

# Constitution for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee of the Department of Physics, NC State University

## Article I - Introduction

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion touches everything that we do in our department. DEI efforts are about all of us; thus we all have a role to play. The DEI Committee was adopted by the Department of Physics in FY2020-2021. DEI issues intersect every departmental committee and per the Department bylaws: *The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee consists of three faculty members of any rank, at least one staff member, at least one postdoctoral fellow, at least one graduate student, and at least one undergraduate student. All members are nominated by the DEI Committee with final approval by the Department at large.*

The concept of diversity, which is difficult to constrain to just one definition, encompasses acceptance and respect for each individual within our community. This individual may vary from one's own thoughts -- ideas, perspectives, and values -- or identity markers such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disabilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, language, and more. We must recognize that everyone has an identity that is composed of multiple categories, each one which may be salient in a number of situations

'Equity is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources.' - Independent Sector

'Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.' - Independent Sector

A committee year will run with the University fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). The committee will meet over the summer.

### Mission Statement

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee of the Physics Department's mission is to be a force for producing lasting change in making the department equitable and inclusive, in ensuring every faculty, staff, student, postdoc, and visitor has a voice in the department. We

work to make physics accessible to all. We, as members of this committee, strive to be humble with regard to our own flaws and bias, as well as being open-minded to the perspectives and experiences of others. We aim to be open to criticisms from members within and outside the department.

## **Article II – Responsibilities, Leadership, and Membership**

### **Section I – Responsibilities**

All members are meant to be a bridge between their organization, departmental committee, or peers and the DEI committee.

Members of the DEI Committee are expected to:

1. Attend and be engaged at all committee meetings
2. Strive to learn and continuously follow the basic tenets of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
3. Become DEI Ambassadors (Walk the Walk)
4. Follow the guidelines of shared leadership
5. Be respectful of others and allow others to speak without shutting them down
6. Be aware of one's own privilege and power
7. Operate with transparency and build trust within our community
8. Foster a diverse and inclusive environment for all students, staff, and faculty in the Department of Physics at NC State.
9. Abide by the Department [Code of Conduct](#)
10. Work closely with other Department Committees to ensure DEI goals are met.
11. Work closely with College of Sciences Diversity Committees
12. Pursue and support the goals and initiatives of [DEI at NC State University](#)

### **Section II – Shared Leadership**

We recognize that none of us are experts on DEI, but we each bring a variety of personal and professional experience that is valuable. We will apply the concept of shared leadership. A central concept of the [APS-IDEA](#) (see below) model for cultural change is shared leadership. Shared leadership is a type of participatory democracy in which members of an organization or institution share power, obtain multiple perspectives, and provide internal accountability for outcomes affecting them. The [AIP TEAM-UP report](#) defines shared leadership as “an arrangement in which power and decision-making authority are shared among top-level leaders (e.g., department chairs) and individuals with the most to gain from change but the least power to achieve it themselves (e.g., students, or faculty working on behalf of students).” Shared

leadership provides the traditionally voiceless an ongoing role in shaping discussion and decisions, so that they do not have to rely on invitations to be heard.

### Meetings:

The committee will meet at least once a month, virtually or in person. If schedules permit, we will set aside a standing meeting time each semester. Additional meetings may be held depending upon committee/subcommittee (see below) activities. In the spirit of shared leadership, each meeting will be led by a different committee member. We will use a rotation determined at the beginning of each committee year. Each meeting leader will serve as the notetaker at the next meeting. We will use a standard meeting agenda template to facilitate continuity and efficiency.

For full committee meetings, the meeting leader will send out a when2meet link at least 2 weeks prior to the proposed meeting (if there is not a standing meeting). Once the meeting date is confirmed, the meeting leader is responsible for sending a calendar meeting invite and creating a Zoom link (virtual) or reserving a space (in-person).

To qualify as an official board meeting, a quorum of 2/3 of the committee, not including standing (non-voting) members, must be present.

A member is allowed to miss up to 2 meetings without prior notification and/or 4 meetings with prior notification before being subject to removal.

### Documentation:

We will use Microsoft Teams as a workspace and our primary means of documenting events, meeting agendas, minutes, surveys, nominations, and all else that the committee conducts. Our email address, [physics-dei@ncsu.edu](mailto:physics-dei@ncsu.edu) will be used to send/receive communications from department members regarding DEI events and initiatives. There is also a Google Calendar that is linked to the website that will keep track of meetings and events.

## **Section III - Structure**

The committee will ideally consist of:

- 3 Faculty Liaisons
- 1 - 2 Staff members (Administrative or Research)
- 1 - 2 Postdoctoral Scholars
- 0 - 1 board member from Graduate Physics Student Association (GPSA)
- 0 - 1 board member from Society of Physics Students (SPS)
- 0 - 1 board member from PY-Women

0 – 1 board member from National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP)

In addition to the above seats, the following seats should be reserved, with the intent that they should be filled if possible:

1 - 2 graduate students not on the board of any organization

1 - 2 undergraduate students not on the board of any organization

There should be at least 1 undergraduate and 1 graduate student on the committee.

