



**Gangarosa Department of Environmental Health
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Committee
Action Plan: Academic Year 2021-2022**

In Spring of 2021, the GDEH Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Committee (DEI-SC) completed its initial strategic planning process with considerable input and feedback from the department.

A link to the vision, mission, values, and outcomes is [here](#). From May-August 2021, we have been working on developing activities (and measurable indicators) to meet the outcomes listed in the strategic plan. While all outcomes are important, we circulated a survey to department members asking them to help prioritize outcomes for the upcoming academic year. The results of the outcomes upvote are below along with the activities that have been developed by the DEI-SC to meet these particular outcomes.

Results of Department Upvote:

Prioritized Outcomes	Rank Overall	Rank URM Identified
1a. Department leadership sets a tone, culture, and expectations on the importance and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.		4th
1c. Department recruits, supports, and retains students, trainees, faculty, and staff from historically underrepresented populations	1st	1st
2c. Curricula amplify voices and perspectives from historically underrepresented populations	2nd	3rd
2e. 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	4th	
3a. 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		4th
4b. Students are trained in community based participatory research and the racist and colonial history of public health, and specifically related to environmental health	3rd	
4d. 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.	3rd	2nd

Overall, the department elevated outcomes 1c, 2c, 2e, 4b, and 4d for prioritization and activity and indicator development for the upcoming academic year. Respondents that identified as underrepresented minorities elevated similar outcomes. The drafted activities to meet these outcomes are below.

Planned Outputs and Activities (and related outcomes):

1. Improve collaborations at the department level with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the Atlanta area through research and/or mentorship opportunities. **(Outcome 1c)**
 - A DEI-SC working group will - in 2021-22 academic year - map out how to improve these collaborations when it comes to recruitment of staff and students and ensure scholarship opportunities are well advertised.
 - Coordinate these efforts with broader University efforts (e.g. ARCH program)
2. Strengthen department member retention and support through **(Outcomes 1c & 4d)**:
 - *Faculty-level initiatives* - peer mentorship program for junior faculty, structured support and retention plan for trainees and faculty, a student mentorship best practices among faculty; This initiative will be led by Dr. Freeman in the coming academic year.
 - *Student level initiatives* - financial support for URM students, mentoring program (first years paired with second years), student lounge to foster community
 - *PhD student level initiatives* - redesign of EH790 for first and second year students by DGS
 - *Staff level initiatives* - encourage engagement through department-level staff council representatives.
3. Build on improvements in the faculty hiring process through continued communication and feedback from the Search Committee. **(Outcome 1c)**
 - In 2020, the DEI-SC provided extensive feedback on the search committee process. The faculty search committee made several changes in constitution and process. The department made offers to new faculty (all women, two women of color). The DEI-SC will continue to collaborate with the search committee as useful to support a diverse faculty recruitment process.
4. Continue to offer trainings and learning opportunities around general DEI and anti-racism topics and practices. **(Outcome 1a)**
 - The DEI-SC will continue to coordinate with outside collaborators and experts in anti-racism practice like the Capital City Justice Group who provided a Critical Discussions department-wide training as well as small group curriculum on how to develop anti-racism practices in the previous academic year. The DEI-SC will work to provide similar trainings and potentially continue these small group sessions for the coming academic year.
5. Identify trainings that help faculty identify and utilize curricula developed by URM investigators. **(Outcome 2c and 2e)**
 - The DEI-SC will work with the MPH and PhD DGSs, as well as GDEH curriculum committee representatives, to increase awareness for and training on how to increase environmental justice content and amplify URM perspectives in assigned classroom texts and examples. We will liaise with the school curriculum committee to determine plans at school level.
6. Continue the Our Voices Seminar Series to increase awareness and profile of faculty of color within environmental public health and mainstream it within the regular GDEH department seminar series **(Outcome 2c)**



- Dr. Mike Caudle will lead the solicitation and promotion of talks to amplify the voices and work of URM researchers and research related to environmental justice.
7. Offer faculty trainings on current environmental justice topics and decolonizing public health methodology (**Outcomes 2e, 4b**)
 - Course evaluations include reviews on instructor's ability to integrate environmental justice topics and/or create an inclusive classroom environment
 - Seminars on EJ will be included in the regular EH seminar series
 - A three- part series in Spring 2022. This series is being co-developed by EHS PhD candidate, April Ballard. The DEI-SC will work with April and the department to offer this series for the entire department/institutionalize the course.
 8. Offer a course on community-based participatory research (CBPR) for masters and doctoral students (**Outcomes 4a, 4b, & 2e**)
 - **Dr. Melanie Pearson** currently offers a CBPR short course for Masters in Clinical Practice. The DEI-SC will work with Dr. Pearson and the department to bring this offering to all students in the department potentially as a one-credit course in the Spring semester.
 9. Explore ways to incentivize community partner engagement (**Outcome 4b, 4c**)
 - Explore activities and strategy during 2021-22 academic school year.
 - An example activity would be a “speed dating” type event where community organizations and faculty/students learn each other’s missions and expertise and then see if collaborations can be developed. This event could be integrated into the annual EH networking night.
 10. Identify URM-specific fellowships (**Outcome 4d**)
 - The DEI-SC will work with Dr. Qiang Zhang (Mike to coordinate) - who leads the awards within the department - to identify URM-specific fellowships.
 11. Continue the PhD Application Bootcamp in collaboration with Dr. Mike Caudle (a series of workshops to mentor students through the PhD application process with the aim of increasing diversity in PhD programs by reducing barriers to higher education access) (**Outcome 4a, 4d**)
 12. Develop a science training community to encourage and support URM students. (**Outcome 4d**)
 - During the 2021-22 academic year, the DEI-SC will seek to understand how the department can improve the environment around academic critiques and positive support for students.