

UTK College of Arts and Sciences
Diversity Action Plan Template 2020
Due to the College Office: September 8, 2020

Guide to Sections:

- **Mission** *What is your department's commitment to diversity and inclusion? This whole section should be brief – no more than one to two paragraphs long.*
- **Objectives:** *Under each goal, please provide objectives that summarize what the department will do to meet each goal. These should be measurable and reasonable given the needs and resources for the department. Moreover, they should reflect the unique needs of the department in terms of diversity and inclusive practice.*
- **Actions:** *What concrete actions will you take to carry out the objectives? Be as specific as possible.*
- **Metrics/Benchmarks:** *How will you know that you have been successful in meeting each objective? These should be tangible targets that are aligned with each action mentioned. How will you measure progress?*
- **Date:** *What is the timeframe that you will implement each action?*
- **Responsible Party(ies):** *Who is responsible for implementing each action? Be as specific as possible here.*

Mission of the Department:

Name of the Department: Earth and Planetary Sciences

The Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences (EPS) affirms its belief in and commitment to diversity and will continue to develop and promote a diverse community. EPS is dedicated to maintaining an inclusive working environment where differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds, and needs are fostered with opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and visitors from divergent experiences to participate in and contribute to the Department. EPS recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary in teaching, research, and service. Therefore, EPS will strive to ensure that every departmental activity is open to all students, faculty, staff, and visitors regardless of race, sex, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, or disability.

Goal 1: Create and sustain a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive campus climate.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
Maintain strong, affirmative messaging regarding the importance of diversity and inclusivity in research, teaching, and scholarship	Incorporate Diversity Statement and Code Conduct from Strategic Plan into Departmental Bylaws	Faculty vote to approve revised Bylaws	Fall 2021	Department Head and Diversity Council Chair
	Place the Diversity Statement and Diversity Action Plan in a prominent position on the department homepage and provide links to UTK diversity resources, including Multicultural Student Life, Black Cultural Center, Pride Center, and Student Disability Services	Track visitation to diversity website pages and content, which is updated and adjusted as needed	Fall 2021	Media Coordinator, Department Head, Diversity Council Chair
	Evaluate gaps in publicity about diverse faculty, staff, and student achievements	Track and evaluate progress from annual reviews and periodic check-ins with individuals	Annual evaluation period (Fall semester), and continued throughout year	Annual Evaluations and Awards Committee, Department Head
Organize deliberate activities to discuss, evaluate, and encourage inclusivity that will increase exposure of information	Introduce and discuss diversity initiatives at graduate student orientations and at faculty meetings, as well at departmental seminars (tied to Goal 5)	At least one activity each semester as documented in Faculty Meeting minutes	Biannually, tied to the beginning of Fall and Spring Semesters	Diversity Council
Ensure that all concerns regarding diversity-related issues are heard, considered, and acted upon	Maintain EPS Diversity Council consisting of at least one faculty member (as chair, as a service assignment), and one graduate and one undergraduate student volunteer, who meet regularly together and with their respective populations to discuss and act on any issues arising in the department	Membership is reviewed semiannually; Council activities or issues reported out at monthly faculty meeting	Fall 2020	EPS Diversity Council, Department Head
Continually update, refine, and improve our efforts to promote diversity within our department and the geoscience field	Regularly assess the Department Diversity Action Plan for efficacy and fairness. Revise the Department Diversity Action Plan as needed, subject to all appropriate approval processes at the faculty, department and college levels	Assess and revise the Department Diversity Action Plan at least every 3 years	No later than 2023 and reoccurring at appropriate intervals thereafter	Diversity Council in coordination with Department Head and Faculty

Goal 2: Attract and retain greater numbers of individuals from historically underrepresented populations¹ into faculty, staff, and administrative positions.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
Recruit a diverse workforce	Compile and make extensive use of targeted advertising opportunities, such as through professional organizations, to attract a more diverse pool of applicants	Applicant pool meets or exceeds the demographics expected from a national pool	All active and future searches	Chair of Search Committees and Department Head
	Require diversity statements for the formal application process for new faculty hires	Applicants not considered if materials do not include a diversity statement	All active and future searches	Chair of Search Committees and Department Head
Reduce bias and discrimination during the application review and interview processes	Train all faculty in bias awareness prior to the search process (inclusive of both the search committee members and broader department faculty)	All faculty participate in university-provided (i.e., STRIDE) or related training (e.g., SafeZone)	All active and future searches	Chair of Search Committees and Department Head
Retain a diverse workforce	Allocate resources to identify and reduce barriers for faculty; evaluate financial (e.g., endowments) and non-financial incentives to minimize gaps among faculty groups	Track and evaluate progress toward promotion from annual reviews and periodic check-ins with individual faculty members	Annual evaluation period (Fall semester), and continued throughout year	Annual Evaluation Committee, Department Head, and mentoring committees
Sustain progress toward long-term diversity objectives	Increase awareness of current and ongoing demographic trends among the department faculty, staff, and administration	Track demographics among EPS faculty, staff, and administrative positions and report on faculty/staff demographics compared to (1) demographics of the United States geoscience community (2) the broader UT community, (3) regional and national population demographics	Assessed annually	Diversity Council Chair and Department Head

