

Graduate Study Diversity & Inclusion Improvement Plan

Developmental Psychology
Department of Psychological Sciences

Statement on Diversity and Inclusion

The Developmental Division of the Department of Psychological Sciences at the University of Missouri is committed to cultivating and preserving a graduate training program that embraces all forms of diversity, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, sex, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, disability status, and ideological beliefs. In line with the Department's STRIVE initiative, we pledge to acknowledge, address, and combat racism and continually work toward greater inclusion, diversity, and equity in our training program. Guided by the belief that a strong, thriving academic community is one that embraces variation in viewpoints and life experiences, we are committed to identifying and refining approaches to promote program diversity and implement inclusive training practices. Below we detail our diversity and inclusion plan across 5 keys areas: Faculty Training and Education; Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention; Curriculum; Research; and Outreach.

Faculty Training and Education in Diversity and Inclusion

Current Practices

Developmental faculty have regularly participated in workshops, trainings, and seminars on diversity and inclusion. With regards to graduate student training, these efforts are important for supporting faculty's mentorship of students from diverse backgrounds.

Goals

We have developed several plans to enhance the diversity and inclusion training of our faculty. These include:

1. The University of Missouri has announced a plan to implement mandatory diversity and inclusion training for community members. The developmental faculty support this commitment and will complete all mandated trainings.
2. In addition, the developmental faculty are committed to furthering their education and awareness of diversity issues and implementation of inclusive practices. Thus, faculty will attend diversity and inclusion seminars and workshops. This includes completing at least one (1) intensive training/seminar every three years (e.g., education and development seminars through Inclusion, Diversity, & Equity at the University of Missouri; developmental society diversity programs). Developmental faculty are also encouraged to attend other seminars, as relevant.

3. In the summer of 2020, the developmental division instituted a “Developmental Division Diversity & Inclusion Reading Group”, which will continue into the future. This aim of this reading group is to enhance awareness of and encourage open dialogue among our community on topics of diversity and inclusion in developmental research, the academy, and society, more broadly. The role of leading this reading group will rotate among faculty annually.

Graduate Student Training and Education in Diversity and Inclusion

Current Practices

Developmental graduate students take coursework within the developmental division, department, and university that pertains to diversity and inclusion. Moreover, topics pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion are part of the Developmental Division’s weekly seminar.

Goals

To enhance the diversity and inclusion training of our graduate students, students are encouraged to attend diversity and inclusion seminars and workshops. Specifically, graduate students will participate in at least one (1) diversity, equity, and inclusion continuing education activity per year.

Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention

Current Practices

The developmental division is especially committed to training early career scientists of diverse backgrounds. We encourage students with backgrounds that have been historically underrepresented in the sciences to apply, including but not limited to BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, first-generation college students, veterans, returning students, and those of low socioeconomic status. This commitment is reflected in the diversity of our current graduate students. Further, our division has a strong track record of retaining and placing graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds in academic positions.

Goals

We are committed to continually enhancing our recruitment and retention practices as they pertain to students from the above noted backgrounds. To achieve the goal of continual enhancement, we will:

1. Attempt to increase the number of underrepresented students in the graduate student applicant pool. We will pursue outreach and recruitment attempts targeting

- traditionally underrepresented students. This includes advertising (i.e., listserv announcements) and participating in the University of Missouri TigerView program, which is an exposure program for prospective students from historically underrepresented backgrounds.
2. Become knowledgeable of and implement new and/or improved strategies for equity-based holistic graduate applicant recruitment. Such practices include considering applicant credentials through the lens of the whole applicant, including considerations of structural inequalities that might limit the access of individuals from underrepresented groups to experiences and opportunities for career advancement. In addition, applicant need will be taken into consideration in funding for interview travel.
 3. Aim to maintain our strong record of retention of graduate students, including those from underrepresented backgrounds. This will be achieved through the continuation of practices that have proven effective in the past, including flexible graduation plans and individualized mentorship.

Curriculum

Current Practices

The developmental division values diversity and inclusion in the graduate curriculum. This value is currently reflected in our curriculum in several ways:

1. Our core courses include representation of developmental theories and perspectives across cultures and topics on developmental processes in underrepresented groups. As examples, the Social and Emotional Development graduate seminar (Psych 8440) includes topics on “Sexual Orientation in Romantic and Parent-Child Relationships” and “Parenting across Cultures”. Gender differences are considered in the topic of “The Development of Peer Relationships and Close Friendships” and are discussed in “Theories of Development” (Psych 8410). In the latter class, there is also discussion of ethnic differences in parenting practices. Moreover, the Cognitive Development graduate seminar (Psych 8420) includes topics on “The Development of Racial Preferences and Biases” and “The Role of Economic Inequality in Trust”.
2. In addition to our core course offerings, the developmental faculty offer other courses pertaining to diversity and inclusion. Specifically, Dr. Amanda Rose teaches Women’s Professional Development (Psych 9470) that covers research on gender differences in academia and provides students with tools to reduce gender bias and overcome gender inequality in their careers.
3. The Developmental Seminar has a history of hosting speakers presenting on topics related to diversity and inclusion and speakers from underrepresented groups. We are committed to inviting colleagues who approach developmental science from multiple

