

EQUITY JUSTICE DIVERSITY INCLUSION

2021
Framework



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
**AGRICULTURE &
NATURAL RESOURCES**



OUR COMMITMENT

The College of Agriculture & Natural Resources (CANR) is committed to upholding the mission and values stated by the University of Delaware's Office of Institutional Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. "The University of Delaware's educational mission is to prepare students to live in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world. We are committed to building an educational community that understands people from different backgrounds and economic circumstances, with different needs, and from diverse personal and philosophical beliefs. We want to make all people who are part of the University feel welcome and valued in campus life."

<https://sites.udel.edu/diversity>

EQUITY JUSTICE DIVERSITY INCLUSION

This strategic framework, proposed by the CANR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, is meant to be an adaptable and evolving framework for students, staff and faculty. This plan will help ensure that CANR consistently strives to take actionable steps and to acknowledge that the commitment to equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion is a shared responsibility by the community. The plan will be enacted using the university's institutional norms, practices, and policies, implemented in compliance with the law, and monitored for its consistent adherence to the principles of equity, justice, diversity and inclusion. The plan delineates three areas in which we will deliberately focus our efforts.



After a climate survey audit of CANR staff and faculty in 2019-2020 and undergraduate and graduate students in 2020, the following three areas were determined to be priorities. 1) outreach, recruitment, and retention; 2) training and assessment; and 3) facilitating a just, diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. Please note that all survey results and analyses can be found here: <https://sites.google.com/udel.edu/canr-staff-resources/dei-resources>

The plan also outlines the critical role of administrative leadership in sustaining this agenda.

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Background

CANR shares the [vision, mission and values](#) held by the University of Delaware which include placing the “highest value on our common humanity and therefore we will reflect and act upon issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in the decisions that we make.” To ensure that each member of our community has a full opportunity to thrive in our environment, we believe that equity, justice, diversity and inclusion are key to individual flourishing and the advancement of knowledge. We know that without a vibrant community of people who identify as members of various groups, we cannot progress as a college.

This Strategic Action Plan (“the plan”) is meant to provide a foundational framework to offer guidance on developing the institutional mechanisms and social norms necessary to ensure that differences are respected, welcomed and used to support individuals’ growth and to advance our collective aims.

This is not a checklist; it is a journey. This is meant to be a foundation that will be built upon overtime as improvements are made, strategy phases are completed and the CANR Community develops an increased understanding and awareness of equity, justice, diversity and inclusion initiatives and programs.

Collaborators

The success of this plan relies on engagement from a network of collaborators. Key collaborators and roles are listed below but we recognize that the success of this effort depends on the involvement, support and commitment of audiences internal and external to the university. Involving many different groups of collaborators within the CANR community while planning and making equity, justice, diversity and inclusion decisions will help to encourage transparency and accountability throughout implementation. Additionally, developing this document as a collaborative effort will foster the flow of knowledge across departments and units. Each of the following groups of collaborators are represented on the CANR DEI Committee as defined in the [CANR College By-Laws](#).

Students

Undergraduate, graduate, professional and continuing education students are central collaborators of the plan. While student diversity has grown over the years, we would like to acknowledge that more growth is needed to nurture equitable success. The role of CANR students is to help promote DEI initiatives amongst registered student organizations and with their peers. Students will provide feedback through event attendance (i.e. climate surveys, town halls and focus groups) and active participation to give voice to the student perspective within the CANR community. Purposefully providing a platform to give students a voice, as well as an opportunity for the college to amplify their voices will help students to feel a stronger sense of belonging.

Studies have found that students who feel they belong seek out and use campus resources to a greater extent, furthering their success. In addition, belonging may buffer students from stress, improving mental health (Gopalan & Brady, 2020).

Students will play an influential role in educating each other, raising awareness and being allies or advocates amongst their peers.

Staff and Professionals

CANR staff and professionals include administrative support, communicators, researchers, facilities support and members of Cooperative Extension across the State of Delaware. An important role of staff and professionals is to educate themselves on the college's vision, mission and values by actively engaging in DEI efforts. In addition to engaging in these efforts, staff and professionals will provide feedback through event attendance (i.e. climate surveys, town halls and focus groups) and active participation to give a voice to the staff and professional perspective within the CANR community. Staff and professionals will play an influential role in educating each other, raising awareness and being allies or advocates amongst their peers.

Faculty

In addition to the responsibilities outlined for staff and professional collaborators, faculty are also responsible for understanding the EJDI elements they bring to the classroom. Learning environments can be difficult to navigate when there are cultural differences among students and between students and faculty. Faculty will ensure their students have interactions in the classroom

or lab, or through team-oriented project work, that will prepare them to work in a diverse environment and collaborate with others who bring new perspectives. A commitment to EJNI should be evidenced in intercultural curriculum, accessible instructional practices and classroom norms.

