

# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force Recommendation Report



Middlebury Institute of  
International Studies at Monterey



Middlebury  
College

**Prepared for:**

Senior Leadership Group  
Institute Leadership Group

**Prepared by:**

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force

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# Executive Summary

In November 2020, Miguel Fernández, Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) at Middlebury College, was asked to step into the role of interim CDO at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) through July 1, 2021. In January 2021, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force was formed and began to meet weekly starting at the beginning of February. The DEI Task Force was charged with advising the CDO and making recommendations about structure, reporting, curriculum, and strategic planning regarding justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) work at MIIS.

These meetings were conversational and allowed the members of the Task Force to share insights and experiences with each other and the CDO. Because the composition of the Task Force included a mix of faculty, staff, and students from various backgrounds and positions on campus, a wide range of views were taken into consideration. Meeting notes were taken at each meeting and were kept for reference. Additional insights were gained from informal meetings between Task Force participants and other groups and committees.

From these conversations, the Task Force found several opportunities for improvement in several core areas supporting JEDI work at MIIS, including the need for a formalized structure responsible for integrating this work, a robust and responsive reporting mechanism, curricular changes, and targeted and actionable strategic planning for the future of this work.

To that end, the Task Force recommends that MIIS:

1. Use funds set aside for antiracist work at MIIS to hire an external JEDI consultant to do a localized needs assessment
2. Add MIIS to the Middlebury CDO portfolio
3. Hire JEDI Coordinator to oversee Institute JEDI initiatives and align with all Middlebury
4. Develop protocol for the continuation of the Task Force beyond July 2021, including mechanisms for voting, replacement, compensation, and formalizing expectations for participation
5. Hire 1-2 Graduate Assistants to assist with JEDI initiatives
6. Fund and promote Healing/Reconciliation/Restorative Practice events on campus
7. Identify MIIS staff and/or faculty to temporarily sit on Middlebury College's CBRT
8. Designate staffing to oversee reporting & ombudsperson
9. Support and promote requests for surveys of faculty, staff, students, and alumni
10. Curriculum update, including a resource database, curriculum audit, and departmental trainings that support JEDI work



The Task Force recognizes the very real budgetary restraints MIIS is facing and urges Middlebury to prioritize investment in creating an infrastructure that can meaningfully support JEDI work at MIIS.

## Introduction

In November 2020, Miguel Fernández, Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) at Middlebury College, was asked to step into the role of interim CDO at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) through July 1, 2021. In January 2021, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force was formed and began to meet weekly starting at the beginning of February. The DEI Task Force is charged with advising the CDO on all issues regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion at MIIS. In particular, the Task Force was charged with making recommendations about structure, reporting, curriculum, and strategic planning regarding DEI work. This document comprises the recommendations of the Task Force and is being shared with the Institute Leadership and the Senior Leadership by the CDO.

## Composition of the DEI Task Force

*Miguel Fernández*, interim Chief Diversity Officer MIIS, Chief Diversity Officer Middlebury College

*Lydia Gentry*, Borrowing Services Manager, Library

*Anna Mei Gubbins*, International Education Management (IEM) Student

*Rana Issa*, Assistant Professor of Professional Practice, Arabic Studies Program, Graduate School of Translation, Interpretation and Language Education (GSTILE)

*Sadia Khan*, Director of Admissions

*Angela Luedke*, IEM Graduate 2021, former Queers and Allies at MIIS (QAAAM) Vice President

*Morgan Moore*, International Policy and Development (IPD) and International Trade and Development, Master's of Public Administration and IPD Program Representative on Student Council 2020-2021

*Sabino Morera*, Assistant Professor of Spanish and Latin American Policy Studies, GSTILE

*Rayna Celeste Rogers*, Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies (NPTS) student, Women of Color Advancing Peace & Security (WCAPS) West Coast (MIIS Satellite) Vice President

*Maia Stewart*, Master's of Public Administration and IEM Student, Vice President of the MIIS Arts Club

*Jessica Varnum*, Deputy Director, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey

*David Wick*, Associate Professor, IEM and French and Francophone Studies (withdrew from Task Force in order to fulfill an emergency need at the Institute).