#### Term Limits:

Faculty members can serve a maximum of three consecutive years on the committee and students, postdocs, and staff can serve a maximum of two consecutive years unless otherwise approved by the DEI Committee and Department.

The committee should have no more than 14 members at any given time.

Exceptions can be made to the above limits if approved by the entire DEI committee and the Department.

Currently recognized departmental organizations that should be represented on the committee include GPSA, SPS, NSBP, and PY-Women.

### **Section IV- Subcommittees**

Subcommittees will be formed in order to facilitate focusing on specific tasks, goals, or initiatives. Each subcommittee will consist of 3 –4 committee members. The subcommittee should organize itself for maximum efficiency and productivity, and report at each meeting. Each member must actively be on at least one subcommittee.

#### Subcommittees:

Climate and Training – responsible for surveying Physics Department students, faculty, and staff about their experiences and suggesting changes. Responsible for recommending and coordinating DEI training for the committee or the Department where appropriate.

Events and Budget- responsible for leading department-wide events and securing funding from the Department or external sources for the events. For major events, the entire committee may be involved.

Membership – responsible for leading the nomination and membership change process

Recommendations- responsible for prioritizing and putting forth DEI-focused recommendations to the Department Head or the Department at large

Website – responsible for creating and maintaining the DEI committee website (should consult with the rest of the committee as needed regarding content)

## **Section V - APS-IDEA**

APS-IDEA is a valuable resource for the DEI committee. DEI committee members can be on the NC State APS-IDEA team if they choose to do so, but DEI committee members are not de facto members of the NC State APS-IDEA team. The committee will rely on an APS-IDEA liaison to attend meetings and discuss what they have learned through APS-IDEA so that there is sharing of information between the two teams. Members of the NC State APS-IDEA team will attend their own meetings and fulfill their own responsibilities. Collaborative initiatives or events between our APS-IDEA team and our DEI committee are always possible.

## **Section VI – College of Sciences DEI Committee**

The Physics Department DEI Committee will recommend to the Department two members to represent our committee on the College of Sciences (COS) DEI committee on an annual basis. A majority vote by the committee is required for appointment to the COS DEI Committee. The responsibility of the COS liaisons will be to attend all meetings and inform the committee about COS and other COS Department's DEI events and initiatives.

## **Article III - Nomination Process for Members**

### **Section I**

The nomination process shall begin in April of each committee year with a general call for nominations. At least two emails should be sent to the Department with the announcement or reminder. Nominations will only be accepted by members of the department and only until the end of April. Current members should also submit a nomination for themselves, if they wish to be on the committee again.

### **Section II**

After nominations have been collected, a sub-list of nominees should be sent to the respective advisors (DUGP, DGP, Department Head) if necessary, and the entire list will be made accessible to the DEI committee. Nominees shall also receive an email notifying them of their nomination and will have two weeks from notification (May) to accept the nomination (except in the case of a self-nomination).

During the beginning of June, discussions should be held about the nominees and appointed by the DEI committee no later than June 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Section III**

Once the appointed nominees have received their confirmation from the committee, the new members should be approved by the Department at large no later than June 30th.

### **Section IV**

After the department has approved the new members, a meeting shall be held in July to introduce the new members and dismiss the members whose terms have ended.

### **Section V**

If a committee position is vacated during the committee (fiscal) year, a new member can be nominated and appointed upon approval by the entire DEI committee.

## **Article IV - Removal**

### **Section I**

If a committee member no longer wishes to be on the committee for any reason, they may notify the committee in writing. Whenever a committee member leaves, the seat can be filled as described in Article III, Section V above.

### **Section II**

If a committee member is considered obstructive or harmful to the goals and objectives of this committee, they may be removed by vote during a committee meeting. A motion to dismiss must be brought forth by a committee member. If the motion is seconded, the subject member will recuse themselves from the room for the final vote. A majority vote is required for removal.

### **Section III**

A member who misses two meetings without prior notification of absence and/or misses four meetings with prior notification of absence will be subject to removal from the committee. During any meeting of the full committee, a vote can be taken, where a majority vote is required for removal.

### **Section IV**

If ever there is a tie in a vote on any matter, the Department Head is called in to break the tie.

## Article V - Training

All members are expected to:

1. Complete any DEI training required by the University, College and/or Department
2. Read ***Diversity Regimes: Why Talk is Not Enough to Fix Racial Inequality at Universities*** by James M. Thomas <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11hpt0q>
3. Ambassador Training -- Attend professional development workshops held by the committee, OIED, or APS-IDEA on the following topics:
  - i. Bias
  - ii. Microaggressions
  - iii. Leadership/shared leadership
  - iv. Allyship
  - v. Teambuilding
  - vi. Reporting
4. Complete the IDI self-assessment test (OIED) if the budget allows for it.

## Article VI - Constitution

Amendments to the Constitution shall be presented by members of the committee in writing and shall be read and voted upon at any official committee meeting. A super-majority of two-thirds of the voting members present shall be required for approval.