UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION

UME's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Respect

A University of Maryland Extension Strategic Plan | Spring 2022

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Respect (DEIR)
Goals and Priorities
This document is designed based on several activities undertaken by the UME
DEIR taskforce. It will serve as a living document, as we continue to refine and
enhance our DEIR strategies and align our priorities with the University of
Maryland and College of Agricultural and Natural Resources' DEIR activities.

Contents

UME DEIR GOALS AND PRIORITIES

University of Maryland Extension (UME) is a statewide, non-formal education system within the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at University of Maryland, College Park and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

UME educational programs and problem-solving assistance are available to citizens and are based on the research and experience of land-grant universities such as the University of Maryland, College Park.

In Maryland, UME employs approximately 200 faculty and 200 support staff and contractual employees located at the University of Maryland, College Park; University of Maryland Eastern Shore; 23 counties; Baltimore City; and four research and education centers. Many academic department faculty members located on the College Park and Eastern Shore campuses have joint appointments with UME. These joint appointments promote the exchange of knowledge between the universities and among academic specialties.

UME DEIR Distinction

UME, as a statewide non-formal education system, is committed to embedding our DEIR goals, practices, and behaviors as key principles in our operational structure, communication delivery, and outreach mechanisms to meet the needs of Marylanders. UME's purpose is to provide leading and exceptional applied research and educational programming to all individuals and adopt our College of Agriculture and Natural Resources roadmap to change the lives of our community, faculty, staff, and stakeholders – one learner at a time.

UME DEIR Vision

- UME is an inclusive entity within AGNR that respects and values differences, supports and creates opportunities to capitalize on those differences, fostering an environment that makes us better educators, employees, and volunteers.
- DEIR is integrated into all of UME and is the foundation for carrying out our mission, reaching broader audiences, and assuring our service and delivery reach every corner of the state.
- UME audiences, volunteers, and employees reflect the general population and our ability to meet a wide array of needs.

HISTORY

Following the creation of AGNR's DEIR vision, a task force was formed at UME to systematically understand the multifaceted need of our stakeholders. Initial draft for consideration was developed by UME Senior Administration, a representative of Area/City Extension Directors, and the AGNR Compliance Officer. Below are the members of the task force.

DEIR Task Force Members for University of Maryland Extension

1.	Jeff W. Howard	Senior Administration Liaison
2.	Aly Valentine	Senior Administration Liaison
3.	Joy Rafey, ENR	Staff
4.	Terry Serio, FCS	PTK
5.	Mariah Dean, ENR	PTK
6.	Jean Burchfield, ENR	Staff
7.	Karen Basinger, FCS	PTK
8.	Michael Elonge, FCS	Faculty
9.	Luke Macaulay, ENR	Faculty
10.	Jessica Mellon, 4-H	PTK
11.	Vernelle Mitchell-Hawkins, 4-H	Faculty
12.	Sarah Hirsh, AG	Faculty
13.	Rose Greene Colby, 4-H	Staff
14.	Susan Harrison, AG	PTK
15.	Dhruti Patel, FCS	Faculty
16.	Lee Ann Schnappinger Bridgman, Eastern Shore	Staff
17.	Janet I. Sefton 4-H	Staff
18.	Jon H. Traunfeld, ENR	Faculty

First Meeting-Laying the Foundation

Questions such as, "What does DEIR mean to you? What is your sense of its meaning to colleagues and volunteers?", "What are some of the challenges you may envision, both within and outside of Extension, as we consider this work.", "What do you envision as some foundational needs of the Organization as we enhance our DEIR focus?", "As we consider shifting the culture Extension to a more inclusive Organization, what does that vision look like? How will we recognize that we have begun to evolve to a more inclusive Organization?", etc. garnered in-depth discussions on the topic.

We would like to highlight some of the qualitative quotes that we received as part of the response to each of the questions mentioned above.

What does DEIR mean to you? What is your sense of its meaning to colleagues and volunteers?

"Some colleagues see diversity equity and inclusion efforts as a euphemism for anti-white discrimination. Some also see it as a dilution of merit-based approaches by giving a preferential treatment to people based on external appearances."

