Diversity Action Plan (DAP)¹, 2020-2023

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Draft supported by the faculty of the Department of Public Health (November 4, 2020)

Commitment to Anti-Racism and Equity

The CDC reports that Blacks are overrepresented in COVID-19 hospitalizations; 33% of hospitalized patients were Black even though only 18% of the particular community was Black.

February 23, 2020: Ahmaud Arbery was hunted down and shot to death while jogging in Georgia.

March 13, 2020: Breonna Taylor was shot to death in her Louisville, KY home by police with a no-knock warrant.

March 25, 2020: George Floyd died of asphyxiation after a police officer kneeled on his neck for almost 9 minutes.

May 26, 2020: Christian Cooper, an avid birdwatcher, was threatened with potential deadly police force by a white woman.

May 27, 2020: Tony McDade was fatally shot by an officer of the Tallahassee, FL police force.

March 30, 2020: Daniel Prude, experienced a mental health episode. Police restraint led to asphyxiation. A week later, Prude was disconnected from life support.

August 23, 2020: Jacob Blake became paralyzed after being shot seven times in the back by a police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin while three of Blake’s sons were in the backseat.

Black Lives Matter

Racism is a longstanding public health issue. Racism, not race, accounts for the health disparities we have witnessed across the centuries. We are heartbroken and angry about the ongoing systemic racism and blatant disregard that burdens Communities of Color – especially the Black community. The recent painful events build upon centuries of abuses and have heightened our

¹ Planning Resources: (1) UT’s DAP website - https://diversity.utk.edu/diversity-action-plan/ and (2) Slides with examples
awareness of savage inequalities and atrocities of white supremacy that challenge and prematurely end the lives of Black Americans via disease, murder, or the daily depletion and fatigue inflicted by micro-aggressions. The injustice must end and fairness and equity must prevail.

The UTK Department of Public Health is committed to contributing to solutions through education, research, and professional development opportunities. We appreciate that we function in the haze of intrinsic bias and are prepared to self-examine and promote anti-racist actions. We understand that silence is complacency. This commitment is and will continue to be an ongoing process that requires much intention, fostering, and prioritization. Only personal reflection, action, and policy reform – both formal and informal – will promote healing and justice for all -- particularly the Black community.
Strategic Plan

1. **Culture and Climate**: Create and sustain a welcoming, supportive and inclusive campus climate.
   
   a. **Objective 1**: By May 2021, 100% of public health faculty and staff members will attend annually a workshop or training on diversity, equity, and inclusion provided by campus, professional organizations or community groups.
      
      i. **Actions**: Every year via annual review, faculty and staff members will report at least one workshop or training seminar on diversity, equity, and inclusion that they attended in the last year.
      
      ii. **Metrics**: Staff and faculty will track individual attendance at events, including name, date, location, for annual reviews.
      
      iii. **Timeline**: annually
      
      iv. **Persons responsible**: All faculty and staff
   
   b. **Objective 2**: The Department of Public Health hosts one (at minimum) social-gathering event at to-be agreed upon time and neutral location, such as the HPER breezeway or UT gardens, to promote welcoming and a sense of belonging (whether remotely, in-person or hybrid) open to full faculty, staff and students per academic year. All events will be held in a way to adhere to and uphold safety precautions during the COVID-19 pandemic.
      
      i. **Actions**: Plans and executes a social gathering for the Department.
      
      ii. **Metrics**: Tracking attendance at the social-gathering event; review of annual departmental climate survey to identify opportunities to evaluate sense of belonging and welcoming at the social-gathering event.
      
      iii. **Timeline**: annually
      
      iv. **Persons responsible**: Department Chair (funding) and an existing committee within the department (to be identified by department head)
   
   c. **Objective 3**: By May 2021, full faculty and staff will engage in a process of identifying ways to develop a shared ethos or values around issues of equity and diversity as it relates to departmental dynamics, policies, and practices and engage the process identified.
      
      i. **Actions**: Select an agreed upon process and time and then engage in at least one of the specific identified processes.
      
      ii. **Metrics**: Action steps will be taken based on what comes out of the process.
      
      iii. **Timeline**: Begin 2021 and ongoing
      
      iv. **Persons responsible**: Department Head, participate by full staff and faculty

2. **Faculty/Staff Recruitment and Retention**: Attract and retain greater numbers of individuals from underrepresented populations with comparable salary and benefit into faculty, staff, and administrative positions.
   
   a. **Objective 1**: Effective Fall 2020, all interviews for open positions in public health will include Zoom/telephone interviews of at least one candidate from a racially/ethnically diverse background and/or other underrepresented minority backgrounds who meet the minimal
requirements in the final interview pool. Pending HR approval, in all department job announcements, a note stating, “There is specific interest in recruiting individuals from racially/ethnically diverse backgrounds in addition to other underrepresented minority backgrounds” will be included and bolded.

i. Action 1: The CEHHS Dean established this policy during summer 2020. Search chairs will work with the CEHHS Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and the Diversity and Recruitment liaison to assure recruitment reaches multiple networks of racially/ethnically diverse backgrounds in addition to other underrepresented minority backgrounds, including networks identified in Objective 1.
   1. Metrics: Report from search chair
   2. Timeline: Fall 2020-onward
   3. Persons responsible: Search chair

ii. Action 2. Effective Fall 2020, the Department Head will facilitate the identification of a mentor for underrepresented faculty or staff who will provide the needed support and guidance leading to their academic success and professional growth. Faculty or staff from underrepresented populations may provide their own preferred list of mentors for department head to consider.
   1. Metrics: Statement on annual review regarding mentorship
   2. Timeline: Fall 2020-onward
   3. Persons responsible: Department Head

iii. Action 3. Department Head will ascertain that assigned mentors for underrepresented faculty or staff will provide the needed support and guidance to underrepresented faculty or staff for academic success and professional growth.
   1. Metrics: Statement and data on annual review regarding mentorship
   2. Timeline: Fall 2020-onward
   3. Persons responsible: Department Head

c. Objective 3: Review recommendations from the annual departmental climate survey to identify opportunities to foster a welcoming, supportive and inclusive work environment.
   i. Actions: E & D committee sends anonymous survey to students, faculty and staff in the spring every two years, and reports on results with recommendations in late spring.
   ii. Metrics: Climate survey report
   iii. Timeline: Every two years
   iv. Persons responsible: Equity and Diversity Committee

