DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PLAN 2015-2020

The College of Environment and Design
University of Georgia

The College of Environment and Design (CED) and the University of Georgia (UGA) value a university environment that supports and fosters diversity. The primary goal of both the UGA and CED Diversity and Inclusion Plans is to sustain and enhance teaching, learning and working in an environment that embraces diversity and inclusion. The CED recognizes the tremendous value diversity brings to academia. As such, the CED promotes an atmosphere where diversity is valued and seen as a source of enrichment for the entire CED community. Further, UGA and the CED are committed to meeting the diverse needs of their students, faculty, and staff through creating an environment of mutual respect, understanding, and support.

Values of Diversity in the CED

The College of Environment and Design embraces diversity as an immensely important aspect of the educational intent of a college that focuses its work on design, preservation and planning across a broad spectrum of economic, social, and cultural communities. The CED Mission Statement emphasizes the training of students to work in a diverse, global, and increasingly complex world. Diverse perspectives in the design, planning and preservation fields enrich the dialogue of environmental design possibilities. Since the contemporary professional workplace is comprised of diverse individuals and the design professions work globally and across cultures, it is important to insure that students are sensitive to issues of cultural diversity, are facile in working with a broad spectrum of communities, and that communication skills are developed to engage dialogue and input from any communities in which they work. As such, it is critically important to include curriculum that invites discussions of values and needs of diverse peoples and communities in the professions represented by the CED.

Aside from the direct discipline related benefits to diversity within the design, planning and preservation fields, a diverse learning environment has been proven to offer broad educational benefits. According to the report Investing in People: Developing All of America’s Talent on Campus and the Workplace, students educated in a diverse environment with a broad spectrum of perspectives and varied backgrounds gain better critical thinking skills and display greater social and interpersonal skills in engaging with multiple communities and individuals.

CED DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION GOALS

The College of Environment and Design’s 2015-2020 Diversity and Inclusion plan is based on the 2011-2016 University of Georgia’s Diversity Plan: Embracing Diversity and Inclusion at UGA. The primary goals identified in the UGA plan include an enhanced institutional climate to support diversity, recruitment and retention of diverse students, recruitment and support of diverse faculty and staff, expansion of partnerships with communities and organizations
external to UGA to increase diversity-focused research and engagement opportunities, and the codification of diversity achievements through including metrics to annually evaluate progress in reaching diversity and inclusion goals. The CED Plan emphasizes the provisions of the University plan that are most relevant to the College. As such, it sets forth the overall goals for diversity and inclusion in the CED.

The five goals of the CED Diversity and Inclusion Goals are adopted from the UGA plan. The goals are as follows:

1. Enhance and sustain an institutional climate that welcomes, values and promotes diversity and inclusion
2. Increase recruitment and retention of diverse students, especially those from historically underrepresented communities and cultures
3. Recruit, retain and support advancement opportunities for diverse faculty and staff
4. Expand community and organizational partnerships that increase diversity-related research, service and outreach initiatives
5. Include diversity and inclusion metrics into established systems of accountability

The CED Diversity and Inclusion Plan highlights past accomplishments towards those goals, possible challenges towards meeting those goals, and future directions and initiatives in continuing to further the goals of diversity and inclusion within the CED.

CURRENT AND PAST INITIATIVES

Recruitment

**Graduate:** The CED is currently involved in an overall recruitment effort to promote its programs and increase enrollment. As part of this effort there has been a focus on including academic institutions that are diverse. This has included participating in the graduate school fair offered by the Atlanta University Center Consortium, Inc., the largest Historically Black University (HBU) consortium in the world. This event typically draws students from Spelman, Morehouse College and Clark Atlanta University. Savannah State College (SSC) has also been identified as a potential recruitment site for future years.

**Undergraduate:** Undergraduate efforts include working in the diverse Athens/Clarke County school system to provide information about the discipline of landscape architecture, the only undergraduate course of study in the CED. In addition, we have developed a Master of Environmental Planning and Design program at the Gwinnett Campus to allow practitioners and other non-traditional students access to the graduate program at the CED.
Student Efforts: In the past, students have organized in the CED to promote diversity and inclusion efforts. The CED leadership has welcomed these initiatives.

