

DEI-AB Professional Development Plan for Cell and Molecular Biology
2024–2025 Academic Year

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

The CMB department would like to build on the existing sense that we are a diverse faculty and staff who are all respected for the expertise and thoughtfulness we bring to the teaching, research and service activities in the unit, college, and university.

We wish to ensure that our students recognize that CMB – like almost all fields of science – has been dominated by male scientists from western countries which has implications for what has been studied, and which studies have been taken seriously. Additionally, genetics -- one of the sub-fields of CMB – was often identified as eugenics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This was palatable when research was focused on agriculture, but not when applied to human genetics.

We wish to ensure that all students are afforded an equal opportunity to pursue a career in the life sciences through cell and molecular biology.

2. Objectives

We would like to build on the diversity of our faculty and staff by hiring new staff and faculty with a mind to increasing the diversity of lived and professional experience, expertise, and interests.

We would like to offer our staff and faculty the opportunity to expand their understanding of successful DEI strategies for our interactions as a unit as well as in the classroom.

We would like to ensure that our courses are free of any unintentional biases or barriers to access for any students.

We would like the extra fee for CMB courses removed, since this fee acts as a financial barrier for students to enroll in the degree which best prepares students for the greatest number of careers in the life sciences. This fee produces inequities amongst the students as well as the units in CLAS.

3. Strategies

To accomplish our faculty and staff development goals, we will avail ourselves of the suggestions provided including:

- Incentivizing and rewarding DEI-AB work and DEI-AB related professional development activities;
- Adopting best practices in faculty and staff hiring so that search committees can increase the number of underrepresented candidates for advertised positions in CMB;
- Inclusive mentoring of newly-hired faculty and staff;
- Implementing inclusive teaching practices in the classroom.

We will review our undergraduate and graduate curricula carefully to try to identify and correct unintentional biases (the review of the graduate curriculum will be part of our graduate program review, scheduled for 2024-2025 academic year).

To address historical inequities in the CMB curriculum, we will:

- Specifically identify the contributions to CMB made by female scientists (e.g. Barbara McClintock, Rosalyn Franklin, Esther Lederberg) as well as scientists from non-western nations (e.g. Chandra Bose, David Ho)
- Will rename “the molecular biology of the gene” to “genes and genomes” to distance the topic from James Watson

We will continue to work with the CLAS Dean and Provost’s office with the aim of having the extra fees for CMB courses removed.

4. Professional Development Activities

- Faculty and staff will be encouraged to complete the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging e-training modules, offered through GVSU, every 3 years.
- The department will invite OURS to present on inclusive faculty mentoring of undergraduate researchers and other DEI-AB related topics concerning undergraduate research and scholarship.
- Faculty and staff will be encouraged to participate in the **Inclusive STEM Teaching Project** <https://www.inclusivestemteaching.org/>
- Faculty and staff will be encouraged to take the Cornell-X course “Teaching and Learning in the Diverse Classroom”

5. Reflection on Learning

During the 2025-2026 academic year, the faculty and staff will reflect on the efficacy of the DEI-AB professional development carried out in the previous year as well as the progress toward our goals.

These reflections will be collated from:

- Comments from faculty and staff during or after professional development activities.
- Results of surveys for workshops on DEI-AB themes.
- Minutes from unit discussions of unit-level DEI-AB initiatives underway and planned for the future.

6. Estimate of Expenses related to DEI-AB Professional Development Plan

At present we have not identified any costs associated with the DEI plan for CMB. This may change when the whole unit has an opportunity to discuss and revise our plan.

7. Timeline

In the 2024-2025 academic year we will:

- Adopt best practices for hiring a new faculty colleague;
- Invite OURS to have a conversation about inclusive mentoring of student research;
- Encourage faculty and staff to engage in the identified professional development activities;
- Begin our review of our curriculum, starting with the graduate curriculum;
- Continue to work toward removing the extra CMB fees.

We will have one departmental meeting in the Fall and one in the Winter semester to discuss and reflect on our progress toward our goals.

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