perspectives (i.e., Human Development, Sociology, Nursing, Education, Communications, Nutrition, History). We are also committed to recruiting speakers who represent the richness of diversity we seek in our student scholars. Moreover, the developmental division aims to promote an inclusive culture during the seminar by engaging in inclusive seating arrangements and questioning practices (i.e., providing ample space for student participation and engagement in questioning speakers).

Goals

The developmental division is committed to continually improving the graduate curriculum as it pertains to issues of diversity and inclusion. This will be achieved by decentering whiteness in the curriculum, representing the intersectionality of development in course materials, and leveraging Critical Race Theory and cultural humility in review and enhancement of course material. Specifically:

1. Faculty teaching the core developmental courses will review their syllabus annually to decenter whiteness by ensuring representation of scholars from and theories pertaining to underrepresented groups. For example, assigned research articles will be reviewed to ensure that researchers representing multiple races, genders, and nationalities are included to improve the representation of our science. Course material will be reviewed to ensure representation of topics pertaining to diversity and the many ways in which backgrounds intersect (e.g., race and gender) in development. The key tenets of Critical Race Theory will be employed in review of course material. For example, topics might be included in courses that present examples of counter-storytelling in which experiences of minority groups are shared and explored.
2. The Developmental Seminar will include at least one (1) talk per semester that pertains to topics of diversity and inclusion and this talk will be widely advertised to the department. We also aim to include speakers from underrepresented backgrounds. Moreover, at least one (1) professional development seminar per semester will focus specifically on diversity issues and inclusive practices as they pertain to the professional development of graduate students. For example, the syllabi for the courses taught by graduate students might be reviewed to ensure course material decenters whiteness, covers topics pertaining to the intersectionality of development, and include diverse perspectives of development.

Research

Current Practices

Faculty in the developmental division have a history of conducting research on topics pertaining to diversity, including:

1. Gender differences in children's friendship interaction (Dr. Amanda Rose) and sibling dynamics (Dr. Nicole Campione-Barr)
2. The role of race/ethnicity in infant trust (Dr. Yuyan Luo)
3. The role of in-group v. out-group status in children's preferences for individuals, the impact of social categories on children's playmate preferences, and preschoolers' tendency to group dolls on the basis of race, gender, or age (Dr. Kristy vanMarle)
4. Considerations of socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and gender in research on parent-child attachment relationships to test theoretical predictions about the universality of attachment relationships; role of gender in parenting behavior (Dr. Ashley Groh)
5. Identification of factors (e.g., development of prerequisite skills) that will better prepare students of color for success in high school algebra; identification of sex-specific vulnerabilities to chronic exposure to stressors (e.g., excess alcohol use; Dr. David Geary).
6. Family relationship qualities, practices, and processes across multiple racial and ethnic groups including within-group examinations of White, Black, and Latinx families (Dr. Nicole Campione-Barr)
7. Parent-child socialization in Black families; autobiographical reminiscing and identity development among Black adolescents and young adults, including a recent project focused on high-achieving Black women (Dr. Jordan Booker).

Goals

The developmental faculty will continue to engage in research that considers the role of diversity in development. For example, developmental faculty have several relevant grant proposals under review. Dr. Yuyan Luo submitted a proposal to NSF to examine trust across diverse contexts in childhood and Dr. Ashley Groh submitted a proposal to NIH to study mothers' neural adaptation to parenthood across the transition to parenthood among African American and European American mothers. Drs. Geary and Booker have a proposal submitted (NSF, NIH) to study how the home environment and parent-child interactions influence children's readiness for learning mathematics at school entry. The children are largely from low-income households and will be ethnically diverse. Dr. Booker has submitted a proposal to NSF to consider parent-adolescent co-reminiscing and identity development among ethnically diverse families, and a proposal to NIH to examine Black parent-adolescent socialization through family stories, considering the effects of racial marginalization on parental socialization and adolescent racial identity development.

Outreach

Current Practices

The developmental division encourages engagement of faculty and graduate students in outreach that serves individuals and communities that are historically underrepresented in psychology. A key way in which the developmental division has engaged in this is by

making research opportunities accessible for undergraduate students from underrepresented backgrounds (e.g., first-generation students, ethnic minority students). For example, faculty have (1) served as mentors as part of the McNair Scholars Program, (2) engaged in inclusive recruiting practices (e.g., advertising research position in courses with greater representation of students from underrepresented backgrounds), (3) offered paid research experiences through the work study program, and (4) participated in the Department of Psychological Sciences Undergraduate Research Scholars Program designed to promote engagement of students from underrepresented backgrounds in research. These efforts have resulted in many of the faculty's research labs having greater representation of undergraduate research assistants from underrepresented backgrounds than seen at the university level.

