

**UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center  
Unit Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
December 2020**

At the UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center (CREC), we are committed to diversity in its many forms, and we aim to promote an inclusive and equitable environment with a strong sense of belonging for all students, faculty, and staff. We recognize that individuals from all groups have not historically had the same access to education, in general, and to the CREC, more specifically, and we seek to address this moving forward. We recognize that the different spaces that community members inhabit may require different approaches to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We embrace the differences among us and strive to create learning and working environments enriched by those differences.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Plan is a defined framework and set of initiatives that will guide our future decisions and investments across all departments and communities, including those defined by race, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, gender and gender expression, religion socioeconomic background, and first-generation status.

**DEFINITIONS\***

**Diversity**

"The heterogeneity found in the composition of the workforce, our collections, and community." (Collections Directorate, MIT Libraries, 2017).

The sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. When we recognize, value, and embrace diversity, we are recognizing, valuing, and embracing the uniqueness of each individual. [Slightly modified from "ALA Equity, Diversity, Inclusion An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights"]

**Equity**

Taking difference into account to ensure a fair process and, ultimately, a fair outcome. Recognizing that some groups were (and are) disadvantaged in accessing educational and employment opportunities and are, therefore, underrepresented or marginalized in many organizations and institutions. Increasing diversity by ameliorating conditions of disadvantaged groups. [Slightly modified from "ALA Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights"]

**Inclusion**

"Creating and actively sustaining an organization and community in which all can participate fully, be respected, and be treated in an equitable manner." (Collections Directorate, MIT Libraries, 2017).

An environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; are valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives; have equal access to resources and opportunities; and can contribute fully to the organization's success. [Slightly modified from "ALA Equity, Diversity, Inclusion An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights"]

\* <https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/edi/keyterms>

## GOALS AND IMPACTS

Through a sustained effort to strengthen diversity within CREC community and through the long-term implementation of the DEI Plan, CREC aims to achieve the following long-term impacts:

**Goal 1. Foster** an inclusive center climate that supports and encourages community members and provides a strong sense of value and belonging among all students, faculty, and staff.

**Goal 2. Recruit** diverse applicants for faculty, student, and staff that is also reflective of Florida's diverse demographics.

**Goal 3.** Increase diversity and the community's **knowledge** of diversity among faculty, students, and staff.

**Goal 4. Retain** and recognize diverse faculty, and staff.

**Goal 5.** Improve **experiences**, success, and sense of belonging for all community members.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In alignment with the Goals listed above, the CREC has identified the following short-term implementation strategies. We recognize that the work necessary to realize the DEI Plan will require substantial effort and resources, and it may not be possible to undertake all of these implementation strategies simultaneously. We also emphasize that this work is the responsibility of the entire community and should not fall solely on the shoulders of the systemically oppressed groups we aim to support.

## **Short-term Implementation Strategies**

1. Establish CREC DEI Committee that will meet quarterly to review DEI progress, implement planning and programs, and assess DEI initiative success.
2. Collect data on diversity, equity, and inclusion, including surveys of staff, faculty, and students on inclusive center climate and the impact of CREC DEI efforts.
3. Analyze data on diversity, equity, and inclusion and use the results to inform ongoing revision of CREC DEI efforts and this DEI plan.
4. Create and disseminate information about diversity and DEI-related efforts, initiatives, and successes through websites, and communication, including an annual report on DEI in the CREC and public recognition of DEI “wins” by individuals and groups.

### **Implementation Strategies in Support of Goal 1**

#### ***Fostering an inclusive climate***

- 1.1** Disseminate Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion
- 1.2** Develop and deliver programming around DEI focus topics for the entire CREC (students, faculty, and staff).
- 1.3** Create and implement a strategy to broaden the delivery and impact of focused DEI-related workshops.
- 1.4** Promote open and regular conversations within the CREC community about DEI-related concerns and initiatives.

