

**Gangarosa Department of Environmental Health  
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Committee  
Annual Report 2021-2022**

**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 can 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.

**2021-22 Action planning.** 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](#). 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 were documented in our DEI Action Plan (numerated in the “summary of activities” section below) along with the activities that have been developed by the DEI-SC to meet these outcomes (bullets under activities).

The DEI-SC coordinates and supports DEI-related activities for the department, guided by the DEI Action Plan. 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.

**Results of Department Upvote**

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.

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

**Summary of Activities and Accomplishments** Since May 2021, the DEI-SC has been working on developing activities (and measurable indicators) to meet the outcomes listed in the strategic plan, with specific priority to those outcomes elevated by the department in the upvote (above).

The list below is the drafted activities, followed by the specific actions for each relevant activity.

1. Improved collaborations at the department level with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the Atlanta area through research and/or mentorship opportunities.
  - A DEI-SC working group mapped out how to improve these collaborations when it comes to recruitment of staff and students and ensure scholarship opportunities are well advertised. These collaborations have been explored through specific initiatives, including the Our Voices Seminar Series, PhD Application Bootcamp, work with the LGS EDGE program to promote EHS.
  - Coordinated these efforts with broader University efforts and worked with LGS DEI to determine the best ways to develop collaborations with HBCUs in Atlanta.
  
2. Strengthen department member retention and support through:
  - *Faculty-level initiatives* - Dr. Freeman developed a peer mentorship program for junior faculty that covers mentorship development, understanding service requirements, clarifying purchasing, discussing building a research group. The junior faculty mentorship plan has been revised (and will be further revised with junior faculty).
  - *Student level initiatives* - Financial support for URMs, mentoring program (first years paired with second years), provided resources to students
  - *PhD student level initiatives* - Redesigned EH790 for first- and second-year students by DGS
    - EHS 790R has been redesigned to include more resources to help students navigate the PhD program. For example, providing more detail and transparency about the candidacy exam and what to expect, discussions of imposter syndrome, developing a strong mentor-mentee relationship, research ethics, as well as opportunities for science communication (written and oral).
  - *Staff level initiatives* - Encouraged engagement through department-level staff council representatives. Have staff voices heard and represented at DEI-SC meetings and conversations. The staff council representative provided updates to the DEI committee regarding staff issues filtered through the council.
    - The DEI-SC Staff Culture working group hosted multiple meetings over the year to discuss how to better strengthen the staff community and retain its members. The representatives from the RSPH Staff Council worked to bring the concerns of the GDEH staff to the table, most notably the concerns of Research Staff in the department and across the school. Our Staff Council representatives are in the early stages of outlining ways to report their general body meeting discussions back to the department. The research staff continues to host bi-monthly meetings with the chair to discuss any areas of concerns. We also organized and hosted a staff appreciation luncheon to recognize our research and admin staff. A press release was also published highlighting various staff members who recently received Service Excellence awards.



3. Built on improvements in the faculty hiring process through continued communication and feedback from the Search Committee.
  - 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 continued to collaborate with the search committee to support a diverse faculty recruitment process. Continued to offer training and learning opportunities around general DEI and anti-racism topics and practices. However, participation was not a requirement for search committee members—something that is being considered for the future.
  - The DEI-SC coordinated with outside collaborators and experts in anti-racism practice like the Capital City Justice Group to provide a second set of Critical Discussions department-wide training in early Spring 2022.
4. Identified trainings that help faculty identify and utilize curricula developed by URM investigators.
  - The DEI-SC has identified a path forward to mainstream the school-level DEI curriculum self-assessment. Several faculty members piloted the tool to assess ease of use.
  - We propose hiring a student - Prachi Prasad - to support faculty to complete the self-assessment and make relevant changes to the course curriculum and syllabus.
  - We liaised with the school curriculum committee to determine plans at school level.
5. Continued 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
  - Although we set out to continue this speaker series, we were unable to schedule speakers this spring mostly due to calendar conflicts.
  - We allocated funds to provide honoraria for URM speakers.
6. Offered training on current environmental justice topics and decolonizing public health methodology
  - There were several school- and university-led events through CFDE and GHI, so this activity was not prioritized this year.
  - Course evaluations continue to include reviews on instructor's ability to integrate environmental justice topics and/or create an inclusive classroom environment. The DEI-SC will work to use these measures to benchmark departmental progress.
  - A three- part series in Fall 2021 was co-developed by EHS PhD candidate April Ballard for PhD students through Laney Graduate School. The DEI-SC has discussed working with April and the department to offer this series for the department in the future.
  - Created 2 departmental Learning Objective metrics:
    - EJCM: # of courses that offer Environmental Justice or Social Determinants of Health methods and/or content times the number of GDEH students that take courses with these competencies
    - EJSM: # of GDEH-sponsored events dedicated to promoting Environmental Justice and environmental health disparity (seminars, guest speakers, lunch and learns) times the number of GDEH students attending these events
  - EH501 integrated and mainstreamed EJ into curriculum
  - Developed competency related to EJ for MPH curriculum. Still needs to be

