

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan
Department of Mathematics
04/29/2021

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Mission of the Mathematics Department

The Department of Mathematics has one of the largest educational missions of any unit on campus. With about 15,000 enrollments each year, including undergraduates from every major as well as graduate students from mathematics and related fields, the department delivers more student credit hours than the three smallest colleges on the Knoxville campus combined. Therefore, the department has significant potential to promote acceptance, appreciation and improvements in diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of Tennessee.

The department has approximately 40 professors, 30 full-time lecturers, 80 graduate students, and 330 undergraduate majors and minors. The geographic diversity of the department's professors is remarkable, representing 15 foreign countries on every continent except Antarctica. In the last seven years, a substantial portion of all departmental faculty hires have identified as a member of at least one underrepresented group in mathematics. We have retained all of these hires from underrepresented groups and they are doing well.

The actions we take to address diversity, equity, and inclusion will improve the department as a whole. At the undergraduate level, our efforts will focus on retention in lower division courses, as well as recruitment and retention of majors and minors, in addition to community building. At the graduate level, our efforts will focus on recruitment, community building, degree completion, and placement. The department remains committed to hiring and retaining a diverse non-tenure track faculty while continuing to search for tenured and tenure-track faculty who both enhance diversity and our research, teaching, and service missions. The ranking of the department has risen significantly of late. According to the QR World Rankings, the department ranks #31 among US public math departments. These rankings show that with careful attention to diversity in our professorial searches we are able to diversify our faculty ranks while enhancing excellence. Recruiting and retaining excellent faculty from underrepresented groups has paid off both for our research program and for the role models in our department for students and the public. We believe it is important to intentionally continue and enhance our efforts.

In spring 2021, the department established the Diversity and Outreach Committee. The charge to the committee is to help foster diversity, equity, and inclusion within the department. We emphasize, though, that diversity, equity, and inclusion are the responsibility of all members of the department. Below we detail six goals.

Goal 1: Continue to sustain a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive **climate** in the Mathematics Department and improve upon it.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
Continue to improve the climate for graduate students, especially with regard to matters of diversity and inclusion.	Support the Math Graduate Students Council (MGSC) both financially and by involving the group in departmental decisions that involve graduate students.	Annual funding for the MGSC. Satisfaction of graduate students.	Ongoing	Department Administration
	Maintain good communication between the MGSC and department administration.	Regular communication concerning policies that may affect diversity, such as those for assistantship and fellowship awards.	Ongoing	Department Administration
	Allow the council to function as an intermediary between students with grievances and department administration.	MGSC is comfortable communicating grievances directly to department administrators.	Ongoing	Department Administration
Continue to strengthen the sense of community among undergraduate math majors.	Director for Math Majors and Minors meets regularly with students, arranges community events, and oversees mentorship.	Attendance at meetings and satisfaction with mentorship.	Ongoing	Department Administration
Continue to ensure staff are treated with respect and know that the department values them.	Maintain good communications with staff.	Staff report few grievances and have high morale.	Ongoing	Department Administration
Continue to address issues of invisible work.	Ensure equitable distribution of service activities among faculty.	Faculty from underrepresented groups are on key committees but do not have excessive service workloads.	Ongoing	Department Head

	Proactively discuss service workloads with faculty who may be over-extended.	Equitable service loads.	Ongoing	Department Head
Monitor and improve as needed the cultural climate in the department	D&O Committee undertakes a baseline assessment on climate and diversity issues in the department	Completion of assessment.	Fall 2021	D&O Committee
	D&O Committee assesses climate and diversity-related issues on a regular basis	Committee annually reports on climate and other diversity issues in the department at the end of the academic year	Beginning Spring 2021	D&O Committee
		Committee develops stronger connections to organizations that successfully promote improving diversity in mathematics, including EDGE, SACNAS, AWM and the Math Alliance.	Beginning Spring 2021	D&O Committee
	At one or more faculty meeting per year discuss issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, including in classroom teaching at all levels.	Monitor	Beginning Spring 2021	Department Head

Goal 2: Attract and retain greater numbers of individuals from underrepresented groups into **faculty and staff positions**.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
Increase the number of faculty from underrepresented groups.	Encourage faculty to make contact with promising future faculty from underrepresented groups.	Candidates identified by departmental faculty apply for faculty positions.	Ongoing	Department Head/Faculty
	After initial short list of candidates is determined, review again all candidates from underrepresented groups whose research is sufficiently close to the area of interest and potentially ask the committee to take a second look.	Additional promising candidates beyond the short list are identified.	Ongoing	Department Head/Search Committees
	Consider requesting to interview at least four candidates (rather than three) for each search in which a candidate from an underrepresented group is included.	Monitor number of such requests.	Ongoing	Department Head/Search Committees
Increase the diversity of staff.	Allow diversity to be a deciding factor when considering otherwise comparable candidates for a position.	Diversity of staff enhanced.	Ongoing	Department Head/Staff
Provide high quality mentoring to all Assistant and Associate Professors.	Assign at least one mentor to all new assistant professors.	Junior faculty develop good relationships with mentors, who support them through tenure and promotion.	Ongoing	Department Head/Faculty

		Faculty are tenured and promoted.	Ongoing	Department Head/Faculty
Participate in diversity hiring programs at the college and campus levels.	Encourage faculty to be continually vigilant for potential faculty from underrepresented groups.	Department participates in every opportunity search and identifies at least three candidates for the department's internal competition.	Ongoing effort	Department Head/Faculty
Increase the diversity of the non-tenure track faculty corps	Advertise widely	Diversity of pool	Ongoing effort	Department Head/Faculty
	Assign at least one mentor to all new non-tenure track faculty	Higher number of non-tenure track faculty retained	Ongoing effort	Department Head/Faculty

