

**UAF Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence (SP-IE) Curricular Responsiveness Committee  
Report on 2022 DEI Forums**

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To assess how faculty and staff perceive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI ) at UAF in the area of academics, the Curricular Responsiveness Committee (CRC) facilitated two Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) forums. Participants were given the opportunity to contribute in-person or virtually using Google Jamboard, a digital whiteboard that a7.16(3. 14.4MCETCILBody 41 BDC23134



also noted the importance of acknowledging what we are doing right in this area and learning from each other's successes.

### **Shared accountability**

For change to occur, it is important for all levels of the institution to participate in DEIA initiatives to promote success and grow from the historical exclusion and discriminatory practices of people of marginalized and oppressed groups. DEIA shouldn't be relegated to a single committee. One participant described DEIA as, "Access. Trust. Brave space. Share power. Shared goal of bringing the outside in and the inside out. Decisions are made with shared vision."

### **Equity**

Equity, equality, equitable outcome, equal access were all terms used repeatedly to describe table outcom-13 ((e

Participants noted the important roles that Indigenous knowledge systems and the self as a resource play in curricular practices. Participants mentioned collaborative, interpersonal actions such as engaging in “talking circles” and “small group discussion/s” and highlighted the benefit of inviting, involving, and consulting with elders and community members, naming specifically Fairbanks Native Association and Denakkanaaga. Regarding individual actions, participants suggested both straightforward, universal ones such as “listening,” communicating, and having

[bell hooks](#)

Ibram X. Kendi, [Scholarship — Ibram X. Kendi](#)

Susan Raffo, [publications — Susan Raffo](#)

[Michelle Raheja](#)

Additional Recommended Resources:

[Springer anti-racism checklist](#)

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examine all my authors and sources for representation of minoritized populations. Include #OwnVoices resources. Include cultural values. Include activities to reject deficit-thinking.” Additionally, the ability to collaborate across departments and disciplines to provide more robust and critical courses can also be valuable.

### **Inclusive Spaces/Community Building**

For students, staff, and faculty the importance of being able to see themselves within the campus and online community in all ways is very important. This includes from the physical building and ensuring reflections of self in art, design, marketing, to online spaces. A key highlight to this theme was being mindful in the use of language in things such as marketing, course syllabi, and dialogue. The ability to share stories and learn from each other provides deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and lived experience. It is the faculty and/or staff’s role to ensure those spaces are maintained within a respectful manner, but it is important to also feel free to disagree.

### **Formal**

DEIA should be integrated formally throughout the course curriculum. Suggestions provided by participants in how to integrate this include:

Adding a statement in the syllabi, specifically in GER courses.

“Cruelty-free” syllabi should be embraced by all [Toward Cruelty-Free Syllabi, with Matthew Cheney](#)

Assessment processes that start at the institutional level, to program review, to department and faculty assessments.

It is also recognized that the new institutional accreditation standard asks us to look at disaggregated student success data in our program review process and it is important that we find a way to work together to improve access and opportunity.

### **Transforming the Institution**

The last theme that came through in this question was that we need to transform the institution from the ground-up to foster diversity, equity, inclusion, and access throughout. It is important to acknowledge and recognize the challenges faced by those who do not benefit from the system as it is currently because it has been and still is a system of privilege. How can we make changes to a system whose foundation and creation was meant for a select few and not for all? While “burning it down” is not an option, it is a metaphor for change and the need for creating

Across the campus community, faculty and staff have adopted a growth mindset and “love adding new materials, resources, and learning alongside my students”; however, embracing and growing a culture of diversity and inclusion is not without its challenges. The results of the data analysis revealed the following perceived challenges: Time, lack of knowledge/subject matter

Partner with our “community experts and pay them (instead of out of pocket like I normally do).”

Live DEIA vs. framing these initiatives as “an add-on, extra-curricular, covered only one day a year, an afterthought, etc.” Having a perception of adding-on is expressed in this participant quote, “DEI is not traditionally a part of my courses or programs. It can still be worth it, but adding thoughtful discussion of DEI inherently takes away time from the subjects the course is nominally about.”

Establish consistent criteria across programs and hold ourselves accountable.

