

CNTC Graduate Inclusion Improvement Plan

As defined by the [“Inclusive Excellence Framework”](#) of the University of Missouri, inclusion is the *“the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity — in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect — in ways that increase one’s awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact with and within systems and institutions.”*

The Cognition and Neuroscience (CN) area inclusion plan outlines areas that aim to fulfill the STRIVE approach of the Department, which incorporate themes of *support, training, representation, instruction, voice, and evaluation*. See the [Diversity and Inclusion webpage](#) for an overview of department commitment to these issues. The following CN area inclusion plan was constructed following discussion and input from both faculty and current graduate students and will continually be revisited, evaluated, and improved.

Weekly Student/Faculty “Friday Seminar”

1. The main opportunity for all faculty and graduate students in the CN area to get together at the same time is during our weekly “Friday Seminar.” While striving to promote and demonstrate the principles of inclusion at all times, the seminar schedule will dedicate at least one session per semester that is relevant to diversity, inclusion, and equity (IDE). Possible examples include a group discussion of these issues or talks by members of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.
2. The CN area has maintained a tradition of having a post seminar “social hour,” offering a potential opportunity for informal interaction between students and faculty. While this was suggested as an opportunity to discuss IDE issues, it was decided that the post-seminar social hour is not well suited to addressing these topics, given its focus on following up ideas generated in the seminar itself and ordinary socializing. A departmental setting might be more appropriate for discussing IDE issues. We plan to solicit further suggestions in an upcoming meeting with the graduate students.
1. We commonly have outside speakers meet just with the graduate students, with the intent of providing a safer environment for interacting and questioning the speaker. The CNTC plan to increase the frequency of social gatherings outside of the seminar, which currently are sometimes only once a year, will hopefully enhance the sense of inclusivity among all members of the area. We are aware of the added challenges of these seminars occurring in the zoom environment and will continue to discuss how to combat and address this issue to maintain a healthy inclusive safe environment.

2. The CNTC continually reviews our approach, by soliciting student feedback, regarding the dynamics of the seminar structure to determine how it can be improved.
3. During the fall semester of 2020, the following seminar was held: [Cog & Neuro Seminars on Diversity and Inclusion Topics](#): Oct. 23, 2020. Discussion on Racial Inequities in Psychological Research. Members of the IDE committee led discussion on a recent article titled: [“Racial Inequality in Psychological Research: Trends of the Past and Recommendations for the Future.”](#)

Teaching and Research

1. Through discussion amongst CN faculty, our initial assessment of how IDE issues may be currently addressed within the curriculum include courses taught by Jason Craggs and Ashley Curtis, who both cover health disparities, as well as Steve Hackley, who teaches History of Psychology and covers religious and ethnic issues, and how psychologists led the movement of scientific racism.
2. In terms of research conducted that may address IDE issues, Jason Craggs and Todd Schachtman directly assess factors associated with health disparities and cross-cultural issues in their research.
3. The CNTC faculty think future efforts could include incorporating and highlighting sex differences (i.e. animal physiology) or gender issues into existing courses.
4. Another idea that was proposed would be to take advantage of opportunities from other training areas, such as courses, workshops, or research activities, that might benefit both our students and faculty. These will be investigated and updated to the plan.
5. The CN faculty have made a commitment to promote and acknowledge graduate student service, volunteer, and community efforts, in addition to the scholarly efforts of research and publication. The CN faculty acknowledge that a “publish or perish” culture has a negative influence on recruiting and retention of both women and minorities.

Outreach and Recruitment

1. Many CNTC faculty serve as mentors to first-generation and ethnic minority undergraduate and graduate students, including students participating in McNair Scholars and IMSD/EXPRESS programs.
2. The CNTC faculty have also participated as mentors for the NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) research program, which aims to increase research participation of underrepresented minorities and women, and persons with disabilities.
3. CNTC has been actively engaging in the Tiger View program to increase diversity of incoming graduate applicants and students.