- mapped to courses and formally approved by EdCmt (Approval target date: Fall 2022)
- EJ Course: 14 students enrolled, shared classroom power, learning assessments involved multiple platforms of delivery to accommodate all students
7. Offered a course on community-based participatory research (CBPR) for masters and doctoral students
    - The DEI-SC worked with Dr. Melanie Pearson and the department to bring this offering to all students in the department as a one-credit course in the Spring 2022 with 12 students across different departments. Enrollment numbers may increase if course description is corrected in course catalog, if taught in a different semester than the EJ course, and/or taught at a time that does not conflict with required courses.
    - Highlight of topics covered:
      - benefits and challenges of community-engaged research
      - partnership development
      - returning research results to participants & communities
      - moving from research to tangible community benefits
      - how racism and other forms of injustice can manifest in these partnerships (including guest lecture on decolonizing research)
      - how these partnerships can address racism and other injustices
  8. Explore ways to incentivize community partner engagement (Outcome 4b, 4c)
    - We hosted two community networking events, but there was no discussion about incentivizing potential collaborations - these were more so aimed at student networking, not formal collaboration building.
  9. Continued 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)
    - During the 2021-2022 course series we had 10-15 students participate in the workshops. Most students were from Emory, however, we did have students from Wayne State University, as well as career professionals participating in the workshops.
    - Of the students who participated and completed the workshops, 5 students received and accepted offers for admission to PhD programs, from University of Washington, Harvard, Emory, and Yale.
  10. Develop a science training community to encourage and support URM students.
    - 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.
    - Marisa, Sydney, and Courtney worked with Ariadne and Colleen to identify ways to implement community building during existing events within the department (e.g., orientation). They incorporated a question on EH-related research interest areas to the Student Involvement Survey and discussed adding these research interests into the department Canvas page so that students are able to identify peers with shared interests.
  11. Developed a plan for collecting yearly data across the strategic plan areas. These data will support planning and benchmarking for progress
    - The DEI-SC has developed and will release a 2022 climate survey.

- We will use additional central data from course evaluations, enrollment, and other administrative data to track over time.

12. **HERCULES Anti-racism Activities:** In July 2020, the HERCULES Stakeholder Advisory Board (SAB) voted to address racism as it manifests in the center, our work, and our partnerships. We began by conducting a survey of SAB members and HERCULES leadership (i.e., PIs and Core leads). Based on this survey, a workgroup was established to develop strategies based on survey results. An [anti-racism commitment](#) was drafted and approved for the SAB and is now being adopted and modified center wide. Resources were gathered to serve as pre-work for dialogue groups consisting of both HERCULES leadership and SAB members that were conducted over the summer of 2021 (topics: History of enslavement and racism; Anti-racism and racial equity; Environmental Justice; Health Equity; Academia, Research, & Racism; Organizations). A qualitative analysis resulted in themes from across these discussions, from which additional small group discussions (Fall 2021) developed and recommended concrete actions. Based on SAB prioritization of these actions, a new SAB anti-racism workgroup is developing a HERCULES communication policy, a MOU template for HERCULES community-engaged research, and developing strategies to intentionally promote anti-racism & exposome research in the center.