## Definition of Terms

- **Equity:** The fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups ([from MIIS DEI Glossary](#)).
- **Inclusion:** Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power ([from MIIS DEI Glossary](#)).
- **Diversity:** The term includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued ([from MIIS DEI Glossary](#)).
- **Safe Space:** spaces designed to create psychological and emotional safety for students, in order to allow them to “feel secure enough to take risks, honestly express their views, and share and explore their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.”<sup>1</sup>
- **Brave Space:** spaces intentionally created for participants to feel more free to challenge (with civility) to have a more honest and open dialogue. The agency lies with each participant to challenge themselves (or not) to communicate with each other and be vocal about their own intentions and impacts.<sup>2, 3</sup>
- **BIPOC:** created as an addendum to the previously used term “POC” (Person/People of Color) to highlight the disproportionate systematic difficulties that members of the Black and Indigenous communities face as minoritized groups. It became more widely used during the protests against police brutality and racism. Even though it aims to be more inclusive and address certain aspects of privilege and power in relation to race, there are still those that feel it is too broad a term to encompass their racial identity.<sup>4, 5</sup>
- **Silo:** The term silo has Greek origins, and while it is commonly associated with the agricultural application to separate grain, it has also emerged in the field of higher education as representation of the way faculty and staff have specialized in disciplinary knowledge and research.<sup>6</sup> Silos within organizations “prevent communication, confuse roles and responsibilities, and limit the sharing of information, expertise, and resources across divisions, frequently obstructing change and hindering innovation.”<sup>7</sup> In the context of higher education, this terminology implies that individual disciplines, departments, and courses work independently of one another and do not know what the other groups are doing. In order to take a holistic student approach, we must break down these barriers that have formed between departments.

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<sup>1</sup> See Holley and Steiner (p. 50)

<sup>2</sup> See Arao and Clemens

<sup>3</sup> See Zheng

<sup>4</sup> See Zamudio-Suarrez

<sup>5</sup> See Grady

<sup>6</sup> See Savoca and Bishop

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. (p. 68)



## Acronyms

- GSIPM - Graduate School of International Policy Management
- GSTILE - Graduate School of Translation, Interpretation, and Language Education
- IEM - International Education Management
- IEP - International Environmental Policy
- DARS - DEI Advocacy and Research Society
- SIL - Sustainability Impact Lab
- SLG - Senior Leadership Group
- ILG - Institute Leadership Group
- SAT - Staff Advisory Team
- NPTS - Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies
- CNS - James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies
- QAAAM - Queers and Allies at MIIS
- WCAPS - Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security
- RP - Restorative Practices
- JEDI - Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- DEI - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- GA - Graduate Assistant
- MIIS - Middlebury Institute of International Studies
- CDO - Chief Diversity Officer
- CBRT - Community Bias Response Team



# Opportunity Statement

The Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) has a stated mission to “[*educate*] professionals to advance understanding, promote peace, and drive change in pursuit of a more just world.” This mission begins at home by recognizing areas where we fall short of making the community an understanding, peaceful, and just environment for all students, faculty, and staff. DEI has been identified as a strategic priority for Middlebury. It is time to live by our words and take action.

In President Patton’s call to action sent to the Middlebury community on May, 31, 2020, she writes, “And when you return to Middlebury’s campuses, collaborate with all members of our community to act against racism and become accountable for the work that needs to be done—in our classrooms, in our living rooms, in our workplaces, in our communities.” We must continue to pursue these ideals and develop a more inclusive, transparent, and organized system that will aim to make good on the promise of support and belonging which uphold the mission of our esteemed institution. We need to listen to our constituents, own our own shortcomings, and work together to develop a more just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive community.