CANR Senior Leadership

There needs to be a cultural shift at the University of Delaware, including with senior leadership within CANR. Department chairs, program deans and other members of leadership will adopt a cultural change in practice by making decisions with equity, justice, diversity and inclusion in mind at every level. Senior leadership within the college can commit to DEI by prioritizing these efforts with a commitment of time, talent and dollars. Senior leaders will assure that every department and unit within the college is actively participating and contributing to college-wide DEI efforts by providing a dedicated and permanent line-item in their budgets for this purpose. Each unit should understand its role in shaping an equitable, diverse and inclusive community.

Focus Areas

Three priority focus areas were identified from the 2019-2020 CANR climate audit of staff and faculty provided by the University of Delaware's Office of Equity and Inclusion and results from a 2020 CANR undergraduate and graduate student survey. The full results of these assessments can be found here: <https://sites.google.com/udel.edu/canr-staff-resources/dei-resources>.

Outreach, Recruitment & Retention

To diversify our college community, we must attract and retain students, staff and faculty from all walks of life. Ongoing outreach to underrepresented students at regional high schools will spotlight unique opportunities available to all students at our college, while also elucidating the pathway for application and admission to the university. As we create a more diverse student body, we will also work with Human Resources and other relevant UD departments to recruit faculty and staff that reflect this diversity. To retain new faculty, staff and students, and to ensure an engaged community of alumni and scholars in the future, we must provide support through mentoring, coaching, appropriate advancement avenues and more.

Our strategy for this focus area includes the following objectives:

- Share guidance and resources from Human Resources, the Office of Institutional Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, UD Advance and other units across campus to help develop job descriptions that incorporate equity, justice, diversity and inclusion language in the job advertisement. Assist in facilitating the broad distribution of vacancy and hiring announcements to attract diverse applicants to expand the representation of minority populations in faculty and staff positions. For example, consider adding job opportunities to job boards on websites such as: <https://www.manrrs.org/>, <https://www.sacnas.org/> and <https://www.womeninbio.org/>, as well as discipline and community focused sites such as <https://www.entopoc.org/> and at conferences such as [SACNAS](#) and [MANRRS](#).
- As is best practice according to UD's human resource department, we encourage adding a DEI statement to job applications. A diversity statement often include a description of a candidate's contributions to diversity in their professional lives as well as plans for the future. Detailed guidance on DEI statements can be found in "[Best Practices for Search Committees](#)" on the UD Advance Institute recruitment [website](#).
- We advise that search committees for CANR positions should not only be diverse in its makeup, but also diverse in thought, in area of concentration, in doctoral preparation and in departmental responsibilities accounting for "power imbalances" among its members (e.g., non-tenure line faculty, assistant professors.) Additionally, to increase, in measurable ways, the gender, linguistic, socioeconomic and racial/ethnic diversity of our students, staff and faculty by providing a set of interview questions to search committees via our website and as requested.
- Establish or improve peer mentoring amongst faculty and create a coaching program for staff.
- Establish, communicate and continue outreach activities to regional high schools and minority-serving institutions to develop pipelines for undergraduate and graduate students from minoritized groups.

Training & Assessment

There must be a focus on ensuring that members of the CANR community have the training needed to address issues of inequality and implement the changes necessary to eliminate equity gaps. CANR will build on existing university initiatives through trainings on [ConnectingU](#) and through other efforts recommended by the Office of Institutional Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, like [EverFi](#), to empower

students, staff and faculty to both identify gaps and make decisions that will aid in rectifying these areas. Additionally, CANR leadership will provide the resources to assist faculty with developing or reimagining current curriculum through an intercultural lens. Diversified curriculum can help bridge differences, both on campus and in society. Learning about diverse and global cultural traditions brings groups of students together rather than dividing them (Otten, 2003).

Our strategy for this focus area includes the following objectives:

- Schedule and promote a minimum of two professional equity-minded training sessions each fiscal year, for CANR personnel, faculty and students on anti-discrimination, implicit bias, cultural sensitivity and other topics, with the goal of improving organizational climate. We will encourage administration and department supervisors to be accountable for attending these trainings and providing incentives to faculty and staff for actively engaging in these opportunities.
- With UD's Office of Equity and Diversity, CANR administration will initiate the development and facilitate implementation of assessment efforts to increase accountability among faculty, staff, students, volunteers and stakeholders including annual climate surveys to gauge the perception of each CANR collaborator subset. These surveys should include questions that will measure perceptions of equity, justice, diversity and inclusion.
- The committee will help department chairs and program directors to provide faculty members and teaching assistants with access to resources and training opportunities for ensuring diverse classrooms and intercultural curriculum. CANR leadership will work to increase the number of faculty who attend workshops or request consultations with the [Center for Teaching and Assessment of Learning](#) at the University of Delaware.
- Through internal communications such as emails and a Google Group, the committee will help to educate the entire community on the benefits of advancing equity, an intercultural campus and respectful community.

Diverse & Inclusive Environment

To create a college where every student, staff and employee feels a sense of belonging, we need to foster a more diverse and inclusive environment. We encourage creative thinking to drive scientific innovation. Being around people who are different from us makes us more creative, more diligent and

harder-working (Phillips, 2014). It is important to make members of the CANR community aware of all campus support services that can aid in their success.