4. For regular recruitment, the CNTC believes offering the option of virtual interviews is important to avoid exclusion of potential recruits that can't afford to visit.
5. The department as a whole has an ongoing practice of waiving application fee for those economically disadvantaged.
6. The CNTC faculty also discussed the importance of encouraging recruitment that promotes diversity and inclusion of both grad students and CN faculty.
7. Current outreach includes faculty that have participated in providing interviews with media for the public and hosting public forums (i.e. Brain Awareness Week, LSC "Science Café," Saturday Morning Science) discussing their own research programs. The existence of additional outreach and opportunities that benefit the inclusion and diversity initiative program will be explored.
8. The CNTC also discussed the importance of providing undergraduate research assistants with choices (when available) in how to participate in the lab, such as working directly with people or analyzing data.
9. All research assistants will be encouraged to participate in diversity and inclusion training.

Faculty Commitment and Training

1. All CNTC faculty are committed to continuing training and attending workshops to stay informed of current IDE principles, and will be committed to implementing these principles into all aspects of our work. As part of annual review of this plan, faculty will report progress on training and how it might have been implemented, and a summary of this will be updated to this plan annually.
2. Recent DI training the CNTC faculty have completed include: Building a Foundation: Discrimination Prevention and Title IX, Self-Guided Curriculum: Race, Racism, and the American Experience. Additional training modules through Medical School include: Mistreatment Awareness Training, and mandatory SABA training. These training modules and others are listed at the end of this document.
3. In the context of this topic and all the others addressed below, the CNTC recently discussed the strength and weaknesses of the CNTC in its current state, and will review these annually, relying on faculty, staff, and student feedback regarding DI to maintain and enhance the open, receptive, and inclusive environment of our program.

Accountability and evaluations of outcome

1. Consistent with our ongoing efforts, the CNTC will continue to solicit feedback to assess the overall sense of IDE among faculty, staff, and students as our primary outcome

measure. Concurrent small focus groups with students will also be considered to provide qualitative feedback.

2. The CNTC continually reviews our approach regarding the dynamics of the seminar structure to determine how it can be improved. Moving forward, we will continue to solicit feedback from all members of the area, including CN students, on all IDE matters to understand what we are doing well and areas in need of improvement. This feedback will allow us to ascertain and subsequently develop targeted strategies for areas of improvement. For example, a survey was conducted 2 years ago that touched on these issues, and the students provided useful feedback that was implemented into the organizational framework of the “Friday Seminar.” One example of this framework to maintain a sense of inclusivity is our long-standing custom of allowing graduate students to address a speaker with questions or comments before any of the faculty.
3. The CN graduate students were recently given the opportunity to take a survey to provide feedback on how the CN area is doing to promote issues of IDE as well as offer feedback on the initial draft of this plan. The suggestions of the students from this survey were incorporated into this draft. The students were made aware that during the spring semester of 2021, a dedicated session of the “Friday Seminar” will be held to discuss (in person or on zoom) IDE issues, results of their past anonymous surveys, and ways to improve this plan.
4. The CN area will also be gathering past data on enrollment of underrepresented graduate student populations and continue to collect this data annually.

Ongoing related training modules that CN faculty have completed or are encouraged to complete:

1. [Faculty Recruitment Hiring](#) – This training module “offers guidance on how to mitigate bias in faculty recruitment, and strategies to recruit and hire faculty who share our values of diversity and inclusion.”
2. [Self-Guided Curriculum: Race, Racism, and the American Experience](#) – “The ultimate goal of this self-paced curriculum is to challenge stereotypes and [stereotypical thinking processes](#) that reduce information into over-simplified concepts so that we can acknowledge the danger of a single story.”
3. [Communicating Across Differences](#) – “This series is designed to enhance the capacity of faculty, staff and students to engage in conversations about challenging, emotionally laden topics (i.e., race, discrimination, policy, politics, etc.).”
4. [Core Concept Series](#) – “The purpose of the Core Concepts Series is to provide members of the Mizzou community with a foundational understanding of essential ideas to promote inclusion, diversity and equity at Mizzou.”

5. [Diverse Innovations Series](#) – “This series is designed to engage creativity, innovation and kinesthetic learning methods to reflect on inclusion and diversity topics.”
6. [Inclusion and Belonging](#) – “The purpose of the series is to nurture personal, professional and community development to enhance belonging at Mizzou. The series create spaces for participants to develop inclusive strategies and deepen community connections on campus.”
7. [African-American Experience in Missouri Lecture Series](#) – “This series is designed to offer the community opportunities to reach a new understanding of present-day Missouri by learning about the history of African Americans within the state.”
8. [Summer Express Series](#)