

DEI-AB Professional Development Plan for Anthropology
2024–2025 Academic Year

1. DEI-AB Goal(s)/Outcome(s)

The Anthropology Department has two goals for fostering an inclusive and equitable community among the members of our unit. First, we will ensure students, faculty, and staff have a shared understanding of the meaning of DEI-AB and how it can be promoted in our unit. Second, we will create spaces for empathetic, respectful, and productive dialogue among students, faculty, and staff about DEI-AB and DEI-AB initiatives. These relatively short-term (1-2 year) goals are distinct and closely related. Meeting them will allow us to develop longer term goals and outcomes. We believe that initiatives for fostering DEI-AB in our unit must begin with discussion about what DEI-AB means, what an inclusive and equitable unit looks like, and how DEI-AB might realistically be achieved. For this reason, our goals depend on a bottom-up approach.

2. Objectives

What does your unit want to achieve that will help accomplish your unit's DEI-AB goal(s)/outcome(s)?

To accomplish our goal of ensuring a shared understanding of the meaning of DEI-AB and how it can be promoted in our unit, we will gather data on how faculty, staff, and students understand DEI-AB, what their needs are related to DEI-AB, and what activities/practices/pedagogies already exist in our department. To accomplish our goal of creating spaces for productive dialogue related to DEI-AB, we will promote open discussions in a variety of formats among students, faculty, and staff.

3. Strategies

What approaches will your unit use to accomplish your goal(s)/outcome(s)?

Anthropology plans to take a multilateral, collaborative approach to DEI-AB professional development that is founded on open dialogue between all department members. Instead of seeking out pre-packaged resources for DEI-AB skills training, we will spend 2024-2025 identifying our key areas of strengths and needs. This will allow us to formulate plans for tailored professional development activities to address those needs. We believe creating a more inclusive social and physical environment must begin with establishing spaces for open discussion about DEI-AB-related experiences, departmental strengths, and areas for improvement.

The Anthropology DEI-AB committee initiated a period of data-gathering during the 2023-2024 academic year by conducting one-on-one and focus-group interviews with faculty, staff, and select students. We will expand on this work in AY 2024-2025 by holding open-forum discussions with all parties, including large groups of students, about long term visions for DEI-AB with respect to curriculum, pedagogy, mentorship, departmental resource allocation, skills training, interpersonal communication, and interaction with/in our physical spaces.

We will invite expert consultants to assist in guiding these discussions, revisioning of physical spaces, informing departmental members about existing DEI-AB resources at GVSU and best practices for DEI-AB more generally, and helping us begin operationalizing more inclusive teaching, research, and communal workspaces, depending on what our 2024-2025 analysis of the gathered data determines that we need.

4. Professional Development Activities

What will faculty and staff in your unit do to implement the unit's strategies for accomplishing the plan's objectives and/or achieve the plan's objectives?

- Fall and Winter Student/Faculty/Staff Open-Forum discussions: Structured dialogue centered on key themes related to DEI-AB. These events would be facilitated and moderated by Anthropology faculty and GVSU staff who have expertise and experience in this topic from the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Inclusion and Equity, Disability Support Resources and the student ombudsmen. This would be an environment to let all parties share their views on the topics and to move forward in a way that aims to address their needs. The goals for the discussions are to identify strategies and outcomes that are reasonable and achievable for the upcoming year. To bring students in, we will need funds to provide food and beverages.
- Rationale: In discussion with faculty, staff and students, there was a general view that presentations on DEI-AB are not the most effective approach to have a meaningful discussion. In interviews collected during AY 2023-2024, students expressed that they felt comfortable sharing their honest thoughts with faculty, without worrying about negative repercussions. In this environment, faculty can share their views on how they balance meeting course outcomes and expectations while also addressing issues related to Equity and Access. Based on interviews collected during AY 2023-2024, Equity and Access are two areas where the department can improve.
- Ways that we can promote department space more effectively for students to improve sense of belonging:
 - Develop a reading nook
 - Work with Facilities on options for propped-open or magnetic-lock doors.
 - Reach out to university for assistance with social media promotion for department space
 - Include improved signage that is more welcoming and student friendly
 - Create student-led taskforce overseen by faculty
 - Acquire funds to purchase food for mini drop-in events that take place in the central area. An example of an event could be a 15-minute slot for short 3-5 minute presentations on important anthropology topics that comprise both student-led research and faculty research.
- Rationale: A central theme in all of the interviews related to improving our sense of belonging was the importance of promoting communal space both in the lab and in the

department office suite. There was a consensus that a sense of belonging can be improved by promoting use of departmental space and inviting students into a shared space. In interviews collected during AY 2023-2024, one major issue was the impact that closed doors have on creating a welcoming space. Seeking out options for doors that can be opened during business would be highly advantageous. Student interviews collected during AY 2023-2024 also indicated that they were receptive of current ideas to create a book nook and had some of their own creative ideas to promote this space through more effective signage and other ideas, like adding more student activity pictures from the Anthropology Club and Anthropology Department Instagram accounts. For better quality digital pictures, funds can be used to purchase higher quality photo paper. In addition, student interviews collected during AY 2023-2024 indicated that the lab provides a different type of space that was less formal than the department office suite. Although students wanted us to promote the space in the office suite, they also emphasized promoting the lab space, as there were some students who didn't feel fully welcomed and slightly intimidated due to being close to faculty offices. In relation, some faculty interviews indicated that with more students, we will need measures for controlling noise to minimize disturbances for faculty working. Lastly, based on faculty and staff interviews, the impacts of COVID-19 on decreased student activity are still present, though faculty and staff observations show this starting to change.

5. Reflection on Learning

This section is where the unit should reflect on what faculty and staff have done with respect to DEI-AB professional development for the 2024–2025 academic year. Please answer the prompt in this section: What have faculty and staff learned from engaging and participating in DEI-AB professional development activities during the 2024–2025 academic year?

To begin DEI-AB professional development, a committee of four ANT faculty members interviewed all department faculty, staff, and several students over the W2024 semester. This first step increased awareness and highlighted the many practices already in place within the department culture and teaching strategies.

These discussions have deepened our understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues that will form a greater component of future FWRs and staff entries in Workday in the upcoming years.

6. Timeline

What will your unit do to implement the plan over the next academic year? When do you plan to reflect on how well your unit has achieved one or more of its objectives for the 2024–2025 academic year? Please keep in mind that units will have until May 2025 to report on what they have learned from engaging and participating in DEI-AB professional development activities during the 2024–2025 academic year.

Aug 2024: Faculty will discuss DEI-AB planning at fall semester start-up meeting

Sep 2024: DEI-AB committee meets to establish a date, location, and agenda for fall Student/Faculty/Staff Open-Forum Discussion; sends out invitations to guest speakers; advertises the event via flyers, email announcements, and social media

Sep 2024: Begin development of reading nook; contact expert consultants for suggested titles.

Oct-Nov 2024: Student/Faculty/Staff Open-Forum Discussion; work on department signage, displays, space revisioning and renovations

Jan 2025: DEI-AB committee meets to establish a date, location, and agenda for Winter Student/Faculty/Staff Town-Hall meeting; sends out invitations to guest speakers; advertises meeting via flyers, email announcements, and social media

Feb-March 2025: Student/Faculty/Staff Open-Forum Discussion; continue work on space renovations

April 2025: interview/survey faculty, staff, and students on DEI-AB accomplishments and future goals

May 2025: submit DEI-AB report