"Equity use to mean fair/impartial but now mean providing support to lift others up. Inclusion: a common humanity issue of Non-Judgement. Respect the Golden Rule."

"Bringing different perspectives, skills and knowledge. Providing and equitable environment, resources to grow for all. Respect for one another."

"How do we already implement these tenets at UME? Can we expand on our definitions by giving examples of steps that have already occurred? Recommend conducting inventory of our actions/steps and elaborate."

"We serve all no matter your background. Different dimensions Diversity wheel, Equity to make sure everyone is successful. Inclusivity is celebrating diversity instead of checking off a box. Encouraging differences of opinions and thoughts as well as engaging and welcoming them. Education and learning to learn and accept each other and learning through their stories."

"DEIR the "oxygen" for us to view and engage with our UME family and then to extend that to how we work with our clientele. Best strategies should drive us and challenge us individually and collectively. It is the foundation of any successful organization. Therefore, when we think of and communicate with other, there are DEIR principles we need to consider in all that you do."

What are some of the challenges you may envision, both within and outside of Extension, as we consider this work.

"Resistance and fear of change among volunteers that have been involved with Extension for a number of years in some areas of the state. How we introduce and explain ourselves can make a difference."

"Training, funding and resources-Give access to interpreters, sign language expert for materials and resources (explore on campus department) -Website challenges. How are we creating web content to enhance inclusivity-Using common language to enhance diversity that is common for all."

"BIASES attached to DEIR considerations need to be considered and addressed with sensitivity and respect with the goal of bringing everyone onto the same page. Yet be cautious about labeling groups and assigning biases based on demographics."

"Acknowledge that we exist in a world of systematic discrimination. There have been decades of systematic discrimination thus we start on an uneven playing field due to differing viewpoints."

"It is critical that this be an organic and intentional structure in order to create opportunities for buy-in from all."

"We need to examine what other experiences are when we work with new outreach, consider access issues, abilities geography education, economic opportunities etc. If one has not been raised with opportunities, it may be difficult to engage in new experiences. How do we reach people in that situation?"

What do you envision as some foundational needs of the Organization as we enhance our DEIR focus?

"We need more understanding of language needs across the state and individual

programs need access to MULTI-LINGUAL materials, therefore UME needs translators and staff/resources to produce the materials."

"What kind of education, training and resources are needed to address the needs that have been identified."

"Educational background of our Educators through more diverse UME hires-our educators/staff should look like the population of Maryland."

"Identify the underlying issues that need to be addressed. Things that are lacking to embrace.
Importance of finding universal tools to welcome all, some materials may make some people feel welcome, but others feel unwelcome."

"Develop toolkits and checklists for UME to use with constituents."

"Foundational needs include Teams to be respectful of one another, not just concerned with individual needs and accomplishments; there is a foundational need to move from competition to recognition. More inclusive hiring, training for faculty and staff on DEIR. Training our volunteers in DEIR. How do we engage voices from all levels? Support at the administrative level. Communication is critical; What is DEIR; What does it mean for our department? How do we communicate this to Advisory Boards, community partners and stakeholders?"

As we consider shifting the culture Extension to a more inclusive Organization, what does that vision look like? How will we recognize that we have begun to evolve to a more inclusive Organization?

"The importance of universal nature of outreach, that we consider all different groups and how things can be interpreted to ensure that all people feel welcome."

"Onboarding now includes DEIR training but existing faculty/staff need to receive this training as well."

"Set intentional goals for diversity and program reach. We will know we have evolved by reviewing our UMERS data and see a shift in reach to clientele that we do not serve. We should also be seeing a greater reach and depth and breadth in our partners."

"Define METRICS ahead of time to we have data points to aspire to that we track through real time data collection/display."

"Value Qualitative data as well as quantitative data and find a way to capture that qualitative data. Establish/refine anecdotal reporting."

"Creating a culture in the organization that is empowering to all of us, helps us to grow as individual and organization, have sophisticated system and resources to provide to them."