Outreach: Additional prior efforts have included working with university-wide programs that bring highly qualified high school students from under represented school to campus for summer workshops and college programs. One such example was the Project Grad program that brought students from high schools in the Atlanta area from traditionally under represented communities to campus for summer programs. The CED hosted a two-day design workshop component of that experience.

Engagement: The Public Service and Outreach arm of the CED actively works in a wide variety of communities throughout the state of Georgia, including those communities that are predominately under represented at the University of Georgia. As part of the community design efforts, the members of the design teams also promote our educational opportunities and programs to participants in the outreach efforts.

GOALS AND FUTURE EFFORTS

Goal 1:
Enhance and sustain an institutional climate that welcomes, values and promotes diversity and inclusion

It is recognized that a welcoming, inclusive, and positive climate for diverse communities is critical in furthering the diversity effort. All students, faculty and staff, including individuals from diverse race, gender, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, economic background, and country of origin, are welcome in the CED and recognized as essential members of the community. The purpose of the following strategies is to enhance a positive and inclusive learning and working environment for all.

Strategies:

Diversity and Inclusion Representative, Committee and Student Organizations

1) Assign a faculty member to be the designated Diversity Representative or “point person” to address diversity concerns specific to the CED. This representative will meet on a regular basis with representatives of other colleges to share resources, discuss best practices, trends, and upcoming programs and will share the information gained with CED administrators, faculty, and staff. Every effort will be made to create a compassionate environment where concerns are addressed in-house through discussion, training, and other growth opportunities for faculty, staff, students and administrators.

2) Maintain a Diversity and Inclusion Committee in the CED to create an ongoing discussion about these initiatives, evaluate the success of diversity efforts, and to further the promotion of diversity and inclusion in the CED.
3) Support student groups that celebrate and promote diversity within the CED. These groups will be provided institutional support and encouragement. The CED highly values student initiatives that create a positive educational climate for all students.

**Recognition for Diversity and Inclusion Efforts**

4) Offer faculty, staff and student diversity awards for outstanding efforts in promoting diversity and creating an inclusive environment.

**Diversity and Inclusion Training Support**

5) Ensure that staff, faculty and administrators have opportunities for training to effectively support and work with students, faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds.

6) Create “in-house” training opportunities from UGA-Wide resources. As part of regularly scheduled all CED meetings, an informative session on diversity can be included in the yearly agenda.

7) Encourage members of the CED community to participate in the University of Georgia Diversity and Inclusion Certificate Program.⁶

8) Offer opportunities to participate in renewed in-service training to keep staff, faculty and administrators updated on current UGA initiatives and resources to promote diversity and inclusion.

**Diversity and Inclusion Events and Education**

9) Create a yearly International and Cultural Heritage Day event to celebrate the diversity of international heritage and cultures represented within the CED.

10) Encourage discussion and dialogue on diversity issues, including introducing diversity topics into existing classes and developing elective courses on diversity topics relevant to the environmental design professions.

11) Networking with professionals from diverse backgrounds can be beneficial to students, faculty, and staff in the CED. Having successful professional role models from underrepresented groups engage with our college can serve as inspirational role models for students. Likewise, considering gender balance in all events planned within the CED offers a well-rounded exposure to the diversity of professional practice in the fields represented in the college.
12) Consider balancing diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, culture and background in planning supplemental enrichment activates in the CED especially where CED funds are being used. This includes the lecture series, gallery exhibition planning, field trips, and other extra-curricular activities.

Challenges and Opportunities:

• Students, staff, and faculty need to feel safe in approaching the College’s Dean, Associate Dean, and Program Coordinators and faculty regarding concerns related to diversity and inclusion. Anyone who is in a position to meet with students on diversity concerns need to be trained in proper protocol.