¹ The Higher Education Act defines the term “minority” as an American Indian, Alaskan Native, Black (not of Hispanic origin), Hispanic (including persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Central or South American origin), Pacific Islander, or other ethnic group underrepresented in science and engineering. Note: identification of a particular group as underrepresented may vary by discipline (e.g., women are underrepresented in many STEM fields; Asian Americans in social science and humanities fields.). See formal definition at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title20/html/USCODE-2011-title20-chap28-subchapIII-partE-subpart3-sec1067k.htm>. “Historically underrepresented” can refer to any population that has been excluded over time in a higher education context by virtue of their identity(ies). This exclusion can occur on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, socioeconomic status, ability, or level of parental education.

Goal 3: Attract, retain, and graduate increasing numbers of **undergraduate and graduate students** from historically underrepresented populations and international students.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
Increase department's online and on-campus visibility to highlight opportunities within degree programs and about the geosciences as a career path	Improve information on the undergraduate and graduate sections of the EPS website to describe degree programs and geoscience career options	Track visibility by comparing visitation to website pages	Fall 2021	Undergraduate Program Committee, Graduate Admissions and Program Committee, EPS Media Coordinator, Diversity Council Chair
	Work with undergraduate advisor to develop cohesive information for degree tracks and programs	Track and compare course enrollments and degree tracks; track student progress within majors and programs	Fall 2021	Undergraduate Program Committee
	Advertise open undergraduate research positions on UTK's Office for Undergraduate Research website and graduate positions and opportunities on GSA and AGU electronic jobs boards; solicit questions or feedback, preliminary application information	Track visitation to open positions and to advertisements and follow preliminary application information through formal application and eventually matriculation	Annually, with target dates coinciding with deadlines for fall and spring semester recruiting	Undergraduate Program Committee, Graduate Admissions and Program Committee
Reduce barriers for application and matriculation	Provide application fee waivers	Track demographics for fee waiver requests and follow applications through admission process	Annually, with targeted times for fall and spring application deadlines	Graduate Admissions and Program Committee
	Assess and explore possible additional sources of funds (e.g. alumni support) for graduate application fee waivers	Summarize existing fee waiver program and hold conversations with alumni and possible donors with a goal of doubling existing funds to offset application waivers (e.g. 1:1 matching)	Fall 2022	Diversity Council Chair, Department Head, Alumni Liaison
	Deemphasize use of GRE scores in admissions by emphasizing more holistic metrics, such as referee rankings, GPA, and class ranking. Provide faculty with additional training and more inclusive tools for evaluating potential students	Track the number of applications submitted with voluntarily-supplied GRE scores over time	Annually during Spring recruiting, starting Spring 2021	Graduate Admissions and Program Committee, Diversity Council Chair
Leverage partnerships (internal and external to UTK) to attract a more diverse pool of students to the graduate degree programs	Conduct outreach to showcase department and degree programs through e.g., the McClung Museum, Tennessee Junior Science Symposium, McNair Scholar Program, TLSAMP, FAMU Graduate Feeder Program etc., and develop ties with HBCUs and historically women's colleges in the region	Incorporate an outreach position within the Diversity Council	Fall 2021	Undergraduate Program Committee, Graduate Admissions and Program Committee, Diversity Council Chair, McClung Student Coordinator
	Improve awareness of, and access to, department and programmatic	Become and maintain status as an AGU Bridge Program Partner	Spring 2021; evaluation and renewal annually	Graduate Admissions and Program Committee, Diversity Council Chair

