

**Gangarosa Department of Environmental Health  
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Committee  
Annual Report 2020-2021**

**Background and Formation**

In the aftermath of the killings of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others at the hands of law enforcement, the GDEH affirms our commitment to Black Lives Matter. We hope to continue learning about our internal biases while working towards anti-racism in our daily actions. We reject all forms of racism, prejudice, and injustice, including the pervasive and systemic white nationalist, anti-Muslim, anti-LGBTQ+, anti-Latinx, anti-Chinese, xenophobic, and sexist discourse and policies.

To further our shared vision, the GDEH DEI-SC was formed in August 2020, in line with the [RSPH Policy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#). Our objective is to intentionally foster and ‘build an academic community where all members are able to thrive [and enhance] our scholarly mission to eliminate health disparities and improve health outcomes in disadvantaged and vulnerable populations.’ This is a shared mission that requires both institutional change and individual efforts. The purview of the DEI-SC is to set goals and measurable outcomes, along with departmental and individual activities related to departmental culture, academics and curriculum, recruitment and retention, research, and public health practice. The DEI Steering Committee is composed of GDEH stakeholders including faculty, staff (research and administrative), students (MPH and PhD), and alumni.

**GDEH DEI-SC Mission and Vision**

Our **vision** is an academic community of excellence that fosters and sustains support for diversity, equity, and inclusivity rooted in anti-racism and combating anti-blackness.

Our **mission** is to serve as a hub and support network for GDEH DEI-related initiatives, both within our department and in our work as public health researchers and practitioners, and specifically to:

1. Apply principles of anti-racism as a lens to address all forms of prejudice, oppression, and social injustice, including misogyny, nativism, sexism, and homophobia;
2. Engage the GDEH community to eliminate disparities and achieve environmental health justice and equity;
3. Empower the GDEH community with advocacy tools and practices that elevate DEI initiatives; and
4. Develop and implement clear DEI priorities that are tracked, monitored, and evaluated to ensure the achievement of the critical outcomes necessary to achieve our vision.

Working with faculty, staff, MPH and PhD students, we felt our mission and vision encompassed both RSPH and Emory principles and values. We worked with Capital City Justice Group, an external consulting group, to give us unbiased and professional help with our mission, vision, and goals.



<b>2020-2021 Committee Members</b>			
<b>First and Last Name</b>	<b>Committee Role (Chairperson, Member, etc.)</b>	<b>Position (I.e. staff, faculty, student)</b>	<b>Term Ending? (I.e. Summer 2021)</b>
Matthew Freeman	Faculty Co-Chair	Faculty	Fall 2022
Sydney Hubbard	PhD Student Co-Chair	PhD Student	Fall 2021
Thomas Dang	MPH Student Co-Chair	MPH Student	Fall 2021
Dana Bar	Member	Faculty	Fall 2022
Natalie Dionne	Member	Staff	Fall 2021
Melanie Pearson	Member	Staff	Fall 2021
Beverly Owens	Member	Staff	Fall 2021
Rachel Usher	Member	Staff and Alum	Fall 2021
Sabrina Haque	Member	PhD Student	Fall 2021
Danielle Clarkson-Townsend	Member	PhD Student	Fall 2021
Madelon Morford	Member	MPH Student	Spring 2021
Colton Nettleton	Member	MPH Student	Spring 2021
Sabrina Bogovik	Member	MPH Student	Spring 2021
Wandave Tizhe	Member	MPH Student	Spring 2021
Emilie Saksvig	Member	MPH Student	Fall 2021
Morgan Stuckey	Member	MPH Student	Fall 2021
Ericka Thomas	Member	Alum	Fall 2021
Taylor German	Consultant	Alum and consultant	Spring 2021
April Ballard	Adhoc	Call to Action Chair	Fall 2021
Elizabeth Sajewski	Adhoc	Call to Action Chair	Fall 2021

### **Summary of Accomplishments:**

The DEI-SC coordinates and supports DEI-related activities for the department. The activities below were not all led by the DEI-SC, but in this report we aim to harmonize DEI-related accomplishments and activities within the entire department. Additions welcome!

1. Provided feedback to search committee process & composition
  - Aim: Support/facilitate hiring of diverse faculty to reflect our student cohorts and can help improve department culture and climate
  - Suggested changes to the processes of the search committee. Several suggestions were taken up and we continue to work with the committee. Offers have been given to more females, including females of color
2. Critical Discussions Training Series (January 2021)
  - Aim: Increase ability of department to openly discuss issues
  - Two, 2-hour sessions conducted in January that included >50 members of GDEH
  - Another set of sessions are planned for the incoming student cohort and others who missed the training for August/Sept 2021



3. Office of Respect GDEH Department Culture Report
  - Aim: Identify actionable items to move toward being a more supportive and inclusive department
  - Focus groups among key constituents led by the Emory Office of Respect
  - Report issued and discussed with GDEH leadership and GDEH members
  - Report informed the GDEH DEI Strategic Plan
4. DEI Strategic Plan
  - Aim: Guide and track the culture, teaching, research, and training of the department moving forward as it relates to DEI
  - Developed plan to guide department and hold department accountable for DEI action and guide committee
  - The plan included goals relating to department culture, in class teaching/pedagogy, research, and training/mentorship.
  - Informed by the report from the Office of Respect and focus group discussions.
  - Extensive outreach and input obtained from GDEH members, including prioritization of key outcomes
  - Activities for 2021-22 currently under development.
  - Indicators for tracking key outcomes under development
5. DEI Accountability Groups (Summer 2021)
  - Aim: improve departmental culture and focus on bringing anti-racism to personal and professional settings
  - A follow up series to the Critical Discussions Series to allow GDEH members to talk in a safe space
  - Participation from ~35 members of the GDEH
6. Our Voices Seminar Series
  - Aim: Increase awareness and profile of faculty of color within environmental public health
  - Seven speakers; topics ranged from WASH to ID to Toxicology; Attendance was usually ~40 faculty, staff, students. Each seminar followed by a student-focused Q&A with the speaker.
7. Direct Local Action (led by EHS Call 2 Action)
  - Aim: Increase department members' opportunities to engage meaningfully with the Atlanta community through volunteer opportunities
  - EHS Call to Action group organized a food justice drive with Free99Fridge and donated over 150 meals and nonperishable food items to increase food justice in Atlanta
  - Hosted election volunteering competition within Department
8. Call to Action Discussion Series
  - Aim: Create spaces and opportunities for department members' to engage meaningfully in anti-racist discussions and direct local action
  - Discussions with students, faculty, and staff on topics including community-engaged research, microaggressions, deficit terminology and language in research to increase conversations in the department on anti-racist research
9. PhD Application Bootcamp
  - Aim: Increase diversity in PhD program by reducing barriers to higher education access
  - Series of workshops and one-on-one meetings to mentor students through PhD application process
  - Held 5 bootcamp meetings via Zoom, beginning in August of 2020 to students interested in PhD program. Additional one-on-one mock

interviews over Zoom with students who were interested. Attendance was fluid but had 5-7 core attendees that participated in all of the meetings and activities. Of these students, all but 1 received offers to PhD programs.

#### 10. Curriculum Updates

- Aim: Introduce students to concepts of Environmental Justice
- Updated curriculum of EH 501-Introduction of EH to frame within context of environmental justice to improve pedagogy related to social justice