• Students have organized groups to promote diversity efforts in the past. However, the success of these groups depends on student leadership. Efforts should be made to encourage and promote new leadership in student groups interested in diversity and inclusion. Towards this effort, student groups focused on promoting diversity and inclusion as well as involved with topics related to cultural groups within the CED, should be encouraged to work with the CED Diversity Officer to identify future leadership in order to promote continuation of these groups.

• Faculty and staff are already extremely busy, so the addition of the Diversity and Inclusion Certificate program may be difficult. This requires administrative support and approval.

Goal 2: Increase recruitment and retention of diverse students, especially those from historically underrepresented communities and cultures

The CED recognizes the importance of a diverse student body within the design, planning and preservation programs at the University of Georgia. Since the programs in our college involve working with communities to plan, design and preserve the environment, enlarging the discussion through working with students from a wide range of cultural, racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, assists in insuring that diverse voices are represented in the discussion of how best to create and preserve places for community enrichment and wellness. Gender inclusiveness is also a key goal in the CED.

Student diversity in the CED at UGA can lead to future landscape architecture, environmental planning, and historic preservation leaders trained to engage in solutions to contemporary issues within a wide range of diverse cultures and communities in state, national and international arenas.

Strategies:

Recruitment

1) Widen the diversity applicant pool through active recruitment in high schools in under represented communities (for undergraduate) and college and universities with diverse students
2) Initiate high school and middle school programs to educate students about the profession of landscape architecture and opportunities for diverse communities.

3) Partner with existing programs at UGA that bring high school students to campus for opportunity activities. Be sure to include the CED as one of the regularly visited places for these events.

4) Be aware of diversity in hiring decisions of staff and faculty so that a diverse faculty and staff can assist in recruitment and retention of a diverse student body.

5) Promote distribution of recruitment materials to provide to potential students upon request.

**Social Media**

6) Create a diversity presence on the website and all social media outlets to encourage students from diverse backgrounds to visit and feel welcome to the CED. This can include highlighting efforts of the CED in its outreach and engagement in diverse communities, the experience of diverse students at the CED, groups and organizations in the CED that welcome diversity, and other evidence of the CED’s commitment to a positive experience for diverse student in the CED.

**Support**

7) Find ways to seek extra funding and scholarship opportunities for students from economically challenging circumstances through development efforts and other forms of work-study and grants applications.

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

- While efforts are currently underway to recruit in a wide variety of colleges, the undergraduate major in our college, landscape architecture, is often little known to high school students. Some of the effort therefore needs to include educating high school students about landscape architecture, including how the profession can serve diverse communities.

- In order to be effective, recruitment efforts need to be strategically planned. This includes working with high school guidance counselors, activating social networking tools, and working with student organizations in the CED to promote the college to their high schools.

- Outreach in diverse communities is already an active component of the CED’s public service and outreach programs that combines engagement with recruitment efforts. Support, in terms of materials, website information, and other social media could assist these efforts to recruit underserved communities.
Goal 3: 
Recruit, retain and support advancement opportunities for diverse faculty and staff

In order to better meet future challenges within a diverse world, the CED recognizes the importance of faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. The CED believes it is critically important to hire and promote faculty and staff who can work with a diverse student body, and who can address important issues through research, scholarship, teaching and support that contribute to deeper understanding of environmental design within increasingly diverse communities.

Strategies:

1) When a faculty or staff position becomes available make sure to both network and widely advertise the position to get the best possible applicants from all backgrounds

2) Promote equal opportunity for further training amongst all faculty and staff in order to meet the highest potential in work related achievements

3) Develop a structured mentorship program for faculty and staff at all levels to insure that all who work at the CED are offered coaching for continual growth and advancement in their work environment

4) Encourage interested faculty and staff to take advantage of any leadership training opportunities offered through UGA or within the Georgia State system.

