Why Communication

"This action theme is about raising college-wide awareness of our structural problems, encouraging communal efforts to solve those problems, and creating clear processes for expressing concerns and sharing ideas for improvement.." (Inclusion in Action Working Group Report)

From the Working Group Report:

- "Students are excluded from the decision process/conversation of choices that directly impact us." (a student voice)
- "...feeling 'out of the loop' in important decisions at the department or college level." (a faculty voice)
- "...desire for more transparency." (a staff voice)

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A key takeaway of the summer working group is that the college needs to get the message out that inclusion results from a communal effort and is a dynamic, ongoing process. Many survey respondents cited a need for greater transparency in official college communications about inclusion and diversity--both in terms of what's lacking and what's being done. Some would like the college to focus more on remedying structural inequities at Smith in contrast to calling out the behavior of individuals.
Overall, respondents want the administration to improve information sharing about ongoing inclusion work at Smith, including affinity housing, inclusive teaching, and peer mentoring.

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Focus of *Communications Action Team*: *Improving information sharing* about equity and inclusion at Smith.

Hypothesis

- A centralized, easily accessible mechanism could assist in improving information sharing about equity and inclusion.

- Specifically, an online tool could be helpful in coordinating and communicating information about equity and inclusion at Smith.

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Proposed Experiment

- OEI will use Springshare, a platform used by the library, to answer questions and centralize information about equity and inclusion efforts and information at Smith.

- Springshare allows OEI to centralize information about equity and inclusion at the college through an evolving bank of questions and answers.

- Springshare also allows users to ask questions that can become part of the larger OEI FAQ bank.

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Intended Outcome

Links from OEI website to OEI's Springshare page (via the library), where an evolving bank of FAQ's (maintained by OEI) will allow for community members to search for equity and inclusion-related information and ask questions about equity and inclusion at Smith.

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How it works

Frequently Asked Questions

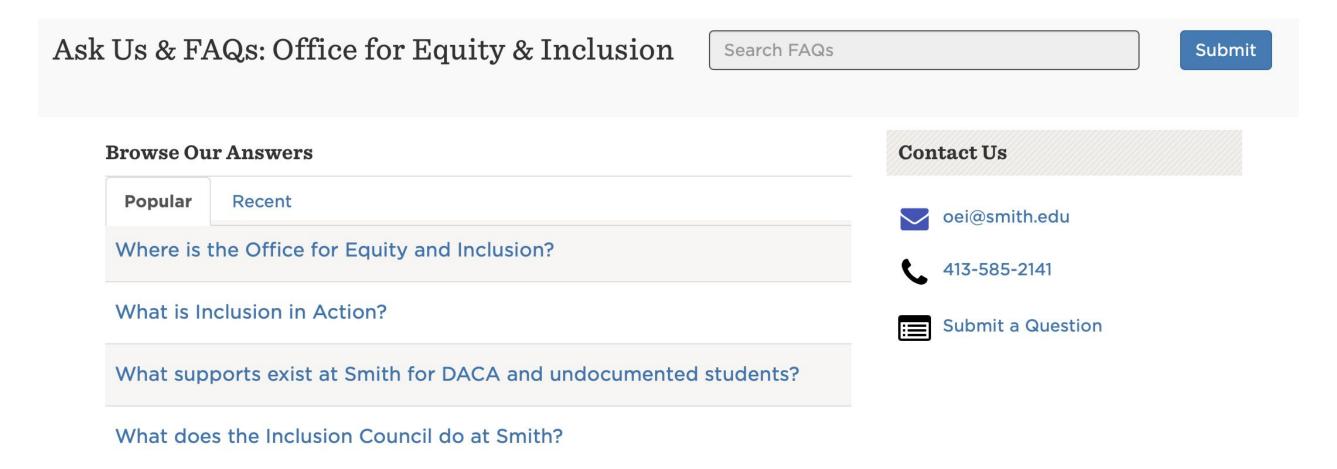Have a question for or about the Office of Equity & Inclusion? See our FAQ, or feel free to ask us a question.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS   **SUBMIT A QUESTION**

STEP 1: Link to Springshare from OEI's website (click "Frequently Ask Questions" and "Ask a Question"):

https://www.smith.edu/about-smith/equity-inclusion

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How it works (cont.)

STEP 2: Visit FAQs and Ask a Question on Springshare platform:

http://smith.libanswers.com/oei

http://smith.libanswers.com/form.php?queue_id=3864

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Recommendations

The Communication Action Team recommends implementing a trial period of 1 year using Springshare and then determining whether this is an effective tool for sharing information and answering questions about equity and inclusion at Smith.

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Thank You
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A special thank you to Sika Berger, User Experience Librarian, and Raven Fowlkes-Witten, Program Coordinator, OEI, without whom we could not have completed our work.

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