Our strategy for this focus area includes the following objectives:

- Host one college-wide event per semester and promote college and campus-wide opportunities.
- Coordinate an annual audit and report by UD's Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) to review photos, bulletin boards, graphics and displays in hallways and common areas in Worrilow Hall and Townsend Hall.
- Create community gathering spaces around Townsend and Worrilow Hall. In coordination with CANR administration, fund and oversee the installation of community gathering spaces around Townsend and Worrilow Hall.
- Distribute information about CANR DEI to CANR Communications at least once per semester for inclusion in college communication and marketing materials.

Sustaining DEI Initiatives

Leveraging diversity, equity, justice and inclusion as a vital strategic and coordinated activity requires vision, action and courage of leadership. Senior leadership must continue to guide this journey with deliberate advocacy and provide direction through their actions. Without diminishing the importance of individual and collective efforts that draw upon the resources, commitments and leadership of students, faculty and staff to fulfill our institutional vision for equity, justice, diversity and inclusion, the final responsibility for guiding the change process and the implementation of the plan rests squarely with senior leadership. Those in positions of decision-making power actively advance positive institutional transformation when they prioritize change.

The CANR DEI Committee suggests that all senior leadership, including department chairs, program directors and deans, within the college plan for and document their contributions to advancing the CANR's vision for equity, justice, diversity and inclusion laid out in this plan. Departments and units will also be responsible for implementing those aspects of the plan that apply to their program or administrative area. The concept of collaborative governance is to engage people constructively across levels to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished (Morgan, Rall,

Commodore, Fischer, & Bernstein, 2020). When leadership from all departments and units are part of the governance for strategic planning it is more likely to operate efficiently. This requirement means senior leaders will:

- a. Routinely examine and report the frequency and identity of students participating in undergraduate research, internships, fields of study and student surveys, study abroad programs.
- b. Document and publicly report progress toward the objectives mentioned in this plan by reporting on where jobs are posted, how many members of a department participate in surveys, trainings and forums, etc.
- c. Implement a process on which staff and faculty are evaluated on how they embrace diversity and foster an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued as part of their annual review process.

Indicators of Success

Without clear measures to analyze and track DEI efforts and outcomes, a tendency to revert to habitual and ingrained thinking and behavioral patterns limits the return on an organization's investment. Metrics serve to neutralize the emotion associated with equity, justice, diversity and inclusion. DEI metrics should serve three purposes: diagnose risk areas and/or identify gaps and opportunities; track the progress of initiatives; and calculate a return on investment through climate surveys that track college perception. Presenting evidence of the benefits of these initiatives will help to foster a more objective, rational and productive consideration of DEI challenges and opportunities. It is advisable to regularly ask the following questions when considering whether the objectives in this plan are being implemented successfully across the CANR community.

Reflection Questions

- Are students, staff and faculty participating in DEI-related activities? More specifically, are minoritized individuals engaging with curricular content and participating in extracurricular activities?
- Are we providing college-wide and promoting UD-wide DEI learning opportunities?

- Do staff and faculty include DEI efforts in personal and professional performance goals, appraisals, or evaluations? Likewise, do students have an opportunity to evaluate staff and faculty on these efforts?
- Are equity and justice being embedded in program planning and curriculum development across the college?
- What are some known inequities that could still use work?

As these questions are answered, it will be important to carefully look at acquired data and identify gaps. Using collaborative governance, we will work with CANR senior leadership to conduct periodic climate surveys and we will track our progress toward our goals while obtaining a check on trends that can signal where to allocate resources in a responsive way.

Reporting

As surveys and assessments are handed out to students, staff and faculty, the committee will compare results from year to year. We will take care in noting any changes in the college climate to gauge whether areas of this framework need to be modified. The committee will share public reports from senior leadership to the CANR DEI website sharing any new initiatives related to creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive campus. Major progress will be evaluated at the end of year three and again at the end of year five. Progress reports from the committee will be widely shared across the CANR community and published on the website.

Additionally, the committee suggests establishing a yearly “DEI state of the college” report by the Dean to describe the status of the college on various DEI metrics, progress on our strategic plan, challenges and opportunities.

Key Terms

Cultural Competency

- According to the [National Education Association](#), cultural competency means understanding your own culture, the culture of others and the role of culture in education. Using culture as a basis for learning, communicating high expectations and reshaping curriculum to reflect diversity leads to better educational outcomes (“Promoting Culturally,” 2017).

Diversity

- Understanding that everyone is unique and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs or other ideologies.

Equity

- Equality is the state of being equal, especially in status, rights and opportunities. Equity means “justice according to natural law or right” or “the quality of being fair and impartial.” In other words: Equality is the end goal. Equity is the means to get there (O’Conner & Kellerman, 2019)

Inclusion

- Inclusion is a sense of belonging. Inclusive cultures make people feel respected and valued for who they are as an individual or group. People feel a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that they can do their best.

Justice

- Justice in terms of the distribution of opportunities and privileges within the college community.

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