### **Lack of Faculty Diversity**

Lack of faculty diversity was frequently discussed by focus group participants and offered as a challenge for promoting DEIA. Lack of diversity in faculty and staff may limit curriculum, identification of needed resources and representation for historically excluded student populations. Currently, we are not hiring in a way that “[allows] departments to expand and [diversify] course content, cluster hires and collaborations across departments.”

### **Q5: What kinds of support would be helpful/needed for you to incorporate DEI into your programs, courses, and syllabi (curriculum)?**

Participants thoughtfully shared a variety of activities and practices that support them in incorporating DEIA into their curriculum. It is important to note a few participants stated they were “unsure” of what they might need to incorporate DEIA into their programs, courses, and curriculum. This is an important statement in and of itself, highlighting the need for more dialogue and shared understanding and learning. Themes found focused on hiring practices; workload and compensation; expectations and examples; education and professional development; peer resources and networking; and accountability and recognition.

### **Hiring Practices**

Participants continue to discuss the importance of hiring practices in DEIA, both for representation and to hire individuals that understand that DEIA is an important component of their position at UAF. One participant reflected on the need for mandatory new hire training on the history of Alaska. “Also...for a long time I have thought that new faculty hires should be required to take a workshop on colonization in Alaska and the history of Alaska Native people, including information about boarding schools and intergenerational trauma. I think new faculty (from outside Alaska) need the history. I sure would have benefitted from this 18 years ago!” Another participant shared the importance of those in leadership positions making sure to model DEI practices and hold faculty and staff accountable to these practices.

### **Workload and Compensation**



Workload and compensation emerged as a consistently important theme for faculty and staff and many shared that there is a need for incentives to support their efforts of including DEIA in their curriculum because it takes time to do this well and in a good way, there is also a need for dedicated time and funding to focus on this. There was an expressed interest in exploring how workload units, workload allowances, and course releases could be negotiated to ensure that DEI in curriculum is a priority. Participants would also like to see, “Inclusion of DEI efforts as a meaningful portion of unit review criteria (i.e., criteria for promotion)”.

### **Expectations and Examples**

Participants requested clear expectations and the need for specific examples on how to implement DEIA into the curriculum. One participant requested, “Example syllabi or example course materials of how to incorporate DEIA into a course. How should we talk about DEIA in a science course for instance?” There were requests for example syllabi, activities, resources, to show how DEIA gets integrated into curriculum across disciplines. There was also a question as to how we define terms for all of the DEIA concepts,

was discussed as recognizing what UAF faculty and staff already do in this area. One participant shared, “I feel like DEI is already incorporated well into courses in our program. It would be great to learn what others are doing.” This is a hopeful outlook that creates a starting point for this effort, a place to ground ourselves in our strengths and good efforts as we commit to also doing more and doing better.

### **Conclusion**

Faculty and staff recognize the importance of DEIA at UAF; moreover, our campus community is actively engaged in this work, sharing DEIA knowledge, practices, and support. While there are strengths, we have opportunities to learn and grow together. To facilitate growth across our campus community, DEIA content needs to be incorporated across every discipline. In addition, DEIA efforts would be enhanced by including a multitude of diverse voices, knowledge, and experiences into our respective fields of study to better meet the needs of our students, as whole people, in our ever changing and diverse world. While the goal of these faculty and staff forums was to understand perceptions and experiences with DEIA in academics the information shared has impacts at every level and aspect of the university system because of the interconnected nature of the work.

### **Next Steps**

The outcomes of this report will help to inform the next steps in exploring DEIA in curricular responsiveness across the university system. This will include 2023 surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups/sharing circles with UAF students at every level and across disciplines to listen to their experiences and learn from them the needs around DEIA and what it means to feel a sense of belonging in the institution. The outcomes of this report and the student report can be shared in a variety of spaces, such as, new-faculty orientation and the faculty accelerator website, and the information can support long-term faculty with ideas and examples of adding DEIA content into their respective disciplines. Faculty and staff have expressed interest in learning about what others at UAF are doing in their own DEIA efforts, supporting the idea of possible roundtables or exchanges to foster more curiosity, inspiration, and learning as a community. It is important to note that this report is not to mandate policies or procedures at UAF, instead create awareness, understanding, and support so that we all benefit, most especially students. In highlighting the importance of DEIA to the whole, one participant states, “Like a rich ecosystem, so does human diversity enhance outcomes.”