Summary of Accomplishments					
Activity	Date or Time Frame	Related Outcome	Qualitative <i>and</i> Quantitative Impact(s)	Purpose/Goal	Target Audience
PhD Bootcamp	Fall 2021- Spring 2022	4d	Approximately 10-15 students and career professionals participated. At least 5 of these students received and accepted PhD offers.	Remove some of the barriers associated with navigating the PhD application process.	Students
Our Voices Seminar Series	Fall 2021	4b,4d	Approximately 30 faculty, students, and staff attended each seminar in the fall.	Increase awareness and profile of faculty of color in EH	Dept
Development of GDEH Learning Objectives	Fall 2021	2e	Creation of 2 Learning Objective metrics: - EJC: # of courses that offer Environmental Justice or Social Determinants of Health methods and/or content times the number of GDEH students that take courses with these competencies	Enhanced training in core principles and methods of environmental justice and social determinants of health and are able to apply these to environmental	Students





			- EJSJ: # of GDEH-sponsored events dedicated to promoting Environmental Justice and environmental health disparity (seminars, guest speakers, lunch and learns) times the number of GDEH students attending these events	health	
Critical Discussions training series	January 6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup>	1A	25 DGEH faculty, staff and students attended.	Increase ability of department stakeholders to openly discuss issues	Dept
Revised and ran EJ course	Spring 2022	2c, 2e	14 students enrolled, shared classroom power, learning assessments involved multiple platforms of delivery to accommodate all students	Increase training on EJ	MPH Students
Ran EH590R: community-based participatory research	Spring 2022	2c, 2e	12 students enrolled	Increase training on CBPR	MPH Students
EH501 alignment with EJ	Spring 2022	2c, 2e	Further refine and integrate EJ material	Increase training on EJ	MPH Students
Development of EJ MPH competency	Spring 2022	2c, 2e, 1d	Developed competency related to EJ for MPH curriculum. Still needs to be mapped to courses and formally approved by EdCmt (Approval target date: Fall 2022)	Mainstream EJ into GDEH courses	MPH students
Junior faculty mentorship	2021-22	1a, 1b, 1c, 4d	Monthly junior faculty meetings to increase peer-support and address key questions and challenges for new and junior faculty	Increase support and community for junior faculty, who are predominantly	Faculty



				women	
Junior faculty mentorship guidelines	5/2022	1a, 1c, 4d	Revised department junior faculty mentorship guidance documents	Increase support and community for junior faculty, with a specific focus on URM faculty	Faculty
DEI M&E plan drafted	5/2022	1a, 1e	Drafted an M&E plan for strategic outcomes related to DEI vision and mission	Receive feedback, benchmark progress and identify areas for improvement	Dept
GDEH Climate Survey	5/2022	1a, 1e	Developed climate survey to benchmark GDEH stakeholder perspectives and to set upcoming priorities	Receive feedback, benchmark progress and identify areas for improvement	Dept
Decolonizing Methodologies seminar series	9/2021	4b	Students across Emory were trained in how colonizing/racist/othering forces impact their research, and how to design and conduct theory-driven transformative research		PhD Students
DEI Curriculum Assessment Tool	4/2022	2c	Several department faculty members pilot tested the school-level tool. The DEI-SC has agreed, pending Chair approval and faculty buy-in, to hire a student to support faculty self-assessment with the goal of all courses being evaluated	Improve our curricula in line with DEI best practices	Faculty
Scientific community	2/2022	4d	Developed strategies along with ADAPs to better foster - communities within	To create a science training community that encourages and	Masters students





			the department around students' research area of interests during orientation and Visit Emory as well through Canvas	supports students, especially those that identify as URM.	
--	--	--	--	---	--

<b>2021-2022 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	Spring 2022
Sydney Hubbard	PhD Student Co-Chair	PhD Student	Spring 2022
Thomas Dang	MPH Student Co-Chair	MPH Student	Spring 2022
Dana Barr	Member	Faculty	Spring 2023
Mike Caudle	Member	Faculty	Spring 2023
Natalie Dionne	Member	Staff	Spring 2023
Melanie Pearson	Member	Staff	Spring 2023
Beverly Owens	Member	Staff	Spring 2023
Rachel Usher	Member	Staff and Alum	Spring 2023
Sabrina Haque	Member	PhD Student	Spring 2023
Kaitlin Taibl	Member	PhD Student	Spring 2023
Brooke Lappe	Member	PhD Student	Spring 2023
Natalie Olson	Member	PhD Student	Spring 2023
Courtney Victor	Member	PhD Student	Spring 2023
Elizabeth Sajewski	Member	PhD Student	Spring 2023
April Ballard	Member	PhD Student	Spring 2023
Emilie Saksvig	Member	MPH Student	Spring 2022
Prachi Prasad	Member	MPH Student	Spring 2022
Danielle Clarkson-Townsend	Member	Alum	Spring 2023
Ericka Thomas	Member	Alum	Spring 2023