

Acknowledgement to Action: the VIMS Plan

Preamble

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) and William & Mary's School of Marine Science (SMS) affirm our commitment to recognizing, confronting, and addressing structural and other forms of racism that lead to oppression and injustice within VIMS, the School of Marine Science and our field. We believe that diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical to achieving and maintaining excellence, as stated in the first of seven VIMS *Principles of Community*. A future VIMS, with more racially diverse students, staff, and faculty will support and enhance our research, education, and advisory missions and provide for individual and community growth.

Institutional Administration Initiatives

- ***Evaluate institutional policies.*** Critically and comprehensively review existing policies, procedures and practices. Identify and work to eliminate systemic and other obstacles to diversity, equity, and inclusion at VIMS.
- ***Improve workplace climate and culture through mandated training.*** Mandate ongoing in-person, professional diversity and anti-racism training for all VIMS personnel. Provide additional opportunities that facilitate and support a culture of respect, equity and inclusion.
- ***Deliver on institutional accountability.*** Track and communicate metrics of success in achieving goals in the VIMS Diversity Action Plan (2016) and VIMS DEI Task Force Report (2019). Proactively gather feedback from the VIMS community and stakeholders on an ongoing basis, in addition to tracking quantitative metrics. Develop an institutional process for regular review and action.

Research Initiatives

- ***Promote diversity in the research community.*** Provide a platform for elevating awareness of research by marine scientists from underrepresented groups through research seminars, work groups, collaborations, and other opportunities.
- ***Develop a diverse community.*** Make strategic hiring a priority at all levels of the VIMS research community. Integrate with existing University-wide programs, centers, and initiatives to advance research potential in areas that are critical to diverse communities and our students.
- ***Engage with underrepresented stakeholders.*** Discuss how the VIMS research agenda could be directed to help ensure more just decision-making in social-ecological systems.

Education and Training Initiatives

- ***Attract and recruit greater numbers of underrepresented students.*** Identify and address barriers to recruitment of students from underrepresented groups. Expand partnerships and pipeline programs to enhance recruitment of students with diverse backgrounds, perspectives and experiences.
- ***Implement programming to support student success.*** Recognizing that there may be differing needs among students, provide robust support mechanisms and programs that foster academic success, professional development, equity and inclusion for underrepresented students.
- ***Provide more robust financial support.*** Use fellowships and other funding to attain diversity, equity and inclusion goals.

Community Connections and Outreach Initiatives

- ***Engage audiences in diverse communities.*** Bring outreach efforts by VIMS faculty, staff, and students to marginalized communities to foster an appreciation of marine science and underscore its importance to society.
- ***Support and broaden programming.*** Leverage the strengths of VIMS outreach groups and partners (e.g. Marine Advisory Program, Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve) to develop new programs and strategies that address the needs of underrepresented groups.