

Here is a summary of the main written comments of attendees at the July 10, 2020 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion open meeting and the DEI committee response. Comments are in bold and DEI response is in regular font. Summarized by Heather McAuslane

## **What are your concerns about our department in terms of its diversity, equity and inclusion?**

- **That we focus a lot on race**
- **focusing too much on race (which is very important) and not other pieces that fit into inclusion: age, socioeconomic status, religion, etc.**
- **We want to be sure that we are inclusive to everyone.**
- **That there isn't space for people to bring all aspects of themselves whether that's ethnicity, gender expression, spirituality, sexual orientation, physical/mental abilities etc...**

Our committee will work on integration and support of all individuals with marginalized identities in our department. We are aware of the intersectionality of our identities and plan that this committee will work to make our department a place where everyone is valued. For example, we have discussed recommending Kognito training to support LGBTQIA+ colleagues and students (<https://counseling.ufl.edu/resources/kognito/>) and UF Best Allyship Movement (BAM) training (<https://counseling.ufl.edu/resources/bam/>). Recent high-profile cases of social injustice and police brutality against Black folks precipitated formation of the committee but we are committed to changing the departmental culture to be inclusive of everyone.

- **I would like to see more collaboration with other diversity, equity, and inclusion groups on campus. Especially with departments that work with ENY**

We can certainly do this – I am aware of five groups in CALS in addition to ENY (Agronomy, SWS, SFRC, PMCB, WEC). Let us know who else we might collaborate with.

- **Our implicit biases, and how they can affect our colleagues and work environment**

We are planning implicit bias training in the department. IFAS has already had one in November but we can get it offered again. UF will also soon have mandatory faculty and staff training in anti-discrimination and anti-bias.

- **We should make sure that there are protections in place for students or staff who voice concerns... really big power dynamics exist in academia between students & PIs or employees & supervisors, and retaliation can (unfortunately) result when people raise concerns. I don't know how to address this, but we need to have a discussion about it.**

We will advertise on our departmental website the mechanisms to make formal or informal reports to UF Human Resources (HR), and how to make anonymous (but still HR-actionable) reports using a third-party client. We will have an anonymous Qualtrics comments box for reporting more minor issues that do not rise to the level of being reportable to HR. In addition, we are planning to have a UF Counseling

and Wellness Center (CWC)-facilitated listening session where all graduate students and postdocs can voice their concerns about the climate in our department in a confidential manner. The CWC facilitator would report back to faculty the student concerns, in an anonymized oral report.

- **I need to learn how better to attract students from minority groups and prepare them to future careers in academia, industry, etc.**
- **Lacking ways that bring students from HBCU's into the department and integrate into the college in all aspects. I've often heard stories of feeling/being at a disadvantage.**
- **Need a team of recruiters who look like the students/faculty/staff we intend to recruit.**
- **I worry that we lack concrete multiyear full financial support programs for multiple black students, and that we need to specifically reach out to black students from Gainesville high schools.**

Heather McAuslane serves as recruiter for underrepresented graduate students in CALS by attending annual meetings of MANRRS, SACNAS, 1890s Association of Research Directors, and FAMU Feeder conference. There is a plan to pay some travel costs for graduate students of color to attend the meeting and help her staff the CALS recruiting table. Rebecca Baldwin, the Undergraduate Entomology club and selected faculty with NSF grants requiring broader impact activities reach out to high school students. MANRRS webinars are very insightful about careers for minorities in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences – <https://info.manrrs.org/webinar-dei-series> Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Series: Exploring Racial Equity, Advocacy, And Social Justice in American Agriculture

- **I think we need to make sure that we go beyond just talking about it and plan concrete actions to address the issues raised**
- **I would like to see a concrete actions as well. Having a plan to increase and welcome diversity that is frequently used and updated**

We are anxious to get going on actions too. This is what we have planned so far: Implicit bias training, a podcast discussion group focusing on minoritized communities, workshop for faculty on how to recruit underrepresented undergraduates and graduate students, at least one speaker per semester in our departmental seminar series who can speak to broader areas of diversity within science, and a repository on our departmental website of resources for anyone who wishes to educate themselves about diversity and equity in academia. We will have more ideas once we get the results of the climate survey which was sent to staff, faculty, postdocs and graduate students. We will also send out the survey to OPS part-time workers.