### **Implementation Strategies in Support of Goal 2**

#### ***Facilitating diversity***

- 2.1** Identify and implement ways to increase the pool of diverse graduate student applicants to faculty programs.
- 2.2.** Identify existing university programming and train faculty to mentor and support diverse graduate students.
- 2.3** Understand, document, and address concerns and challenges related to recruiting diverse staff.

**2.4** Identify best practices for diverse faculty recruiting from other institutions and create a faculty recruiting process that facilitates opportunities for faculty applicants from historically marginalized groups.

### **Implementation Strategies in Support of Goal 3**

#### ***Increasing community diversity and awareness***

**3.1** Train everyone involved in hiring about biases, including racism and sexism, and develop procedures that explicitly mitigate the disparate and negative impacts of these biases on hiring and admissions.

**3.2** Create opportunities for continuous feedback and refinement of best procedures and practices for diverse recruiting of faculty, students, and staff.

**3.3** Regularly assess and evaluate the DEI initiatives of the CREC to ensure that they meet the needs of their target populations.

### **Implementation Strategies in Support of Goal 4**

#### ***Retaining and recognizing diverse community members***

**4.1** Develop programs and resources for mentoring diverse faculty and staff, including accessible “talking point” guides for mentors.

**4.2** Ensure all faculty and staff have access to regular, high-quality feedback about actionable steps and timelines for career advancement.

**4.3** Develop strategies and policies to value/recognize DEI efforts.

**4.4** Develop a process for "exit interviews" to survey faculty and staff who leave the CREC about their experiences.

### **Implementation Strategies in Support of Goal 5**

#### ***Improving the experience for all community members***

**5.1** Continue to support and engage graduate students, staff, and faculty on discussions of best practices in mentoring.

**5.2** Encapsulate lessons mentoring into a handbook of best practices.

**5.3** Foster, support, validate, and engage with existing efforts by students to improve DEI in the community (e.g., through existing CREC graduate student organization (GSO)).

## **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

### **Success indicators for Goal 1**

#### ***Fostering an inclusive climate***

##### **Early Initiatives**

1. Disseminate Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion to all faculty, staff, students.
2. Quarterly meeting of the DEI Committee.
3. Development of an engagement survey to faculty, staff, and students.

##### **Success Indicators:**

1. The number and percentage of CREC, students, faculty, and staff, who participate in the Climate Survey.
2. The number and percentage of CREC, students, faculty, and staff, who are briefed on the CREC Strategic Plan for DEI.

### **Success indicators for Goal 2**

#### ***Facilitating diversity***

1. The percentage of CREC students, faculty, and staff from historically underrepresented background should reflect the Florida demographic, with a goal of improving current percentages by 5% after two years.

### **Success indicators for Goal 3**

#### ***Increasing community diversity and awareness***

1. Majority percentage of students, faculty and staff completing bias training, workshops (e.g. BAM! 4-week workshop with UF Counseling and Wellness Center annually).
2. Creation of document outlining hiring procedures to mitigate the disparate and negative impacts of biases on hiring and recruitment.
3. Establish virtual anonymous “suggestion box” to facilitate continuous feedback and refinement of best procedures and practices for facilitating community diversity and awareness within one year.

4. Annual survey of CREC DEI initiatives CREC indicate majority percentage of target populations needs are met.

#### **Success indicators for Goal 4**

##### ***Retaining and recognizing diverse community members***

1. The number and percentage of CREC, students, faculty, and staff from historically underrepresented backgrounds increases over 5 years to reflect the demographics in Florida.
2. Membership and participation in professional development and mentoring programs increases in two years.
3. Promotion rates for women and underrepresented minority faculty over five years increase from current level.
4. Quarterly communications recognizing DEI efforts and service.

#### **Success indicators for Support of Goal 5**

##### ***Improving the experience for all community members***

1. Majority report satisfaction with mentoring in survey of graduate students, staff, and faculty annually.
2. Annual surveys of graduate students, staff, and faculty support continued improvement or satisfaction with DEI experiences.