"Challenge of how efforts to be inclusive can be exclusive, i.e. Women in Ag, doesn't make men feel welcome."

"Bridge gaps between higher administration and field faculty."

"Open communication and how to encourage to level administrators to listen to all voices on the team; listening to wider audiences and input on every level of the team."

"Suggest we provide range of opportunities for people to fit in where they feel comfortable, allowing people places where they can fit in, provide venues where everyone has a place where they can go."

Second Meeting-Brainstorming for Improvement

Based on the sincere suggestions provided by the participants, a preliminary draft plan was developed. A second meeting was organized to get feedback on the draft plan. All the participants of the second meeting were divided into three working groups and Padlet was used to collect their feedback on five different aspects of the draft. Below were those five guiding questions and responses summarized in the table.

What elements of the proposed plan stand out as the most positive?	Are there actions in the proposed plan that should be priority ordered, differently?	What's missing? Are there voids and is so, what suggestions does the group have to enhance?	Are there actions in the plan that perhaps should be removed? If so, what is the rationale?	What else do we need?
The committee recognize the language barriers and accessibility issues.	Group of people that provide feedback on changes; right now plan is quite vague; For example, when say rewrite job announcements, how exactly rewrite to make better?	What are they tracking? What are measures using? checkbox or more comprehensive about persons past experiences?	Creating a repository of policies, procedures, resources, toolkit where faculty can go to implement the program with a specific population (groups who speak Spanish, Fresh-Creole)	We need to know where we are; need to know what's going to be tracked and how it will be tracked
Aligning current databases to the DEIR	Needs assessment on need, existing resources, employee	Goal 3: instead of language accessibility use the word barriers E.g. Expand	Creating a library of self-paced virtual courses. For reference: https	Need to have a good idea of what diversity of the state is; needs to be defined if looking to represent;

6

document once it is prepared.	mindset, employee feedback on strategies that can be implemented, the need for employee support. This should be the first step.	access to underserved and underrepresented audiences by increasing programmatic accessibility and decreasing barriers (such as transportation, language, advertising).	://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/improve/precautions/tool10.html	Need to look at regional differences. Considerations of differences of demographics according to age; considerations of male vs female ratio of Extension employees; considerations of different communities and their interest in agriculture.
The cultural competency assessment, ongoing engagement and reiterating importance of DEIR moving forward. We like that the Programming section reflects back to future program planning.	Nothing about reordering came up, however, we think there should be some description of programming vs operations vs departmental and how long each "term" lasts.	More description of categories and terms. How do we measure measures each goal/ term (benchmark?) and its improvement in a variety of audiences?	We think that the goals under the categories are a bit hazy. Our group is struggling with how some of these goals line up with their headings.	Are we focusing too much on race and culture, ignoring other avenues of diversity such as religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic?
Getting and keeping people in through promotion; creating a workplace that embraces multiple cultures	Inclusions on how we're benchmarking each term added to the plan would be helpful.	Is training ongoing, we believe it should be and that it should include existing employees, not only onboarding of new employees.		Please ensure that if we do host a webinar/ training as suggested in Medium Term, that it be professional and extensive, not a one-off webinar that employees see as a burden.
		For "creating materials"-- time spent on what materials, where go? (Just AGNR, other departments (e.g., education, environmental engineers),		We will need support from above and other organizations as UME employees are not professionals in DEIR, although we are enthusiastic to implement DEIR programming.

		UMES? all these audiences we target diverse?), hinges on first operations action item.		
		Knowing your audience by doing quick survey. It can be shared with volunteers, audience, stakeholders, or partner.		Document structure needs more explanation and description. Undefined terms, e.g., "DEIR approaches", "equity", "diversity", "justice"; document too broad and needs to be more concise.

Third Meeting-Consensus Agreement for Final Draft

Further, a third meeting was conducted to get further feedback on the draft plan with 3 questions. Below, we illustrate the questions and the responses received:

As we anticipate future training for our employees, what does that training plan look like? What are the parameters that may influence that?

