

# Office of Sustainability Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

UGA Office of Sustainability, DRAFT 2020-11-20

The Office of Sustainability is committed to cultivating an inclusive, diverse and respectful workplace. We are pursuing justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion as a primary theme for the 2020-21 academic year and as ongoing core values. We will strive to incorporate these values into each area and program that we control and to lead with humility, respect, and inclusivity within each environment of which we are a part.

In June 2020, Office of Sustainability staff sent an open letter to all student interns who work with our office condemning racism, acknowledging our part in racist systems, and committing to learn, grow, and provide an inclusive environment (Appendix 1). We remain committed to our goal to honor and uphold the dignity and immeasurable value of others, especially people of color, as we work collaboratively to develop inspired leaders, stronger communities, and thriving natural systems.

## Office of Sustainability Programs and Initiatives

Strategies OoS will implement during the 2020-21 academic year and beyond are listed below, along with specific actions already underway.

- Evaluate OoS practices, protocols, and perceptions to identify internal biases and opportunities to create an increasingly inclusive, diverse, and respectful workplace.
  - Developed an OoS Inclusion Survey to gain insight into perceptions of Green Fee-funded student programs with the intention of enhancing participation among diverse student populations (to be released during spring semester 2021).
  - Prioritizing academic and cultural diversity when developing programs and work teams.
  - Added a statement regarding the culture of the OoS workplace on the [About](#) page of the OoS website and a link to the OoS DEI Plan on the [Reports](#) page.
  - Mid-term evaluations by interns invite honest feedback to enhance both performance and experience, and annual staff reviews invite 360 feedback to gauge effectiveness and morale.
- Continue to promote Green Fee-funded opportunities including internships, grants, scholarships, and Sustainability Certificate among diverse student populations.
  - Internship positions advertised through Handshake and shared with diverse organizations at UGA for communication among their networks.
  - Campus Sustainability Grants program advertised via Archnews Students and Faculty to reach broad audiences.
  - Sustainability Certificate Advisory Board sub-committee established to identify strategies to enhance diversity among enrolled students.
- Incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice as a theme throughout the [Office of Sustainability Student Internship Program](#) during the 2020-21 academic year and beyond.
  - Incorporating guided conversations in all-intern meetings and tasked each intern with articulating how their work can promote equity and inclusion.
  - Hosted two-part training on “brave conversations” regarding race and implicit biases facilitated by Fanning Institute.
  - Planned Civic Dinner event focused on race and privilege.

- Incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice into all OoS-led programs.
  - Added social justice requirements into the [Campus Sustainability Grants Program](#) including the Preproposal, Proposal, and Selection Criteria.
  - Added Unity as a core component of the Greek Goes Green - Green Chapter Certification, and included specific strategies for organizations without a dedicated house to participate meaningfully.
  
- Utilize OoS communications to share opportunities to engage in social justice activities at UGA, illuminate how sustainability issues impact vulnerable populations, and highlight people of color who are leading sustainability-related initiatives on campus and in the community.
  - Encouraged voting through providing actionable, non-partisan resources.
  - Published newsletter articles on Food Insecurity, Poverty, and COVID-19; and Seasonal Affective Disorder and mental health resources.
  - Promoted opportunities for input in USG Naming Study and UGA Task Force on Race, Ethnicity, and Community.
  
- Encourage sustainable procurement practices including prioritizing local and minority-owned businesses when practicable, and actively support Black-owned businesses through OoS programs.
  - Developed [Sustainable Purchasing Guideline](#) in partnership with UGA Procurement.
  - Food at OoS Internship Kickoff Event on August 19 and incentive for OoS Inclusion Survey from local, Black-owned businesses.
  
- Develop partnerships with other departments and organizations at UGA who are actively engaged in diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice, and co-sponsor events with Black and multicultural student organizations to enhance unity and build relationships.
  
- Invite local non-profit organizations that serve low-income and/or BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) communities as well as local Black-owned businesses to submit internship and project requests through Partnership for a Sustainable Athens and Sustainability Certificate Capstone Course.
  
- Engage in and support UGA, F&A, and FMD diversity initiatives.

## **Appendix 1 - Note to Student Interns**

*Sent via Email and GroupMe on 6/4/2020*

Hello All.

We in the Office of Sustainability stand in solidarity with each of you in this moment and with those who are oppressed by insidious and systemic racism. We stand against racism in all its forms, and at the same time we acknowledge our part in this oppressive system. We will continue to listen and learn, seek to acknowledge and overcome our own implicit biases, and strive through words and actions to honor and uphold the dignity and immeasurable value of others, especially people of color.

We will also share resources that help us all to better understand each other and the systems that shape our access to opportunity. We invite you to share insights and resources as well, to help us grow together as informed human beings and effective change makers.

Thank you for joining us in this effort – and for using your eyes, ears, hands, heart, and voice to create a culture in which Black Lives Matter.

Tyra, Jason, and Kevin  
UGA Office of Sustainability