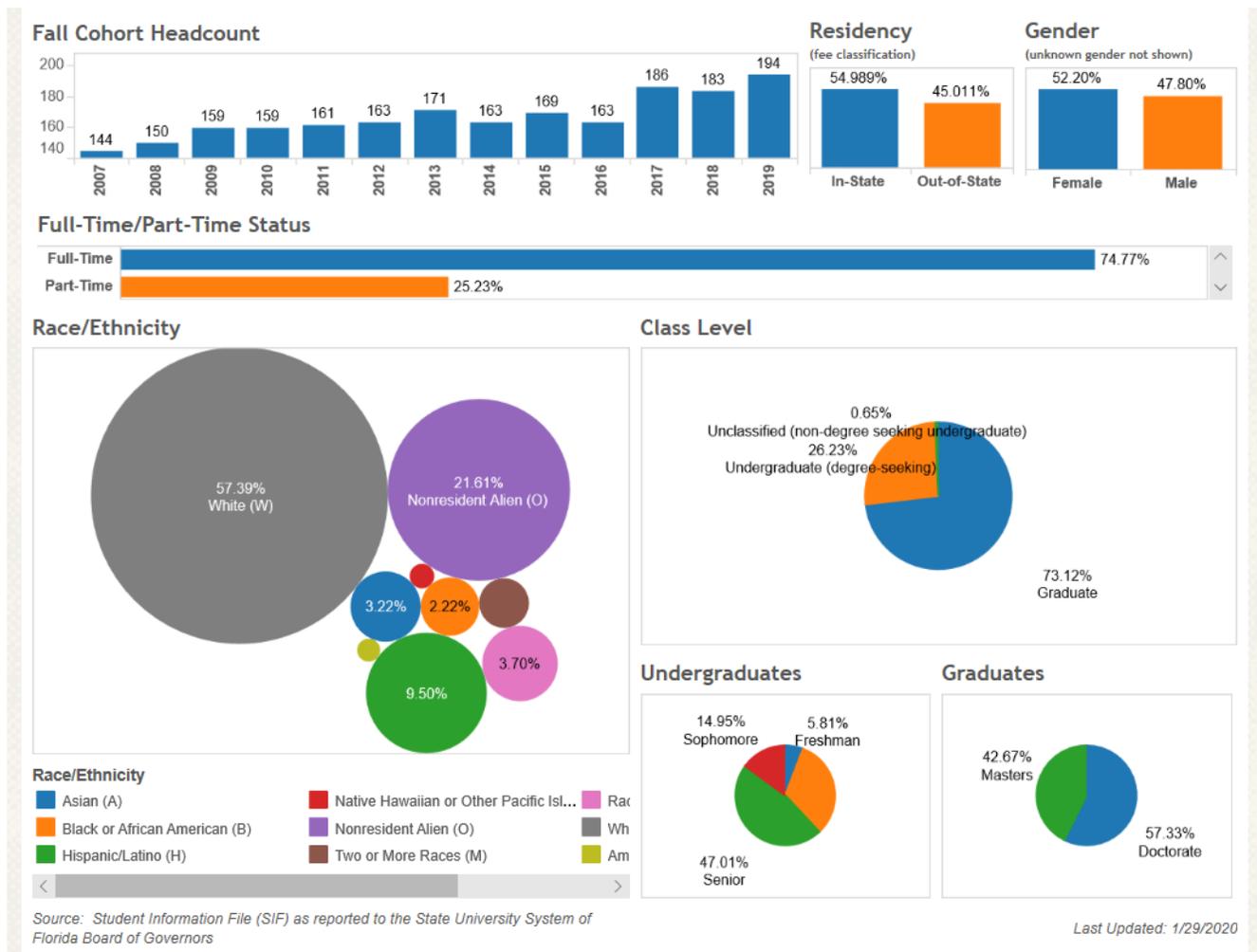
- **Discussions exclude our large community of undergraduates in the department (majors/minors, undergrad employees, etc.). They aren't really asked to participate often. But they are part of the department just as much as anyone else, and should be included... I don't want them to feel like they aren't part of the ent/nem community.**

Originally we proposed that this committee would address inequities, bias and barriers to success in the department for people who are employed here (graduate students, postdocs, staff and faculty) as

much of our focus is on recruitment, retention, and advancement of underrepresented coworkers. We will put this on an upcoming agenda to see if we can expand the scope of the committee.

- I never felt there is any racial discrimination. Initially there were few female faculty, but that is in the process of being corrected.
- Keep in mind that Florida has a population that identifies as 70% Caucasian, and UF has a student population in which only about 52% identify as white only. How is our student population compared with those numbers? How is our faculty represented?

Racial discrimination is not necessarily overt but there are institutionalized and systemic biases in society and our university that affect our department’s ability to have a community whose demographics mirror that of the southern U.S. demographics. Here are the data on student demographics in Entomology & Nematology (combined graduate and undergraduate) for Fall 2019. 21.61% are international students. I don’t think that the Florida data would include non-US citizens or permanent residents.



## **What would you like the department to do to address diversity, equity, and inclusion?**

- **Help facilitate educating members of the department about microaggressions in the workplace**
- **We need to have access to material, conversations, and training to educate ourselves.**
- **I would like to see regular Ally skills trainings in the department**
- **To integrate ways to be more culturally inclusive across the board, such as training, seminars, documents, ect.**
- **I think that we could all stand to practice our active listening skills.**
- **Use the diversity iceberg**

Please see on the previous page that we have plans for trainings of this sort and a place to provide access to materials. Acknowledgement that we are all unique and the sum of our various identities (the diversity iceberg) should be at the foundation of all of these types of trainings.

- **to continue this conversation even after it's not on media radar.**

We are committed to continuing to work on this. Our committee has been put into the departmental bylaws. Support and participation by members of the department will make the effort sustainable.