Our opportunity statement below states where we are currently at, a found gap, the area for growth, and an end goal.

Currently, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies is not meeting its stated mission to educate professionals to advance understanding, promote peace, and drive change in pursuit of a more just world when it comes to justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. MIIS had a Chief Diversity Officer that was compensated for only 10 hours a week for the vast effort of JEDI work on campus. When the CDO resigned in the fall of 2020 after a harmful incident, the College’s CDO, Miguel Fernandez, filled in as MIIS’ interim CDO until July 1, 2021. Currently, there is not, nor has there ever been, a full time employee dedicated to JEDI leadership at the Institute.

MIIS has the opportunity to further observe our mission and implement our values of advancing understanding and promoting peace for a more just world by prioritizing JEDI leadership. In the fall of 2021, MIIS’ DEI Task Force will have established a sustainable structure to support the Institute. By Spring 2022, Middlebury will have hired a full-time CDO that works with and collaborates across campuses. MIIS will have hired a Sustainability and JEDI Coordinator dual position with the end goal of becoming a full-time JEDI Coordinator for the Institute.



# Initial Analysis

In order to fulfill the first part of the charge to advise the CDO on all issues regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion at MIIS, the Task Force met once weekly beginning in February 2021. These meetings were largely conversational, and allowed the members of the Task Force to share insights and experiences with each other and the CDO. These conversations were important for us to set our initial expectations for the group. Because the composition of the Task Force included a mix of faculty, staff, and students from various backgrounds and positions on campus, a wide range of views were taken into consideration. Meeting notes were taken at each meeting and were kept for reference.

Beyond the weekly meetings, many members of the Task Force also had informal conversations with community members outside of the Task Force, often bringing insights gained from those conversations back to the weekly Task Force meetings. Some examples of this type of communication include the Student Council DEI Committee, Institute Leadership Group (ILG), Senior Leadership Group (SLG), Staff Advisory Team (SAT), Student Experience Team (SET), Sustainability Council, and others. While these conversations did expand the types of insights the Task Force could provide, they followed organic networks of connection rather than an intentionally inclusive communication network.

The Task Force and the CDO did make one call for public input from a message that went out to the whole MIIS community on March 11, 2021. Those with questions, comments, or concerns were advised to email [diversity@middlebury.edu](mailto:diversity@middlebury.edu). We received one response from that message.

Based on these conversations, the Task Force has identified four core opportunities for improvement that need to be addressed in order to incorporate and increase engagement with justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) initiatives in the MIIS community:

1. A formal needs assessment
2. A structure for facilitating JEDI initiatives
3. Reporting mechanisms
4. Updates to curriculum

In the following discussion of each of the opportunities for improvement, we give additional detail and context

*This information redacted to maintain confidentiality*





# Theory of Change

A Theory of Change is a tool that is used to create a comprehensive description of overarching strategies in our process to achieve the Institute's goal of prioritizing JEDI values throughout all aspects of its work. The intended result is in line with this Task Force's understanding of the previous communications sent out across Middlebury from President Patton regarding a quest to utilize "education and action" as the "two forms of oxygen that can heal." If this is no longer our ultimate goal, we will need to adapt our strategies. The purpose of this infographic (see Figure 1.1) is to visually demonstrate the intended strategies and results from a zoomed-out lens. On the right-hand side of the Theory of Change, we can see our overall intended result for our work through the Task Force for the Institution. As a result of our work, MIIS should become an institution that prioritizes JEDI values throughout all endeavors.