Goal 3: Attract, retain, and graduate increasing numbers of **undergraduate and graduate students** from historically underrepresented and international populations.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
Increase the number of prospective undergraduates who accept admission and major in mathematics.	Reach out with a welcoming and informative message to all prospective students who have applied to the university and indicated an interest in mathematics.	Number of mathematics majors, and percentage from underrepresented groups.	Beginning Spring 2021	Director of Math Majors and Minors
Create a stronger community among undergraduate math majors	Hold regular meetings with math majors, including group mentoring and advising.	Meetings are scheduled and attended	Ongoing	Director of Math Majors and Minors
	Support the existing Math Club and Junior Colloquium, Pi Mu Epsilon.	The department funds the groups and their meetings are well attended.	Ongoing	Faculty
Provide career development mentoring for math majors	Group and individual annual mentoring of math majors.	Students are satisfied with mentoring arrangements.	Beginning Fall 2021	Director of Math Majors and Minors, faculty mentors.
	Develop connections with alumni, including invitations for alumni to return to campus to talk about their careers.	Students connect with alumni and benefit from connections.	Beginning Fall 2021	Director of Math Majors and Minors.
Further diversify the graduate student body, including international students.	Continually assess policies for offering graduate assistantships and stipend size, to promote diversity, equity and inclusion.	Diversity of graduate student body improves.	Ongoing	Department Head, Associate Head for Graduate Studies, Assistantship Committee

	Use a more holistic approach to admissions and assistantship awards, recognizing that assessment of future graduate student success is very imprecise.	Quality of graduate student body improves.	Ongoing	Department Head, Associate Head for Graduate Studies, Assistantship Committee
Remove unnecessary obstacles to the academic progress of graduate students	Continually assess impact of degree milestones on diversity in the program	A greater fraction of graduate students, including more diverse students, progress at the desired pace	Ongoing	Associate Head for Graduate Studies, Graduate Committee
	Continually assess incentives and policies to promote completion of the PhD.	Higher completion rate	Ongoing	Associate Head for Graduate Studies, Graduate Committee
Provide career and development mentoring for graduate students, especially concerning non-academic careers.	Ensure that faculty and students are informed about non-academic careers and their value.	Students are satisfied with career mentoring and placement.	Ongoing	Associate Head for Graduate Studies/Faculty
	Develop connections with alumni, including invitations for alumni to return to campus to talk about their careers.	Alumni panels are scheduled and other connections are made.	Ongoing	Department Head/Faculty

Goal 4: Develop and strengthen **partnerships with diverse communities** in Tennessee and globally.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
Develop stronger connections with Mathematics-oriented diversity organizations and initiatives	Maintain departmental sponsorship of organizations such as the Math Alliance, SACNAS, AWM, and Edge.	Department has continuing sponsorship	Ongoing	Department Head, D&O Committee
	Increase faculty involvement and generally departmental participation in these organizations.	D&O committee regularly reports on activities involving these groups.	Beginning Spring 2021	Department Head, D&O Committee
	Utilize the resources provided by the Math Alliance and Edge	More students referred by the Math Alliance or Edge enter our program.	Beginning Spring 2021	Associate Head for Graduate Studies
		More faculty are designated as affiliated mentors by the Math Alliance	Beginning Spring 2021	Department Head, D&O Committee
Develop closer ties to other universities and colleges in the state, including community colleges	Reach out directly and through professional organizations	More students from institutions in the state matriculate as graduate students or transfer students	Beginning Spring 2021	Department Head, D&O Committee, Associate Head for Graduate Studies, Director of Math Majors and Minors, Faculty
Develop closer ties to other universities nationally and internationally	Reach out through professional contacts and alums	Greater diversity in graduate matriculates, including from other countries	Beginning Spring 2021	Department Head, D&O Committee, Associate Head for Graduate Studies, Faculty

Goal 5: Ensure students have the opportunity to include significant intercultural perspectives in their studies and encourage them to pursue those opportunities.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
Encourage faculty and student participation in intercultural and international programs and activities.	Encourage faculty and students to seek out these programs and activities.	Monitor faculty reports on teaching, research, and service activities.	Ongoing effort	Department Head
Broaden the scope of the intercultural perspective that students receive.	Encourage students to take advantage of courses focused on diversity issues Make the college list of such courses available to students.	Monitor number of students doing so.	Beginning Fall 2021	Director for Math Majors and Minors
	Encourage undergraduate students to pursue study abroad opportunities.	Monitor number of students doing so.	Beginning Fall 2021	Director for Math Majors and Minors

Goal 6: Prepare graduate students to become mathematical sciences professionals in a diverse world.

Objectives	Actions	Metrics/Benchmarks	Date	Responsible Party(ies)
Ensure graduate students with teaching responsibilities are acquainted with diversity issues in teaching.	Provide diversity-related training in GTA orientation and mentoring. Provide GTAs written guidance on issues that might occur. Communicate Teaching and Learning Innovation Center opportunities around diversity.	Monitor GTA engagement in training and confidence in departmental support.	Ongoing effort	Orientation Committee, course supervisors, Associate Head for Graduate Studies
Position graduate students for research success in a diverse environment.	Encourage graduate student membership in interest groups with a diverse focus.	Monitor number of participating graduate students.	Ongoing effort	Doctoral faculty, Associate Head for Graduate Studies
	Encourage graduate student participation in seminars or brown bag series about diversity.	Monitor the number of students participating.	Ongoing effort	Doctoral faculty, Associate Head for Graduate Studies
	Encourage graduate student participation in national and international travel for research.	Monitor the number of students pursuing research travel.	Ongoing effort	Doctoral faculty, Associate Head for Graduate Studies