- **identify any barriers to people of different communities in recruitment (at all levels) - then work to remove or mitigate them**
- **institute active measures to increase diversity in recruitment pool for faculty and students**

IFAS HR requires a faculty member who serves as diversity advocate on all faculty searches. It is their job to be a provocateur and question inherent biases in the search and screen process. There will soon be a new IFAS training for all members of search committees on confronting bias and being as open and diverse as possible in faculty and staff searches. Eventually all faculty will take this training. Heather McAuslane is recruiting at conferences that promote minorities in science as described earlier. We will look at other areas as well to increase recruitment of diverse colleagues and students.

- **identify barriers to retention**

I assume this is among students? We are aware of some barriers. The climate survey and a facilitated discussion for graduate students by the CWC may provide insight into other barriers.

- **Start by asking different members of the department about their perceptions regarding diversity to identify goals and limitations be open to non-traditional routes of entry to our programs without compromising quality**

Survey results and continued conversations at DEI open meetings may provide some answers to this point.

- **Have discussions about how to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion in our teaching.**

The UF Center for Teaching Excellence has a very informative web page with resources and best practices. <http://teach.ufl.edu/resource-library/inclusivity-in-the-classroom/> You can start here for self-study. UF CTE is open to scheduling departmental workshops and this may be one of the topics that they can speak to. We could arrange a workshop if there was significant interest in this. Let us know. In addition, there will be a session devoted to this at the Fall CALS Teaching Enhancement Symposium - <https://cals.ufl.edu/faculty-staff/teaching-support/trc/trc-events/>

- **Resources for first-gen students**

The university has several offices dedicated to supporting first generation students. What in addition would you like to see the department provide? <https://www.sfa.ufl.edu/first-gen-gators/>  
<https://firstgeneration.ufsa.ufl.edu/>

- **Enact a new system for feedback and accountability.**
- **Require student feedback for tenure decisions. Require evidence of promoting equity and inclusion when making tenure decisions.**
- **Professional leadership on this issue with a mechanism for oversight**

There is discussion at the highest levels at UF to include evidence of contribution to diversity in the tenure and promotion packages. This is not something that can be implemented unilaterally within the department as the Faculty union is involved, even though CALS/IFAS faculty are not in the union.

- **Make it regular practice to share pronouns during self Introductions**

A good suggestion. It would also be good practice for folks to put their pronouns in their email signatures too.

- **Increase recruitment at largely black Gainesville high schools, with accompanying multiyear scholarships and placement programs.**

Recruitment is something that Dr. Baldwin has been working on with outreach. Funding is another issue. Our faculty have in the past worked in the STEP (?) program which brought underrepresented high school students into the lab for summer paid work.

- **Has the department eliminated their GRE requirement?**

The graduate school has eliminated the requirement that applicants to M.S. programs provide GRE scores and the department voted to not require the scores either. The Graduate School has not yet eliminated the GRE for the PhD. The department has to require what the Graduate School requires.

## **What would you like to do or be involved in?**

- **DEI Training/workshops**
- **Should be mandatory so that even people who don't think there is a problem will go through the training.**
- **Participate in the activities proposed by the committee**
- **improve understanding of issues and how to facilitate open discussions without aggression**
- **I think we all could stand to do some meaningful training/workshops. We all have room to improve.**

The training opportunities/workshops and materials for self-study will be widely announced by email (and by departmental social media when appropriate).

- **I would like to participate in meetings**
- **I want to continue attending these open meetings and hope that they will happen frequently.**

The committee meetings will be open to everyone who is interested in attending once a quarter. We will discuss if we can accommodate open meetings more frequently. The Qualtrics suggestion box will be up and open in early August and the committee will address comments and suggestions at each meeting with responses noted in the minutes. The minutes are currently on a faculty-only accessible MS TEAMS website but can be posted in an additional place on the departmental website so that they are available to anyone. Anyone can reach out to a committee member with a question or concern that you want the committee to address (James Brown, Lindsay Campbell, Adam Dale, Ginny Greenway Oscar Liburd, Heather McAuslane, Christine Miller, Purity Muthomi, Faith Oi, Suzy Rodriguez, Chelsea Smartt)

- **Participate in committee meetings and workshops especially for recruiting diverse students.**
- **Targeted recruitment at Gainesville high schools.**

Dr. Baldwin will be very happy to hear from you if you want to reach out to local Gainesville high schools and please attend the recruiting workshop she and I will hold in the fall sometime.

- **An informal discussion group (like a journal club?) about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in science could be useful and enjoyable**
- **Learn more about ways to encourage/support diversity**

James Brown is organizing a podcast discussion group, tentatively "Making of a Minority", and will announce it as soon as he is ready. Sara Zlotnik in the School of Natural Resources and Environment has organized a book club that is open to all ecology/biology/environmental sciences postdocs, undergraduate and graduate students and research staff and will deal with antiracism and racial justice. You can register your interest here and request to be added to an email group -

[https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3VPufdOlqZgMDyJ](https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3VPufdOlqZgMDyJ) Webpage - <https://arrgs.weebly.com/>