On the left-hand side of the Theory of Change, we can see the three main strategic focal points that we need to achieve our intended result. All three strategies are equally as important, but address different branches of our plan. The first, in blue, addresses the importance of transparency and communication across the silos at the Institute as well as across Middlebury at large. We need to develop partnerships, channels for communication, and regular meetings to ensure a cohesive experience for the student. Students will not receive a holistic education if everyone is siloed off from one another. We need to inform and be informed about what is happening on each campus and within each department so that we do not repeat labor but rather uplift our colleagues and give more comprehensive support to our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

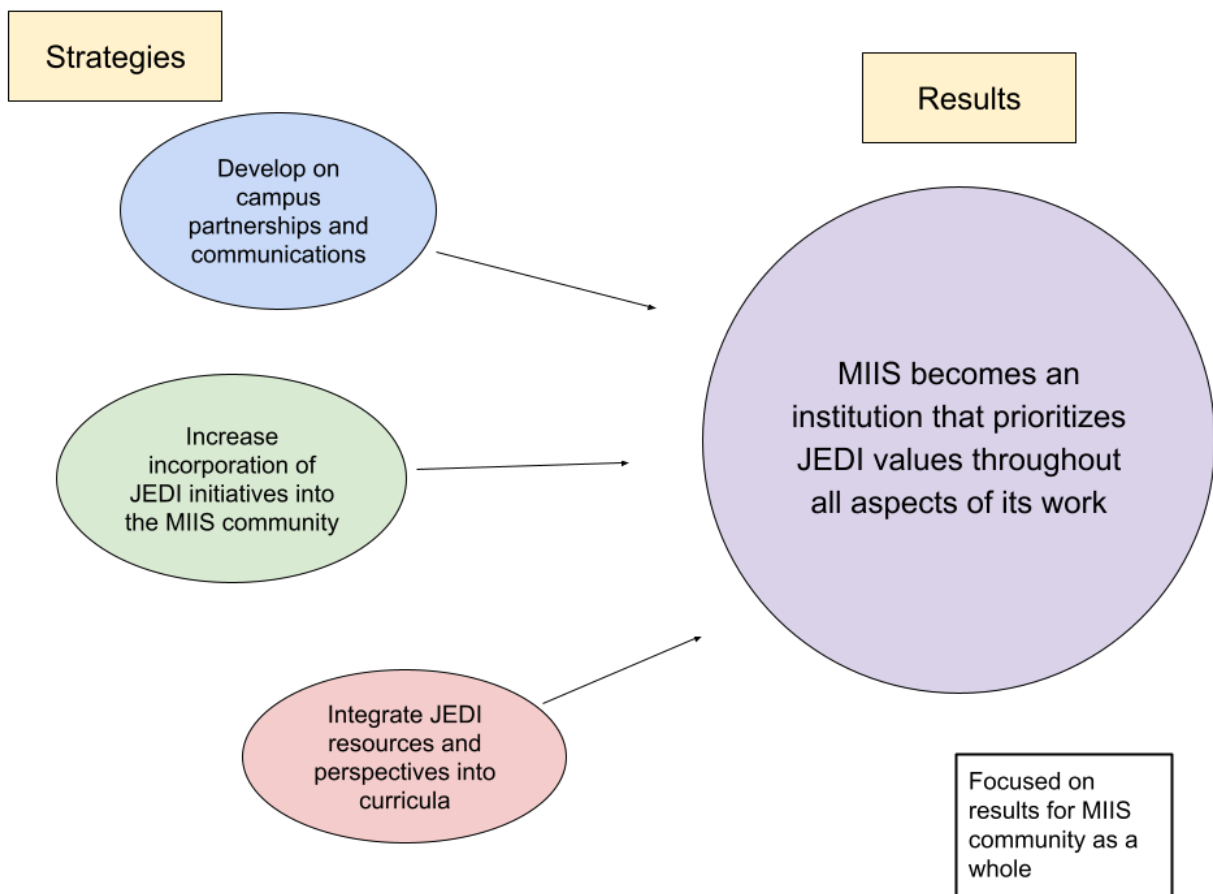
The second strategy, in green, aims to encompass the importance of integrating JEDI initiatives on campus. We hope that the Institute can become a community in which all students feel valued and a sense of belonging. This is not the current reality of our Institution. We need to take action to actively build a strong community based on respect, equity, and justice. This means that we need to create both brave and safe spaces for communication as well as a thorough reporting system to uphold the community's values. We need to not only address JEDI issues with broad statements published for the wider community, but also take the time to make quotidian changes to our culture.

