

DEI-AB Professional Development Plan for Biomedical Sciences
2024-2025

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

We would like to use this plan as an opportunity to think creatively about our professional development and how it will shape the future of the department. We can use this opportunity to empower our faculty and staff in a way that will enhance productivity and leadership while also achieving the goals regarding DEI-AB.

There is a lot of groundwork that needs to be done before we can effectively address best practices in this area. This groundwork entails rethinking how we function as a unit and developing professional development practices that embrace our diversity as we already know it. When we empower every member of the unit to develop their strengths and pursue what they are passionate about, we will be one step closer to the goals of EIAB. The **outcome** we envision is a department that harnesses the best in everyone, regardless of rank or status, to develop a thriving department. When we thrive, we will in turn enhance the ability of our students to thrive. We cannot offer what we do not have.

Our goals for the first year will lay the groundwork for more in-depth goals in the subsequent years.

Goal 1. (Fall) Engage the faculty and staff in a strengths-finder assessment to get a better understanding of individual strengths and abilities and how they might best contribute to the unit's function.

Goal 2. (Fall or Winter) Faculty will participate in at least 2 professional development activities relating to DEI-AB in some way.

Goal 3. (Winter) Engage in discussions to reorganize the department's committees, activities, and functions to provide the right mix of strengths and talents to maximize the effectiveness of our work.

Objectives (measurables)

Objective 1. The unit will develop a strengths inventory that can be used to:

- Shape the makeup of working groups to maximize the effectiveness of their work.
- Inform faculty and staff when choosing professional development activities.
- After the initial strengths inventory, a strengths-finder assessment will become a regular part of onboarding new faculty and staff in the department and their results will be added to the inventory.
- The strengths inventory will also inform our decision-making when hiring new faculty and staff.

Objective 2. After the faculty participate in professional development activities, they will submit a guided reflection into a department repository. These reflections will be used to guide the department in planning for the subsequent year's DEI-AB plan. It will also assist us in gauging the usefulness of specific professional development offerings in serving department needs.

Objective 3. The unit will develop student advisory groups.

While there are many workshops and seminars offered campus-wide that speak to student needs, it is important to give voice to those in our major who can speak more specifically to the specific/unique needs they encounter as Biomedical Science majors.

Potential student advisory groups might be focused on/draw membership from:

- Students of color
- Disability awareness
- Student communities/clubs
- Student professional development
- Learning diversity (first generation, adult learners, international students)

This objective begins the process of learning more about our students' needs and perspectives by hearing from the students themselves. Student needs and perspectives might surprise us, or they might dispel some of our (mis)perceptions about student performance and potential. This objective also extends the values of DEI-AB to our students in an intentional way that will help us understand the barriers they face (E & A) and better engage with and embrace the diversity of our students (D&I).

In the long term, everyone's sense of belonging will be strengthened. Objectives 1 and 3 will ultimately dovetail with Goal 3 because they will inform the faculty and staff about strategies to pursue and potential solutions for meeting student needs more effectively.

Strategies

Strategy 1. Develop an onboarding plan to be used for every new faculty or staff member hired into the department. This includes adjunct, affiliate, and tenure-track faculty, as well as AP and PSS staff.

In addition to onboarding, individual mentoring plans will be developed over the course of the person's first year of service. The goal of the mentoring plan is to have a consistent means of identifying the interests and needs of the faculty or staff member to assist them in choosing an area of significant focus for contributing to the work of the unit.

Strategy 2. We would like to re-think the concept of "significant focus" that is part of the Faculty Workload Plan and Report. We are accustomed to thinking about this as a choice of either additional teaching, scholarship, or service that fulfills the equivalent workload of a 3-credit class. While choosing to teach an additional class as a significant focus is clearcut, it is quite difficult to ascertain how much scholarship or service is equivalent to a 3-credit teaching load and how this can be distinguished from the amount of time one already contributes to scholarly activity or to service to meet standard unit expectations.

We would propose that a significant focus should derive from the strengths and expertise of the individual and serve to support the work of the department. For example, if a faculty member had identified strengths or expertise in teaching pedagogy, they might have a significant focus that includes activities such as serving on the curriculum committee, developing a new course, or providing classroom observations for evaluating and/or mentoring adjunct, affiliate, or tenure-track faculty. They might also choose professional development activities that will support and expand their expertise.

This frees the significant focus from being a discrete choice of teaching OR scholarship OR service. It encourages the faculty members to pursue their interests while also serving the department in areas of need that mesh with their strengths, interest, and expertise. It also will help the unit leadership find the best fit when forming committees or teams for a specific

purpose. The bottom line is that this creative use of significant focus will empower each member, enhance their sense of belonging and encourage further learning and professional development.

Strategy 3. Another strategy for elevating personal strengths and interests would be to identify individual members of the unit to serve as “master teachers”, “master advisors”, “master communicators”, and so forth. These individuals would serve as leaders in their area to spearhead new initiatives or to serve as the “go-to” person for others seeking advice or input for a particular project. This would, of course, require definitions of what we mean by these terms.

Professional Development Activities

It is our hope that choices for professional development will arise out of the interests of the faculty as well as from suggestions put forward by the unit leadership and standing committees. We would envision that a suggested list of opportunities will be provided as a starting point, but the list would change from year to year as new needs and goals develop. The list will provide guidance but the choices for professional development will most often stem from the growth areas of the individual or in response to the needs and goals of the department. Understanding the needs of the department and the interests of the members provides rich ground for collaboration and empowerment within the unit.

Reflection on Learning

There will be two types of reflection in our DEI-AB process.

1. As mentioned in Objective 2, the department will develop a repository where faculty will submit a reflection after participating in a professional development activity. This will address what was learned from the activity, and how it might be implemented into the person’s and the unit’s work. The reflection will also evaluate the professional development activity and whether it should continue to be recommended for others, and for what purposes. The contents of the repository will be used to generate the DEI-AB plan for the following year.
2. In the winter semester, the department will engage in a review of the current DEI-AB plan and discuss the accomplishments as well as future goals. This discussion will be the basis for a written reflection about the unit’s progress and appropriate next steps. The unit reflection will become part of the public-facing document that prefaces the goals of the following year.

Timeline

The department will gather information from:

- Faculty Workload Reports
- Feedback from unit committees
- Reflections submitted to the unit repository.
- Unit discussions

This will take place primarily in the latter half of March, and the unit reflection will be written in early April to be used in writing the DEI-AB plan for the following year. The

faculty will provide discussion and input on the reflection and plan prior to the end of the winter semester, with submission of the final document in May.