- *Before training, a needs assessment is crucial. Are employees ready for this?*
- *Make signing up or accessing this training as easy as possible for employees initially, and then the public as we expand. Remember that not everyone has digital access. We should promote and advertise the training as welcoming, not scary or exclusive.*
- *No matter the education setting or goal, the audience is important. Utilize the same techniques that we use in programming to guide us. For instance, smaller group trainings/ class sizes can lead to more sharing and deeper connections rather than just checking boxes in an online training portal.*
- *Hands- on training is preferred, something interactive. Utilize discussion-based components, rather than purely instructional. For our audience, we should think about marketing and promotion to invite people to feel comfortable in signing up. We should use personal stories and experiences of each person in the group to have a more open training.*
- *Ensure that whoever is leading the training is engaging, immersed and well versed on the topics. Perhaps someone in HR or designated employee who is an expert in this topic. An outside organization/ leader could be a good starting point as well.*
- *Long term and continuous trainings with virtual options for follow up and reinforcements of our goals to encourage a commitment to DEIR. Encourage programs to have their own smaller, DEIR taskforces moving forward.*

- *Some parameters should consider time availability of extension employees and reduce other commitments, for instance to replace an admin Monday with a DEIR training. Should we start with ⅓ of extension employees, like a pilot version! consider invitation to DEIR training an honor and then they will encourage others in their program or office to participate.*

What are some suggestions as it relates to an engagement strategy? How do we bring the Organization along regarding the DEIR plan and the significance of the work?

- *Engagement Strategy should include: Building relationships, building trust, building and changing culture, Time to cultivate - the above take time to grow organically - not feel forced.*
- *It is important to understand the belief system of internal and external audiences and shifting it towards acceptance of DEIR principles & practices.*
- *When considering engagement care should be taken with wording and how we talk to people - good intercultural communication, experiences, sensitivity, and expertise.*

What are the concerns and challenges that we might anticipate regarding a shift in UME culture surrounding DEIR work? What ideas does the group have to mitigate as we anticipate this reality?

- *Are we moving past this issue? If we are only checking off the "box" are we not creating a narrative that does not represent diversity?*
- *If we are not engaged with the community and understand the real community needs will we be accepted? What are the elements of engagement? First, we need to listen, understand the needs of that group or population and then provide the services that the group or population need.*
- *We need to ensure that all faculty and staff are working as a team to provide services. How do we utilize faculty/staff meetings to ensure that the county team is all on the same page?*
- *The lack of interpreters and funds for those services hamper local programming. Resources for these services are limited within the county, and the county has limited resources to meet all the needs of the community. Are we really equipped to meet the full scope of accommodations that may be requested of UME?*
- *Campus is a barrier to UME, decisions and resources do not take UME's needs and challenges into the decision- making process. We are unable to access the actual resources of interpreters on campus which is understandable due to the distance. If we cannot access the services, then we should be budgeted with state funds to provide those resources.*

Based on all the feedback, suggestions, and constructive criticism received from the UME members over the 3 meetings, we came up with the below 3 goals on DEIR. We have listed the broader goal, as well as the timeframe, programming, operations, and departmental action items.

GOALS

Goal #1: A UME culture and environment that is inclusive and values all employees

(AGNR Goal 1: Foster a College of Agriculture and Natural Resources that respects diversity and encourages equity and inclusion)			
TIMEFRAME	**PROGRAMMING**	**OPERATIONS**	**DEPARTMENTAL**
Short Term: 6 months	**Action Item:** Conduct a cultural competency assessment among employees focused in two areas: a) Employee personal competencies b) Workplace culture/climate i) **Measurement:** Administering the survey, keeping track of the responses	**Action Item:** Ensure that the physical work environment has inclusive and accessible facilities. i) **Measurement:** AGNR Compliance office with UME Operations office will have jurisdiction to ensure accessibility issues. For websites, we need to incorporate appropriate language, translation, etc. keeping track of the changes will be a good measure	**Action Item:** Complete a workplace climate survey. i) **Measurement:** Design and administer the survey, how many employees received the survey, how many responded, data analysis
Medium Term: 1 Year	**Action Item**: Draw on the workplace climate results to create a comprehensive workshop series to enhance the UME culture toward greater inclusiveness that values all employees, volunteers, and clientele. DEIR as part of program development and implementation. i) **Measurement:** Developing and offering	**Action Item:** Make sure that all the employees attend the workshops and trainings. i) **Measurement:** Send out memo to all employees, update information in the UME website, keep all the employees informed about the changes	**Action Item:** Provide equitable access to professional development, use of leave time, and work responsibilities i) **Measurement:** Encourage employees to attend workshops and trainings, encourage employees to provide constructive feedback on these actions