3. Student Recruitment and Retention: Attract, retain, and graduate increasing numbers of students from historically underrepresented populations and international students.

a. Objective 1: By the end of Spring 2021, The Department of Public Health will develop a mentorship program to support underrepresented undergraduate students interested in public health and first generation college students.
   i. Actions - E & D committee develops guidelines (e.g., number and format of contacts) for the mentoring program and trains the grad students. The committee sends out an interest form to the department for graduate student
‘Mentors’ annually; and facilitates the matching between undergraduate students and graduate students

ii. Metrics - number of matches per year and established guidelines for mentoring program

iii. Timeline - annually

iv. Persons responsible - Equity and Diversity committee, Public Health program directors

b. Objective w: Remove the GRE as an admission requirement by Fall 2021 for all graduate Public Health programs.

i. Actions –
   1. Faculty vote by December 2, 2020
   2. Revise admission guidelines/criteria for submission to CEHHS Curriculum Review Committee (CRC)
   3. Submit revisions to CEHHS for February 2021 meeting
   4. Address suggested revisions and submit to Graduate CRC Spring 2021 meeting

ii. Metrics – GRE requirement does not appear/is not applied in the 2021-2022 Graduate Catalogue and moving forward

iii. Timeline - Revision process by Spring 2021

iv. Persons responsible – Directors of the MPH and PhD programs

4. **Engagement and Outreach:** Develop and strengthen mutually beneficial partnerships with diverse communities in Tennessee and globally.

a. Objective 1: By Fall 2021 the Department of Public Health will host or co-host an annual presentation addressing equity and diversity that is open to the greater community.

   i. Actions
      1. Draft speaker selection guidance
      2. Finalize guidance with faculty approval
      3. Assess DPH financial support
      4. Fundraise if necessary
      5. Confirm presentation
      6. Book venue (unless virtual)
      7. Market presentation
      8. Develop evaluation design and materials
      9. Analyze evaluation data and apply to planning for following year

   ii. Metrics - Evaluation data report from the responsible party

   iii. Timeline - Annually

   iv. Persons responsible – Equity and Diversity Committee and Public Health Department Chair
b. Objective 2: By August 2021, faculty bylaws will reflect academic outreach and engagement scholarship as recommended for Associate and Full Professors in the UTK Faculty Handbook; this revision will include a request to include how marginalized communities are reflected or incorporated in research, teaching, and/or service.
   i. Actions
      1. Draft bylaw edits by January 2021
      2. Faculty review, approval, and adoption by May 2021
      3. Faculty inclusion of bylaw guidance in dossier by August 2021
   ii. Metrics
      1. Revised bylaws
      2. # of faculty dossiers reflecting revised bylaws
   iii. Timeline - annually
   iv. Persons responsible - Public Health faculty

5. Curriculum: Ensure that curricular requirements include significant intercultural perspectives.
   a. Objective 1: By December 2021, each PUBH prefix syllabus will include a learning objective that reflects diversity and equity.
      i. Actions
         1. Compile suggestions for assignments from existing syllabi
         2. Compile topics that fall under equity and diversity from existing syllabi
      ii. Metrics
         1. Reviews of course syllabi
         2. Assignments that reflect equity and diversity in each syllabus
      iii. Timeline- 50% of courses reviewed annually
      iv. Responsible parties: Faculty
   b. Objective 2: By August 2023, have a Health Equity certificate reflected in the Fall 2024 catalog
      i. Actions
         1. By October 2021, determine the courses that could contribute to a certificate in health equity
         2. By January 2022, confirm all courses inclusion in the Health Equity certificate
         3. By October 2022, submit a Curriculum Review Committee proposal for the Health Equity certificate.
      ii. Metrics: Completed proposals and PUBH 555 appears as a course contribution to a Health Equity certificate by Fall 2023
      iii. Timeline - meet monthly as needed until proposal is submitted to the CEHHS CRC
iv. Responsible parties: Faculty

6. **Graduate Student Professional Development**: Prepare graduate students for professional positions in a diverse world.
   a. Objective 1: The Department of Public Health will require graduate students to attend 6 hours of university-sponsored, local, state, or national, or events addressing diversity and inclusion as monitored in PUBH 509/609 (graduate seminars).
      i. Actions
         1. Add requirement to Graduate Seminar
         2. Send out UTK Office of Diversity and Engagement calendar to students
         3. Draft instructions for short reflections
      ii. Metrics – Monitoring via MPH Seminar and proposed doctoral seminar
      iii. Timeline: Initiate Fall 2021
      iv. Persons responsible – Graduate Seminar coordinator, Doctoral Seminar coordinator
   b. Objective 2: The Applied Practice Experience Final Report will include a reflection on the role of social inequities and structural barriers in achieving health equity at the field organization.
      i. Actions - update Final Report template and instructions
      ii. Metrics - review of report template
      iii. Timeline - implement starting spring 2021
      iv. Persons responsible - APE Coordinator