In 2013, the University of Denver established the Interdisciplinary Research Incubator for the Study of (In)equality (IRISE) to serve as the intellectual home for faculty and students engaged in the development of cutting edge interdisciplinary research on issues of inequality, social justice, and inclusivity. Since then, IRISE has hosted 9 postdoctoral fellows, sponsored impactful faculty and student research, scholarship, and professional development, and hosted numerous lectures, symposia, and conferences examining multiple forms of discrimination and inequality in contemporary culture and life. IRISE has also become the home to the Pioneer Pathways Program (P3) and the Roger Salters Institute (RSI), supporting both undergraduate and graduate students from marginalized backgrounds as they become engaged thinkers and critical scholars in their own right. In its four short years, IRISE has established itself as a prominent and essential institute within the DU community and beyond. With this foundation, IRISE is preparing for its next innovative and progressive phase: IRISE 2.0!

What is IRISE 2.0?
From its beginning, Colorado has been a location of innovation and discrimination, perseverance and resilience, expansion and colonization, potential and oppression. The challenges of such dichotomies are seen from the Sand Creek Massacre in its early territorial period, resistance to the forced concentration of Japanese Americans in the state during World War II, the deep rooted segregation of students of color in public schools in the 1950s and 1960s, to the more recent exploitation of immigrant labor throughout the state. In each and every case, racism has paved the roads to deep and enduring equity gaps for communities of color throughout Colorado.

As a part of the DU Grand Challenges initiative and IMPACT 2025, IRISE is re-envisioning its work around creating solutions to those racial equity gaps in education, health, income, housing, and employment that persist throughout the state and region. Specifically, in a campus-wide effort for DU to have a collective impact on reducing racial disparities in Colorado, IRISE will direct its resources to align and collaborate with others around the state who are responding to many of the issues identified in the Rocky Mountain PBS Losing Ground Report.

Beginning now, IRISE will spend the winter and spring quarters of the 2017-18 academic year engaging with faculty, department chairs, on-campus institutes and centers, and off-campus partners towards building out its next phase of impactful and collaborative scholarship, teaching, and leadership. In the 2018-19 academic year, IRISE will launch into a two-year initiative, drawing together the DU community, local communities, legislative communities, and all those interested in investing toward closing racial equity gaps in Colorado. Will you join us?

How can you be involved?
There will be a variety of ways for individuals, academic departments, local organizations, administrative and governmental agencies, and many others to join in this two year initiative. Some of these opportunities include:

- Creating collaborative community efforts that cross over the borders of academia and community organization to address racial disparities within the local spaces and places;
- Aligning curriculum and courses toward addressing and center a racial equity lens;
- Committing resources already ear-marked to address and bring light to narratives and conversation of race, racism, and racial disparities in Colorado, ultimately seeking equitable outcomes; and
- Shifting current focuses or re-imagining them to examine the intersectional nature of identities, work, processes, policies, and procedures that impact people of color disproportionately.

Who do I contact?
If you are interested in joining IRISE 2.0 and its mission to address racial disparities in Colorado, please email us at IRISE@du.edu.