The final strategy, in red, is focused on the way that JEDI work will be executed in the classrooms at the Institute. In order to become an educational institution that prioritizes this work, we need to be willing and able to effectively teach and share resources from a wide variety of sources in all of our coursework. JEDI work cannot be encapsulated into a self-contained two week course that hits the highlights. It needs to be incorporated into each course regardless of department. As we are an international institution, we should be sharing diverse perspectives and helping teach our students about the importance of empathy, equity,



and justice. There needs to be further inclusion of diverse voices in the scholars we explore. Faculty and staff need to be made aware of what resources are available on a regular basis. They should also be in communication with one another so that there is not a duplication (or omission) of important works. Instead of maintaining our siloed departments and coursework, we have the opportunity to help students draw connections between coursework and across disciplines and build on their previous progress. Furthermore, since we have students at all different positions on their journey to understanding and participating in JEDI work, students should complete self-assessments and have access to a wide range of materials to help meet them where they are and support their individualized learning goals.

Figure 1.1: DEI Task Force Theory of Change



# Recommendations

After identifying the gaps in MIIS's current capacity to engage in JEDI work, the Task Force makes recommendations in the following areas:

1. A formal needs assessment
2. A structure for facilitating JEDI initiatives
3. Reporting mechanisms
4. Updates to curriculum

*Information redacted to maintain confidentiality*

# Program Logic Model Visualization

The following visualization was created with backward design in mind to function as a roadmap for future strategic planning. It displays the ways in which resources, activities, and their outputs can influence the outcomes and overall impact we hope to have on the community. The Logic model is intended to be read left to right to see how each step influences the next and ultimately leads to the goal that the Institute becomes an institution that prioritizes JEDI values throughout all aspects of its work.

The Resources section in yellow lists the resources to which we have access, campus partners with whom we can collaborate, and some of the references that we have explored since the inception of the Task Force.

The Activities section in green lists some ideas of things we can do to help make an impact. There are both community centered activities that will be shared with the whole community to increase participation. The Task Force centered activities are potential activities that the Task Force should take on to continue our work together.

The blue section gives a more detailed look into how the Task Force could plan and execute these activities. While we give a rough estimate to see how to make progress on these activities, we do not foresee all of these goals progressing from one step to the next at the same time. This will be a staggered process that allows for space to do the appropriate research to have these activities completed well, but we will give generalized suggestions about the timeline as reference. We see our Short-Term goals as goals to be completed by Mid-Semester Fall 2021. While some Mid-Term goals could be completed soon, they should all be completed no later than Mid-Semester Spring 2022. Our Long-Term goals will also range in timeline completion, but should be implemented no later than Summer 2022.

The Outputs section in red is a list of tangible action items we will create, obtain, or accomplish as a result of our activities.

The Outcomes section in orange is divided into four sections that represent four categories of our desired outcomes. Outcomes demonstrate what community members will get out of our activities and outputs. The vertical arrows demonstrate the progress from more knowledge-based outcomes to application of these concepts. In the top left (lightest orange), the outcomes have to do with individual student bias, reflection, and application. It would read “Community members will be able to identify their own privileges, biases, and values. Later, they would be able to conduct self-assessments to learn areas of future focus. Eventually, community members will be able to interpret how their own positionality influences their interactions with other cultures.” The top right (lighter orange) outcomes have to do with