	opportunities, such as by becoming an American Geophysical Union Bridge Program Partner Institution			
Formalize graduate student mentor-mentee relationships outside of thesis/dissertation advisor(s)	Encourage use of Independent Development Plans (IDPs) and improve mentoring with members of the EPS Alumni Advisory Board and various UTK programs (e.g., Graduate School, Provost's office)	Track use of IDPs among graduate students and their participation in mentoring programs; at least one meeting per year between students and Alumni	Annually, associated with annual evaluation	Graduate Student Advisors/Mentors, Graduate Admissions and Program Committee
Sustain progress toward long-term diversity objectives	Increase awareness of current and ongoing demographic trends within the department undergraduate and graduate student populations	Track demographics among EPS undergraduate and graduate student populations and report on student demographics compared to (1) demographics of the United States geoscience community (2) the broader UT community, (3) regional and national population demographics	Assessed annually	Diversity Council Chair, Undergraduate and Graduate Program Chairs

Goal 4: Develop and strengthen **partnerships with diverse communities**² in Tennessee and globally.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
Develop new and innovative initiatives to improve opportunities for K-12 earth science education and experiences	Seek internal and/or external funding to support initiatives, such as hosting annual Earth Science Day for middle school students, participate in engagement and design activities with schools or the McClung Museum (e.g., Darwin Day)	Increase involvement to two or more major events per year	Annual reports from outreach volunteers	Outreach team and/or McClung Museum coordinator and associated volunteers. Coordinated by Diversity Council
Build formal and informal linkages to the global earth science community	Encourage and support faculty participation in international meetings, field trips, and scientific collaborations	Track participation by faculty in international programs and report out annually.	Annual evaluation	Department Head
	Recruit more international students, and Fulbright or Exchange program scholars for collaborative research with department faculty	Track number of international students and scholars within the department and report out annually.	Annual evaluation	Graduate Admissions and Program Committee, Department Head

² People from various cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

Goal 5: Ensure that **curricular requirements** include significant intercultural perspectives.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
Increase the number of speakers from under-represented minority groups and international speakers represented at our regularly scheduled Klepser seminar series	Invite speakers from under-represented groups to speak in the Klepser Seminar Series. Record and report out diversity statistics to the faculty annually	Demographics of invited speakers should meet or exceed trends in the broader US geoscience community until invitee demographics approach regional and national population demographics	Annual review from report provided to faculty at the end of the spring semester	Seminar Program Coordinator
Address broader issues of pedagogy, work-life balance, professional development, and inclusivity within the geosciences	Invite speakers who are experts in these topics to speak in the Klepser Seminar Series.	At least 1 seminar per semester addressing these broader issues of access and inclusivity	Annual review from report provided to faculty at the end of the spring semester	Seminar Program Coordinator
Increase opportunities for geological field work and field trips outside of Tennessee and the United States	Encourage student enrollment in international field camps and allocate financial resources to support students, including from internal (university, college) and external (agencies, alumni)	Offer at least one competitive student scholarship to cover up to 75% of costs to participate in an international field camp each year	Annual	Undergraduate Program Committee, Graduate Admissions and Program Committee, Department Head
Explore offering new courses which span significant disciplinary and cultural boundaries	Survey students and faculty to assess interest in cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary courses such as environmental justice, urban and international environmental science, etc.	If interest warrants, consider offering one or more courses per year in the indicated topics	Annually/Biannually	Undergraduate Program Committee, Graduate Admissions and Program Committee, Diversity Council Chair

Goal 6: Prepare **graduate students** to become teachers and researchers in a diverse world.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
<p>Prepare graduate students for a career in an increasingly fluid and international marketplace</p>	<p>Assure a broad and diverse background in Earth science and associated cognate sciences in order to accommodate independent and interdisciplinary research</p>	<p>Student and peer evaluations of course content</p>	<p>Annually, tied to a student's committee meeting</p>	<p>Faculty and Graduate Admissions and Program Committee</p>
	<p>Require all graduate students to undergo SafeZone training</p>	<p>Accomplish Required Trainings</p>	<p>Fall 2021, with annual renewal each Fall</p>	<p>Graduate Admissions and Program Committee</p>
	<p>Develop graduate student skills in public presentations and written expression</p>	<p>Geological presentations course (GEOL 596) is in place; add more significant writing components to existing courses; offer lecturing opportunities to senior graduate students</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Faculty and Department Head</p>
	<p>Encourage and financially support graduate participation in national and international meetings and workshops</p>	<p>Annual summary of student presentations at professional meetings</p>	<p>Annual reporting to faculty, each Spring</p>	<p>Graduate Admissions and Program Committee, Discretionary Fund Committee</p>