the same framework as Advance HE's Athena SWAN and Race Equality Charter (REC) initiatives in the UK. [AAAS was able to build](#) on the more than 15 years of history and accomplishment of Athena SWAN, a gender equality program that has been expanded to Australia (as SAGE), and to Canada (as Dimensions). Athena SWAN evaluations demonstrate what is possible with a long-term systemic transformation effort.

SEA Change focuses on equity for all marginalized identities, including gender equity (like Athena SWAN) and race equity (like REC) simultaneously, addressing issues related to women of color in STEMM. As institutions expand their capacity to document the presence and experiences of—and thus, better serve—people of all identities, SEA Change will expand its expectation for evidence-based assessment of the experiences of other marginalized people, which include people with disabilities, veterans, people in the LGBTQIA+ community, and others.

The heart of SEA Change is a scaffolded, holistic self-assessment and reflection framework. The Institutional Bronze Award process includes an internal qualitative and quantitative self-assessment of policies, practices, programs, and culture across a broad range of categories such as governance, faculty career progression, and sexual harassment policies, using questions rooted in promising practices for DEI in higher education. Institutions that choose to apply for an award submit a narrative telling their DEI story, and a 5-year action plan that will address barriers to DEI uncovered in self-assessment. Applications are evaluated by a peer-review panel that recommends an award level. With the [SEA Change Awards](#), colleges and universities are publicly recognized for their efforts—and eventually, evidence of progress—to advance DEI in STEMM. Awardees must apply to renew or progress their award after five years to support continual, iterative transformation. We are currently preparing to pilot a framework for [Biomedicine Bronze Awards](#) for academic health science centers.

By joining SEA Change, members become part of a network of institutions seeking systemic transformation in support of DEI in STEMM. Membership is a commitment to striving to do better, a signal to all who currently— or those who aspire to—study, work, research, teach, and serve the institution, that it will be taking action to improve its policies, programs, practices, and culture.

SEA Change Charter Members, including institutions participating in this symposium, **Arizona State University, University of Florida, University of California at Davis, and University of California at Irvine**, are committed to including diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as a core component of their institutional mission. As part of a growing movement, SEA Change Charter Members [commit to a set of principles](#) that include aspiring to: 1) **remove the additional systemic and structural barriers and obstacles** that compound the usual challenges in higher education facing everyone and are statistically more likely to be faced by individuals from groups that are affected by inequity at major points of educational, professional, and career development and progression; 2) **shift institutional culture and climate**, ensuring that regardless of demographic and identity characteristics unrelated to potential and performance in STEMM, individuals are respected and enabled to be productive and to contribute to the advancement and application of knowledge; 3) develop **solutions to inequity** that build upon organizational governance and accountability structures and systems at the central and local level, including metrics and evidence-based evaluation, standards, policies, processes, and roles and responsibilities transcending individuals employed at a particular time; 4) involve those who are targets

of inequity and those who are not in developing solutions to inequity, knowing that the **burden of change should not rest on individuals experiencing barriers that stem from those inequities**; 5) embrace **equity, diversity, and inclusion as central elements of excellence** by recognizing that high performance results from the inclusion of all committed individuals of promise, and that STEMM excellence requires programs, policies, and practices that support a welcoming and professional climate and culture for inclusion of all; 6) **addressing the current structural and systemic inequities affecting different populations and groups across STEMM disciplines**, particularly barriers that result in the absence or near-absence of diversity within student bodies and senior academic and professional roles, as well as in business and industry; 7) addressing both **explicit and implicit biases** that lead to exclusionary conduct and perpetuate structures and systems of inequity across our institution, and we understand that such conduct is a barrier to enhancing excellence; 8) using organizational structures and systems, including related resource allocation, to support better design, evaluation, and **continuous improvement of those structures and systems**—as well as of transactional strategies (individual programs and projects) aimed at enhancing diversity and inclusion—to make the structures, systems, and strategies more effective and sustainable.

If you are interested in joining our movement to transform institutions of higher education, please contact us at seachange@aaas.org.