	workshops, keep track of number of workshops and attendees, evaluation by the attendees		
Long Term: 2-3 Years	**Action Item:** Incorporate DEIR principles and philosophies as part of Extension employee onboarding including program development concepts within an Extension Program Development Academy. i) **Measurement:** Create a website, provide DEIR training during onboarding, webinar to existing employees, encourage educators to add one DEIR Learning outcome into their program design, keep track of beneficiaries (online database)	**Action Item:** Make sure that all the employees attend the workshops and trainings. i) **Measurement:** Send out memo to all employees, update information in the UME website, keep all the employees informed about the changes	**Action Item:** Make sure that all the employees attend the workshops and trainings. i) **Measurement:** Encourage employees to attend workshops and trainings, adopt DEIR logic model in their programs, encourage employees to provide constructive feedback on these actions

Goal #2: A workforce that represents the diverse needs of the state

(AGNR Goal 2: Recruit, retain, and develop a diverse community within the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Faculty, staff, and students))			
TIMEFRAME	**PROGRAMMING**	**OPERATIONS**	**DEPARTMENTAL**
Short Term: 6 months	**Action Item:** Provide education, training, and mentoring for faculty and staff development including resources for faculty/staff to be more competitive for promotions.	**Action Item:** Rewrite job announcements to reflect a more inclusive approach beyond the diversity statement at the bottom of the announcement. Qualifications will	**Action Item:** Create information materials for undergraduate students regarding Extension and employment opportunities.

	i) **Measurement**: keep records of how many employees underwent training, provide resources via website that everyone has access to, taking their feedback	include experience, knowledge, and/or ability to work with diverse populations. i) **Measurement**: Keep track of how many job announcements are rewritten	i) **Measurement**: Designing a brochure with all the information, distributing the brochures, keeping track of how many undergraduates were benefitted,
Medium Term: 1 Year	**Action Item:** Promote and value scholarship that focuses on diverse audiences. i) **Measurement:** Report, research project, teaching, publications	**Action Item**: Hire and onboard the data manager/analyst to design, support, analyze, and develop data management systems for the land-grant mission who will contribute to the tracking and assessment of the progress of our DEIR work. i) **Measurement:** we need to have another plan, no doubt we need such a position, but given the situation, we might tie it up with the College	**Action Item**: Create advancement pathways for staff and administrators. i) **Measurement:** Track all the professional development trainings that professionals receive. Based on the data, advise them on other available programs **Action Item:** Draw on UMD and surrounding university undergraduate and graduate programs to increase readiness through coursework and internship opportunities so applications are more competitive for Extension careers. i) **Measurement:** Literature review, meetings with our peers to see what they are doing
Long Term: 2-3 Years	**Action Item**: Assess the effectiveness of DEIR approaches within Extension programming through annual faculty review	**Action Item**: Create job shadowing and internship opportunities with an emphasis on the Minorities in	Action Item: Enhance mentoring program as it relates to the retention of a diverse workforce that may not have a strong Extension background.

