# Task 2: Build a strong foundation for the initiative by assessing the existing landscape

## Method: Assess the Existing Landscape

**Task Summary:** Strategic planning begins with an assessment of where your institution is on the diversity and inclusion continuum, which refers to the stages of diversity as delineated by Marc Nivet, the AAMC’s chief diversity officer, in [*Diversity 3.0: A Necessary Systems Upgrade*](https://www.aamc.org/download/427410/data/diversity3.0anecessarysystemsupgrade.pdf). This effort will provide insight into potential challenges and leverage points (see Essential Task 3). Fortunately, there are a number of institutional readiness checklists to aid in the process (see Assessment Resources section).

**Directions:** Answer the following questions.

1. **How have commitment and action around diversity and inclusion evolved over time? What, if any, seminal events need to be considered?**

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1. **Where was the focus on diversity five years ago? Where is it now?**

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1. **What policies are already in place to support diversity and inclusion? The difference between policy and practice can sometimes be dramatic. Things are often done in a certain way because “that’s the way they have always been done.” The impact on processes such as hiring, recruitment, retention, professional development, lab space, support staff, promotion, and merit raises can be profound.**

Consider policy versus practice in the following:

* Hiring practices
* Recruitment
* Equity (compensation, access, promotion, treatment, etc.)
* Mentoring

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1. **What are the particular imperatives driving diversity and inclusion strategic planning within your institution? Are there any state laws, community efforts, or institutional mandates that create pressure points and opportunities?**

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1. **What have previous climate assessments told you about the environment?**

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1. **What other sources of data can you access to assess the organizational culture (e.g., exit survey data, nonmatriculating-student survey data)?**

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1. **What was done with the data that were previously gathered? How were the data used to inform practice? Are any of the data/analyses still relevant?**

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