

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan
of the
Gangarosa Department of Environmental Health (GDEH)
Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University

May 11th, 2021

This strategic planning document was developed by members of the GDEH community to sharpen our Department's vision and mission related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The process was led by the GDEH DEI steering committee (DEI-SC). Here we identify critical outcomes related to department culture, teaching and pedagogy, research, and training/mentorship. This strategic plan is explicitly focused on department DEI-related outcomes and activities; it is not the strategic plan for the GDEH department writ large. A yearly planning process will be developed to address these outcomes, which will be tracked to determine short and long term progress. This is a living document that will be revisited and evaluated bi-annually.

The DEI-SC will oversee the implementation of the strategic plan across department programs, classes, student groups, procedures, etc. However, primary responsibility for select activities and monitoring may be delegated to the department relevant stakeholders (e.g., curriculum committee or program director). Where we refer to the "GDEH community," we are focused on administrative and research staff; MPH and PhD students; and primary appointed faculty, though we also will work to actively engage jointly-appointed and adjunct faculty; alum; and committee and research partners in these processes where appropriate and feasible.

Within this strategic plan, we discuss GDEH community members from "historically underrepresented populations" which includes but is not limited to LGBTQ+, native, Latinx, differently abled, economically disadvantaged, first generation, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), and other stigmatized groups with a focus on Black individuals. These groups have been traditionally marginalized across society and specifically within academia. We reference "anti-racism" in this document as well. Anti-racism is the active process of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies, practices, and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably. We have done our best to be intentional about selecting inclusive and appropriate language throughout this document, but recognize and acknowledge that many terms that currently exist fall short, are controversial, and may change with time. We will do our best to keep language up to date. If you identify a term that is problematic, feel free to contact us and we will do our best to address your concerns.

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.

To achieve this mission, GDEH DEI-SC **values and prioritizes** the following:

- Thoughtfulness and intentionality in decision making
- Physical, mental, and emotional safety for all
- Effective and active allyship
- Individual and collective accountability
- Open and consistent channels of communication
- Constant learning from the GDEH community
- Production of scholarship that holistically considers equity and inclusion

Strategic Goals:

1. Department culture

- a. Department leadership sets a tone, culture, and expectations on the importance and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- b. Department members are supported and able to study and work in an environment free from discrimination
- c. Department recruits, supports, and retains students, trainees, faculty, and staff from historically underrepresented populations
- d. Department members have meaningful opportunities to engage with the Atlanta community through research and volunteer opportunities
- e. The Department actively seeks and is open to critical feedback and is able to adapt and respond with transparency

2. In Class Teaching + Pedagogy

- a. Classrooms are safe spaces for students from historically underrepresented populations and other axis of disparity (e.g. learning differences) that allow for full participation and engagement
- b. Instructors are trained and prepared to engage students from historically underrepresented populations and able to respond to criticism
- c. Curricula amplify voices and perspectives from historically underrepresented populations
- d. Instructors and students are equipped to identify biases and engage in bi-directional learning
- e. Students are trained in core principles and methods of environmental justice and social determinants of health and are able to apply these to environmental health

3. Research

- a. A scholarship of impact - where research is translated to policies and practice for addressing environmental health disparities - is prioritized along with the scholarship of discovery
- b. Department has a strong portfolio of work centered on environmental health disparities and environmental justice
- c. Research initiatives apply an equity and/or environmental justice lens
- d. The department prioritizes and provides opportunities for community-engaged research partnerships
- e. Department commits to standardized recruitment and performance metrics to reduce the risk of personal bias impacting hiring, promotion, recognition of merit, and retention.

4. Training + mentorship

- a. GDEH community members are anti-racist in their approach to the lived experience and scholastics of students from historically underrepresented populations
- b. Students are trained in community based participatory research and the racist and colonial history of public health, and specifically related to environmental health
- c. Student opportunities are available and supported in areas of environmental health disparities and environmental justice
- d. Students, trainees, and early career investigators from historically underrepresented populations are supported with mentorship and training opportunities to meet their professional goals without disproportionately burdening faculty on the basis of their identity characteristics.

Stakeholders who have reviewed and provided feedback to date (5/11/2021):

1. *Core members GDEH DEI-SC*
2. *Capital City Justice Group*
3. *GDEH PhD students*
4. *GDEH Masters students*
5. *Call 2 Action*
6. *GDEH Administrative staff*
7. *GDEH Research staff*
8. *GDEH Faculty*
9. *Dr. Joanne McGriff*