	(AFR) and Performance Review and Development (PRD). i) **Measurement:** We can add all the activities, training, outcomes, feedback, etc. over the years	Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences MANRRS students at UMCP and UMES, as well as Morgan State, and Bowie State and former 4-H members currently in college. i) **Measurement:** Track the number of internships created	Further, the UME mentoring guide will be enhanced to focus on DEIR as a part of base of Extension programming i) **Measurement:** keep track of mentor-mentee program, check-ins to see things are moving as expected, collecting data on the program

Goal #3: Expand access to underserved and underrepresented audiences by increasing programmatic accessibility and decreasing barriers

(AGNR Goal 3: Provide College of Agriculture and Natural Resources programs to underserved, underrepresented and socially and economically disadvantaged audiences. Build and strengthen partnerships with diverse communities, industry, government agencies, civic and community organizations to support AGNR's external DEIR and outreach efforts)			
TIMEFRAME	**PROGRAMMING**	**OPERATIONS**	**DEPARTMENTAL**
Short Term: 6 months	**Action Item**: Assessing what program materials/resources can be translated for language and cultural relevance. i) **Measurement**: Needs assessment of program materials that need translation, how many languages should we be translating to, if we have such capacity and the cost associated with it	**Action Item**: Develop and implement an inclusive excellence framework that uses equity rubrics to assess conceptual framework, organizational infrastructure, program elements, community relationships assessing and responding to community. i) **Measurement:** Design a DEIR logic model and provide access to everyone to adopt, modify, in their program development and evaluation	**Action Item**: Identify needs and provide consistent expected processes that lead to discovering and engaging new audiences and partners. i) **Measurement:** Encourage employees to adopt DEIR logic model in their programs, keep a record of the effectiveness of DEIR logic models and outcomes
Medium Term: 1 Year	**Action Item**: Expand UME communications beyond English and develop materials to reflect the diversity of	**Action Item**: Define expectations and reflect accomplishments with DEIR on AFR and PRD processes.	**Action Item**: Identify and provide consistent expected processes to conduct inclusive assessments,

	the state, and share resources broadly across UME. i) **Measurement:** Keep record of what program materials are translated into other languages, assessing the need for more language translations	i) **Measurement:** Update current forms and criterion to include DEIR learning outcomes. Keep track of how many educators were evaluated based on the DEIR outcome. **Action Item:** 1. Creating a repository of policies, procedures, resources, toolkit where faculty can go to implement the program with a specific population (groups who speak Spanish, Fresh-Creole) 2.Creating a library of self-paced virtual courses. i) **Measurement:** Create webpages of the new programs, as well as update the existing ones	with intentional efforts to engage those who have been historically excluded/disengaged from UME programs. i) **Measurement:** Track the reach our programs to excluded groups, collect data of the program recipients, their feedback, etc. **Action Item:** Provide consistent metrics of expectations to incorporate DEIR as part of the Extension program planning, evaluation, and reporting process. Expectations to include justice centered theory, research and practice. i) **Measurement:** Tracking how many programs incorporate DEIR parameters, how the programs received, and what was the outcome
Long Term: 2-3 Years	**Action Item:** Conduct a DEI barrier analysis to accessing Extension programming. i) **Measurement:** Design barrier analysis parameters, collect data, analyze data **Action Item**: Advance	**Action Item:** Increase accessibility of our current partnership/ stakeholder data (collecting the demographics of our advisory groups and committees electronically). i) **Measurement:** Design a data	**Action Item**: Enhance data collection, management, analysis, and reporting to inform UME DEIR planning and progress in community, programming, and inclusive environment.

research on equity and justice, diverse and inclusive research teams, and research and evaluation methods that are appropriate for diverse audiences. i) **Measurement:** Track all the research and programing incorporating DEIR parameters conducted by UME members	collection form for demographics, collect the data from our stakeholders, carry out data analysis of that information	i) **Measurement:** Consistently monitor DEIR related programs, planning, evaluation and include the data on the reports

GOAL TRACKING

As has been described above, each goal has several action items from programming, operations, and departmental perspectives. We have plans in place to measure each DEIR action and rigorously track them over the time. That way we will see our DEIR impact, have the shared accountability, and will get opportunity to improve further. UME DEIR Plan is monitored by a quarterly basis by the Senior Leadership Team. For questions, updates and details please contact Dr. Jeff Howard, DEIR Taskforce Chair at jwhoward@umd.edu.