

University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science

Cultural Diversity Planning (Draft)

Introduction

The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) operates under specific statutory mandates and a revised Mission Statement approved by the University System of Maryland (USM) Board of Regents and the Maryland Higher Education Commission in early 2012. Its statutory mandate is to “conduct a comprehensive program to develop and apply a predictive ecology for Maryland to the improvement and preservation of the physical environment through a program of research, public service, and education.” This revised mission included a path for accreditation to award joint degrees with other USM partners and to assume an expanded role in graduate and professional education. UMCES completed its accreditation review by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and was awarded accreditation in March 2016. Through collaborations with other USM institutions, including the Maryland Sea Grant College that it administers, UMCES leads, coordinates, and catalyzes environmental research and education within the USM. The UMCES Strategic Plan, *Focus on the Future*, defines UMCES’ commitment to cultural diversity and future goals and plans through 2018. The Strategic Plan emphasizes our commitment to engage students from groups underrepresented in the environmental sciences as well as training and inspiring the nation’s next generation of environmental scientists.

The core values of UMCES as stated on page 4 of the Strategic Plan are:

- *Commitment to environmental discovery, integration, application, and education that epitomizes our institutional responsibility to serve society.*
- *Adherence to the highest standards of academic independence in the pursuit of discovery and knowledge.*
- *Engagement in translational science in partnership with scientific colleagues, other units in the USM, agencies and stakeholders.*
- *Responsiveness to the needs of colleagues, sponsors, governments, and stakeholders.*
- *Maintenance of an atmosphere of egalitarianism with no barriers based on status and authority, enhancing shared governance and a commitment to diversity.*

UMCES Plan to Enhance Cultural Diversity

Goal 1: Efforts to increase the numerical representation of traditionally underrepresented groups among students, administrative staff, and faculty

Hiring Procedures

- Enhance procedures to expand the diversity of applicant pools
- Establish procedures to document assess efforts to expand the pool of diverse applicants
- Identify resources needed to
 - Train/ help search committees recruit
 - attract diverse applicants
 - retain diverse applicants
- Implement a new system to track and assess the results of enhanced hiring practices
- **Completion Date:** *January 2018*
- **Cost:** *\$20,000 per year*

Seek to partner with other USM institutions to develop a five-year Marine Estuarine Environmental Sciences (BS/MS) program

- Seek to develop and partner with one or more USM institutions to develop a combined MEES BS/MS program targeted for underrepresented minorities. Attract underrepresented groups that at the undergraduate level who would not be able to financially consider going on to graduate school.
- **Feasibility study completion date:** March 2018
- **Cost:** none for study. Up to 40,000 per year for program implementation.

Engage students from underrepresented groups in UMCES environmental sciences programs.

- Sustained participation in the Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center, a minority training partnership supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
- **Timeline:** Ongoing
- **Cost:** No additional cost

Goal 2: Efforts designed to create positive interactions and cultural awareness among students, faculty, and staff on campus.

Administrative Coordination and Accountability

- Develop and implement annual reporting to the campus community on the state of the cultural diversity effort.
- Develop and conduct a Campus Climate Survey to establish baseline for assessment
- **Completion Date:** *April 2018 (implement with first progress report to USM).*
- **No Cost**

Complete an assessment of Marine Estuarine Environmental Science (MEES) program courses

- Assess how and if the Marine Estuarine Environmental Science (MEES) courses are meeting the general education goals of
 - Interpersonal Communication – Acquiring abilities to relate to and work effectively with diverse groups of people
 - Social Responsibility – Tolerance and respect for diverse groups of people and a disposition toward responsible citizenship and a connection to the community
- **Completion Date:** *June 1, 2018 (necessary for Middle States accreditation review).*
- **No Additional Cost**

Student Organizations

- Copies of this plan will be shared with the UMCES Graduate Student Council organization. They will be asked to review the documents and to provide feedback on plans for cultural diversity.
- Planned program events to expose students to artistic expression and intellectual perspective representing diverse cultures
- **Timeline:** *Ongoing*
- **No Additional Cost**

Faculty and Administrative and Support Staff Development

- Explain to new faculty and staff the importance of cultural diversity to the mission of the University and related challenges and opportunities in the classroom during new faculty and staff orientation programs.
- Copies of plan will be shared with the UMCES Staff Council for review, feedback and new diversity initiative ideas.
- **Timeline:** *Ongoing*
- **Cost: No additional Cost**

Alumni Programs

- Determine ways to engage alumni in the cultural diversity initiative.
- Design an alumni survey to assist with understanding the perceptions and interests of minority groups among its alumni and share this information with the campus community
- **Timeline:** *March 2018*
- **No Additional Cost**

Designated gifts & grants that support cultural diversity

- **Timeline:** *Ongoing*
- **No Additional Cost**

Goal 3: Efforts and process for the reporting of hate-based crimes consistent with federal requirements.

Administrative Coordination and Accountability

- Develop and implement policy, process, and procedure with local police organizations where UMCES campuses are located for the reporting of hate-based crimes.
- **Completion Date:** December 2017
- **No Cost**

Conclusion

In summary, UMCES has made great strides in defining its commitment to cultural diversity for students, faculty, and staff through our accreditation process and strategic planning. Our goals, outlined in this plan, will take us through the next level of implementing initiatives and programs to improve cultural diversity on our campuses. Outreach and training will continue throughout the next year to assess and monitor our progress in this area.