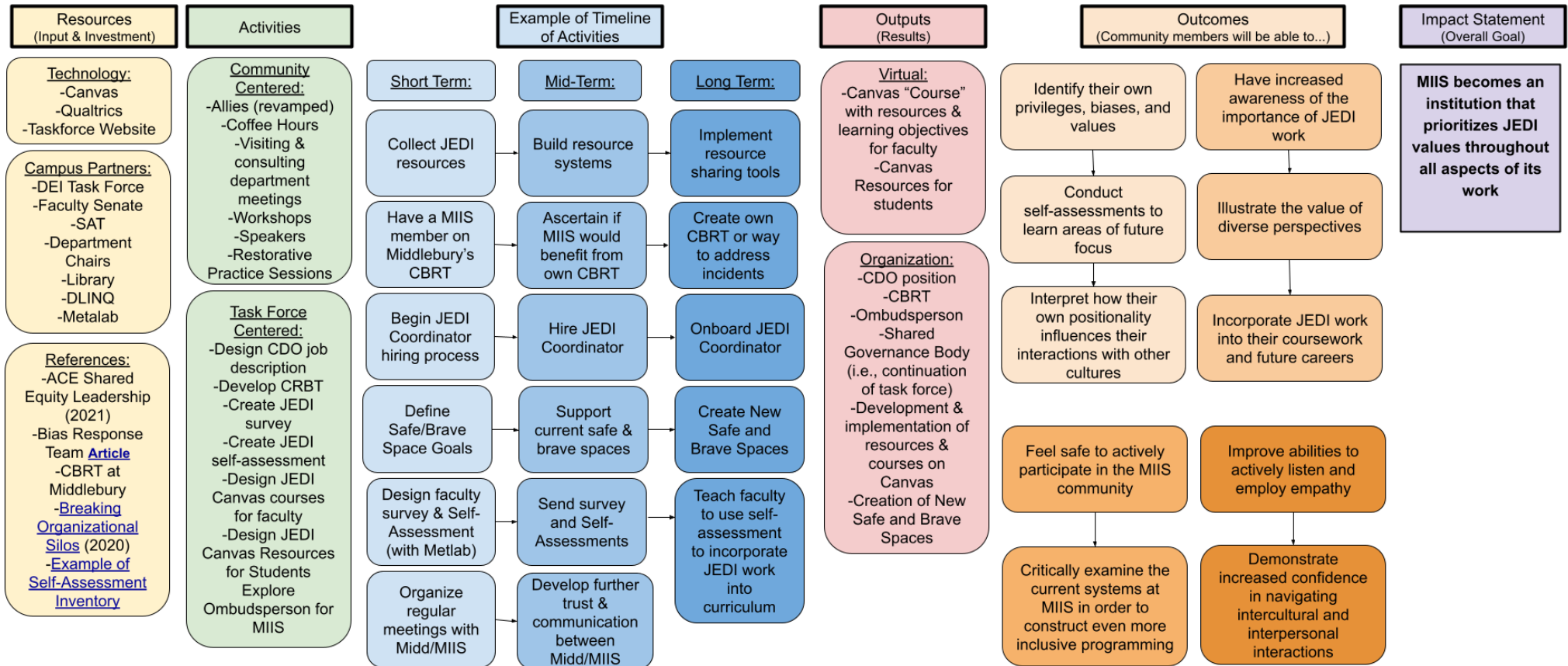


students' understanding of JEDI work and its application. The bottom left (darker orange) outcomes demonstrate the need for students to feel safe and supported during these activities. This would encompass the implementation of both safe and brave spaces as well as ombuds people and a CBRT. The bottom right (darkest orange) outcome section relates to the importance of community members' interactions with others.

The Impact Statement is our ultimate goal—the impact we hope this programming will have on the institution.



Figure 1.2: DEI Task Force Program Logic Model



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# Appendix A: DEI Advocacy and Research Society (DARS)

Student advocates from Professor Kent Glenzer's Advocacy in Action course have offered the idea of the DEI Advocacy and Research Society (DARS).

*Information redacted to maintain confidentiality*

# Appendix B: Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Graduate Assistant Job Description

*Information redacted to maintain confidentiality*

# Appendix C: Sustainability & JEDI Coordinator Dual Role Proposal

*Information redacted to maintain confidentiality*