5) Equally consider all faculty and staff for promotion and advancement within the CED

Challenges and Opportunities:

• Since most faculty and staff are extremely busy with their normal duties, it is difficult to find time for additional training and advancement. It therefore needs to be encouraged and incentivized as an important priority in the CED

• Developing a system of mentorship can be challenging, as it is sometimes difficult to find the right mentorship pair. However, this is critically important to insure all faculty and staff have equal access to guidance towards advancement

Goal 4:
Expand community and organizational partnerships that increase diversity-related research, service and outreach initiatives

As a college that focuses on environmental design, community wellness, historic preservation and other topics related to the built and natural environment, the CED has a strong tradition of working within diverse communities. The CED recognizes the importance of environmental design, planning, and preservation to improve lives. Environmental health, human wellness, and cultural preservation, have been critical areas of engagement within the CED. As such, embracing the Land Grant mission of outreach has been a critical component in both faculty research and teaching pedagogy. Faculty and staff
have engaged in a wide range of communities in the state, nation and in international settings. The CED will continue to support and further this engagement.

**Strategies:**

1) If financially feasible, offer seed funding for special educational and research projects that engage in inquiry related to diversity within the environmental design professions

2) Recognize outstanding efforts of community engagement efforts with diverse communities and organizations in teaching, research, and outreach efforts through an annual award category focused on diversity and inclusion

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

• Since engagement within diverse communities has been a vital component of landscape architecture, environmental planning and historic preservation in the CED, the CED does not recognize any current challenges to continuing and furthering these initiatives.

**Goal 5:**

**Include diversity and inclusion metrics into established systems of accountability**

*It is recognized that diversity and inclusion is an ongoing effort and process. In order to measure the success of the CED efforts and to be consistent with the UGA Diversity and Inclusion Plan, the CED will develop a system of evaluation metrics to measure yearly progress towards diversity goals.*

**Strategies:**

1) The first step in refining, focusing and honing the Diversity and Inclusion Plan is to engage in either a diversity and inclusion audit, or a faculty and staff survey, in order to get baseline information on current issues and concerns within the CED regarding diversity and inclusion.

2) Develop a system of evaluation and measurements that is applicable to the goals of the CED Diversity and Inclusion Plan

3) Create baseline data in which to measure future progress

4) Include these metrics into the yearly report to measure progress

5) Report findings to the faculty and staff on a yearly basis

6) Based on the report, re-evaluate strategies for future success

**Challenges and Opportunities:**

• Since some of the diversity and inclusion outcomes are dependent on multiple factors, the metrics might be based on factors other than CED strategies and efforts. It is therefore important that a careful analysis of the metrics and results take place to accurately understand the outcomes and future strategies.

Prepared by Judith Wasserman, Associate Professor, CED
Diversity includes, but is not limited to, groups defined by race, nationality, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, disability and/or health status, gender identity/expression, veteran status, geographic origins, and socio-economic status.

CED Mission Statement: Through teaching, research, and service in design, planning, and management of the land and its structure, CED will work to improve the environment by providing new and time-tested models for development and preservation. The college will educate the next generation of landscape architects, planners, and historic preservation practitioners to become experts in their areas of specialization with the capacity to collaborate and work effectively across traditional disciplinary and professional boundaries. Graduates of the programs will be equipped to practice in an increasingly complex and changing world characterized by global influences, local needs, and the imperative to create a more sustainable future.


Creating a supportive and inclusive environment is within the purview of the Diversity and Inclusion Representative, Committee, and the Administrators and Faculty in the CED. However, if a violation of the anti-harassment policy occurs, faculty and staff need to refer the matter to the Dean or Associate Dean, and the student, faculty or staff member needs to be informed about the UGA policies of reporting violations. These need to be relayed to any faculty, student or staff member who believes they have suffered discrimination or harassment. Infrastructure is in place at UGA to handle legal and policy issues, and CED administrators will refer those with concerns to appropriate offices.

This program requires an investment of 6 courses (1 core and 5 electives) that serve to educate members of the UGA faculty, staff and administrators on the issues, concerns and legalities related to diversity, anti-harassment, and anti-discrimination efforts. Staff can include this training as part of their regular employment duties. These opportunities allow staff to learn more about UGA and network with staff and faculty from other units on campus.