

Department of Biology's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan Goals and Action Items

This list of Goals and Action Items is a living document of suggested activities that is expected to be modified following community discussions.

Goals

1. Increase the number of Biology members from under-represented groups and from groups of non-traditional backgrounds at all ranks from faculty to staff and students.
2. Increase the curricular and training opportunities for all members of the Biology Department in order to gain a fuller understanding and knowledge regarding issues related to race, racism history in our Department and beyond, and implicit biases.
3. Establish processes by which all members of the Department can engage in developing a diverse and inclusive community and supporting and rewarding these efforts.
4. Formalize new structures within the Department that will enhance our efforts to improve diversity, equity and inclusion and that will provide mechanisms for accountability, evaluation, and transparency.

Specific actions and outcome metrics

1. Increase the representation of faculty, post-docs, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate researchers from under-represented or non-traditional backgrounds in our seminar series, student body, and faculty.
 - A. **Seminar Series Diversity.** An examination of our seminar series over the last several years has demonstrated that we need to improve representation of invited speakers from underrepresented groups. The Department's ad-hoc "Community Committee", created in Fall 2019, has worked to promote a more diversified group of speakers, and this work will continue. In addition to our Department-wide seminar series we will consider inviting former URM undergraduates and graduates from UVA who are in their late stages of their graduate or post-doc training to speak to smaller, area-specific, seminars and to speak to early-stage graduate students about their career trajectories and experiences.
 - o **Outcome metrics:** Measured increases in the diversity of speakers in our Departmental seminars
 - B. **Graduate Student Diversity.** We have recently increased efforts to improve recruitment of URM through participation in the GRIT (Graduate Recruitment Initiative Team) program and faculty / graduate student attendance at research conferences. Additionally, in Spring 2020, three independent Diversity & Inclusion Grants from A&S were awarded to Biology to support increased recruitment of underrepresented students to our graduate program. This work will continue and additional changes to our recruitment activities are planned including improving our

graduate application fee waiver process, introducing closed-door discussions between recruited and current students, and introducing a buddy system to ease the transition of first-year students into the Department.

- **Outcome metrics:** Increases in the proportion of BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and first-generation students in our graduate program.

C. **Faculty Diversity.** Faculty applications now include a Diversity statement (in addition to a Teaching and Research statement), and prior to the review of any applications all faculty must complete implicit bias awareness training. The Department's Director of Diversity and Inclusion (DDI) is an ex-officio member of all faculty search committees.

- **Outcome metrics:** Increases in the proportion of women and other underrepresented groups to our faculty.

2. Increase the curricular opportunities for students and faculty to gain knowledge of the history of racism, in our Department, and in our science through invitations to speakers, through workshops, and through our courses.

A. **Self-education.** We will use at least one Departmental Friday Seminar per year to bring in speakers who can discuss various topics related to diversity awareness. Such topics could include seminars on the history of eugenics, philosophy & sociology of science. Other activities for self-education could include workshops during retreats on intervention techniques, bias training, etc., and may include outside speakers, or UVA resources (e.g., UVA Acts).

- **Outcome metrics:** High attendance by all community constituents at these seminars and workshops.

B. **Curriculum Evaluation.** Currently, only a few of our courses discuss concepts of human variation and diversity, but more courses may have the opportunity to do so. GTA training should also include discussions on how to teach about the biology of variation in an anti-racist manner.

- **Outcome metrics:** Increasing number of courses that include lectures or discussions on human variation and diversity.

C. **Foster College-wide Discussions:** Develop relationships with others at UVA (humanities, in particular) who have experience thinking about racism and biology. Foster these relationships with the goal of developing a University wide event.

- **Outcome metrics:** Working relationships across departments are developed and the seminars/workshop(s) are well attended.

D. **Renaming Biology Buildings and Chairs:** Lewis Hall at Mountain Lake Biological Station, and the Lewis & Clark Endowed Chair are associated with eugenic/racist history and should be renamed. Other named Chairs, awards, and lectureships will be reviewed.

3. Establish a process for all members of the Department to develop a diverse and inclusive community and to support and award these efforts through funding opportunities and training.

A. **Increase Undergraduate Research Funding:** Develop internal funding mechanisms to support summer stipends and/or research funds to URM

undergraduates. Explicit recruiting to these opportunities should become a regular part of introductory and core courses, and include direct outreach to transfer students.

- **Outcome metrics:** Sources of funding are identified (or restructured) and recruiting to identify students for these positions is broad.

B. Develop Graduate Student Stipend for Diversity Outreach: Develop a funding mechanism to support a one-semester diversity fellowship for a student to develop diversity/outreach efforts. This funding mechanism would be competitive and details would need to get worked out.

- **Outcome metrics:** A source of funding and structure is established to sustain this fellowship.

C. Host Discussions at Department events. Increase the exchange of thoughts and ideas crucial to recruitment and retention of BIPOC during the Department retreat, Department town halls, or other small group discussions where groups of faculty and students can participate in workshops (e.g. UVA Acts) and exchange ideas to increase community engagement.

- **Outcome metrics:** Events well-attended by faculty, students, and staff. Development of new initiatives and actions that result from these conversations and activities.

D. Improve Training. GTAs currently have implicit bias training during their orientation but we recognize that more training is needed for all members of our community. There are current discussions about developing training for faculty to improve bias and other issues as it relates to mentorship.

- **Outcome metrics:** Implicit bias training is completed by all GTAs and faculty.

E. Celebrate activities and accomplishments. A diverse and inclusive community benefits us all, and through our web page and social media accounts we should celebrate the efforts of individuals and groups who contribute to these efforts. At the same time, we should be mindful that no single person or group should be overburdened by these activities because we all share this responsibility to each other.

- **Outcome metrics:** Visible posts in multiple formats highlighting achievements and efforts from faculty, students, and staff related to diversity, equity, & inclusion. Additionally, faculty members must describe their efforts to cultivate and/or contribute to a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment in the community in their Annual Activity Reports.

4. The Biology Department will formalize new structures within the Department that will enhance our efforts to improve diversity, equity and inclusion and will provide mechanisms for accountability, evaluation, and transparency.

A. Establish a Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Recommend that the faculty develop this new standing committee to foster a supportive climate for all members of the biology community including staff, students and faculty. This committee would be chaired by the Department DDI and would include representatives from all constituencies. In addition to supporting ongoing activities listed here, this committee will promote the sharing of resources that promote these activities. This committee

will develop an annual report with a summary of accomplishments and recommendations for modifications of goals/objectives to address shifting concerns.

B. Develop a Department Vision that Includes Diversity and Inclusion Goals.

Recommend that the faculty develop a vision/mission statement that includes our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

- **Outcome metrics:** Vision/mission statement is completed by the end of the fall semester 2020.

C. Encourage labs to write or adopt their own diversity statements and post those statements on lab webpages. This recommendation not only reaffirms a commitment to our Departmental goals, but it is also a signal to current and future personnel that the lab is welcoming to all.

- **Outcome metrics:** An increasing number of faculty have a statement on their web page by the end of the fall semester 2020.

Last updated: July 2020