Moreover, the developmental division regularly engages in outreach aimed at disseminating evidence from developmental science to historically underrepresented groups. Examples include:

1. Development of public service video aimed at promoting positive parenting to infant distress among economically disadvantaged and ethnic minority families in collaboration with Child Trends, a non-profit research and policy organization (Dr. Ashley Groh).
2. Giving talks to the Columbia branch of Parents-As-Teachers to disseminate fundamental knowledge about infant cognitive, social, and emotional development, as well as latest findings from our labs (Drs. Yuyan Luo, Kristy vanMarle, Ashley Groh).
3. Providing research-based suggestions to teachers in the Columbia Public School's Title I program, that includes many children from low income households, regarding how to better prepare students for mathematics learning at school entry (Drs. David Geary, Kristy vanMarle).
4. Participating in the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Scholars as a reviewer, presentation judge, and/or mentor (Dr. Jordan Booker, Dr. Nicole Campione-Barr).

Goals

The developmental division will continue to engage in the practices detailed above and engage in further efforts to document and extend our inclusive outreach practices, including:

1. Developmental faculty will track on an annual basis representation of undergraduate student research assistants from underrepresented backgrounds in their labs.

2. Developmental faculty are encouraged to participate in the Department of Psychological Sciences Undergraduate Research Scholarship Program, with a goal of the majority of faculty participating in this program annually.
3. Developmental faculty are currently pursuing projects aimed at enhancing access to research opportunities for undergraduate students from underrepresented backgrounds and will continue to pursue these efforts. For example, Dr. Nicole Campione-Barr has submitted an NSF REU grant proposal that would provide funding for a summer research program for undergraduate students from underrepresented groups to work with developmental faculty in their research labs. In addition, Dr. Yuyan Luo includes an aim to increase representation of ethnic/racial minority undergraduate students in her lab as part of the broader impacts of her grant proposal under review at NSF.
4. Developmental faculty are currently pursuing outreach efforts aimed at broad dissemination of research to underrepresented groups and will continue to pursue these efforts. For example, findings from Dr. Dave Geary's research aimed at identifying factors to promote math success of students of color is planned to be broadly disseminated at the national level. In addition, findings from Dr. Groh's NSF study on the maternal brain will be disseminated to at-risk families in the community via development of a Minds of Mothers Seminar (MOMS) in partnership with Parents-As-Teachers. Findings from Dr. Campione-Barr's NSF study on family communication during adolescence will be disseminated to the community through parent workshops at community library and secondary school PTSA groups.

Evaluation

The developmental division will evaluate our success in meeting our goals for graduate student training as it pertains to diversity and inclusion via an annual report. Specifically, the area director will develop a report of diversity and inclusion activities and initiatives across the five key areas of graduate student training highlighted in this document (Faculty Training and Education, Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention, Curriculum, Research, and Outreach). This report will include information detailing the specific activities and steps that were taken to achieve the specific goals detailed above, evaluation of whether activities were successful in meeting the proposed goals, and recommendations for the coming year. In addition, students will be anonymously surveyed about their sense of inclusion during the past academic year, and results from this survey will be incorporated into the annual report and used to inform recommendations for the coming year. The annual report will be completed and presented to the developmental training area during the last area seminar of the spring semester. During this presentation, feedback from faculty and graduate students will be solicited regarding the area's efforts in creating a more diverse and inclusive environment and recommendations for future goals will be encouraged. This feedback will be incorporated into the final report, including the agreed upon goals for the upcoming academic year.

Moreover, evaluation of our goals pertaining to the curriculum will occur via inclusion of additional TEQ items pertaining to diversity and inclusion and peer teaching evaluations. Regarding peer teaching evaluations, as part of the promotion and tenure process, faculty are required to complete two peer teaching evaluations at the assistant and associate professor level. These reviews will now include an evaluation of course materials in regards to diversity and inclusion.

Plan Development

To develop this plan, developmental faculty initially discussed and brainstormed ideas. A draft of these ideas was developed and shared with faculty for feedback. After incorporating the feedback, the revised plan was shared with the entire developmental area, including graduate students, research scientists, and faculty. The plan was discussed during an area meeting. Feedback and additional ideas were then incorporated into revisions of the plan. Plans developed by other areas were shared with all members of the developmental area. The developmental area plan was then updated again in light of feedback and suggestions for updates in light of other areas' plans. The developmental area plan has been approved by the department and posted on the developmental area website. This document is intended as organic guidelines that will continually evolve as we make progress in some areas and discover currently unrecognized obstacles in others and further refine our understanding of optimal approaches.