



To: Dean Shernita Lee, Assistant Dean and Director, Office of Recruitment, Diversity, and Inclusion - Graduate School

From: Mehrzad Boroujerdi, SPIA Director and PGG Director

Date: January 26, 2022

CC: Ariel Ahram, PGG-GG Track Director, Tom Sanchez, UEDP Track Director, Ralph Hall, SPIA Associate Director

RE: Planning, Governance, and Globalization Doctoral Program, School of Public and International Affairs, compliance with the Diversity and Inclusion Requirements

This memo describes the ways that the Planning, Governance, and Globalization (PGG) Doctoral Program in the School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) will comply with the Diversity and Inclusion Requirements from the Graduate School.

The Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies Resolution 2017-18A requires that students meet the following guidelines:

- The Virginia Tech Principles of Community as they apply to the valuing of human diversity and inclusion.
- The impact that personal actions and words have on self, others, and the communities—university, national, and global—in which we live; issues of privilege, bias, power, prejudice, and discrimination; concepts of multiple personal, social, and cultural identities.
- Available avenues of redress and our shared responsibilities as active by-standers.
- The process of individual introspection required both to understand one's own forms of implicit or unconscious bias and to create inclusive environments.

Graduates of the PGG Program (both the Globalization and Governance track and the Urban & Environmental Design & Planning track) will meet these objectives in the following ways:

1. Complete the following core course, which critically engage issues of inclusion and diversity in the course content and theme:

a. SPIA 6014: Pedagogy and Learning¹: This course will address such issues as academic freedom, diversity and inclusion, affirmative action and how to advance diversity and inclusion in higher education. The “Ethics Requirement” in the PGG Student Handbook states: “By the time students complete the preliminary exam, they must have met the Graduate School’s Ethics Requirement. Meeting this mandatory requirement ordinarily will be satisfied by taking SPIA 6014 (Pedagogy and Learning) or in extraordinary circumstances when 6014 cannot be taught, by other courses agreed to by the student’s advisory committee.”

b. In addition, students have the opportunity to take any of the following elective courses that address DEI issues:

- GIA 5004: Power and Policy in the US
- GIA/PSCI/UAP 5504: Discourse Analysis
- GIA/UAP 5274: Comparative Social Movements
- GIA/PSCI 5514: Global Security
- UAP 5034: Democratic Governance in the Economy
- UAP 5084G: Advanced Community Involvement
- UAP/GIA 5104: Urban and Regional Development Theory
- UAP 5604: Housing Planning and Policy Topics
- UAP 5764G: Advanced International Development Planning & Policy

2. The PGG Student Handbook defines the rationale for the program as follows:

Global events have fueled a growing demand for social scientists with truly global perspectives on government, corporate and non-profit sectors. Globalization has restructured our society, resulting in a need to redefine and redirect governance strategies in areas like the workplace, the neighborhood, municipal or state government, nation-states or non-governmental organizations. Likewise, problems of urbanization, democratization, and non-sustainable practices in land and resource use have not been resolved and there is impetus to transform domestic and global trends toward more sustainable economic development, environmental protection, and social equity.

3. Available channels for redress will be written into our Graduate Handbook, the relevant portions of which are quoted below:

Complaints about professional misconduct (integrity and civility) are concerns of both the targets of those complaints and of the department. As such, they are not appropriate topics of informal discussion alone. Students giving voice to complaints of misconduct should, in a timely fashion, initiate processes in which the department and the targets of the complaints would have opportunities to respond. Students can initiate such processes by sharing complaints with departmental or university authorities, as listed below.

Relevant offices include:

¹ In Fall 2021 the number and title of this course changed from SPIA 6006: Seminar in Environmental Design & Planning to SPIA 6014: Pedagogy and Learning.

- PGG department head — discussion of concerns about graduate student integrity and civility within the department, all of which remain in confidence other than sexual harassment/assault, mention of which must result in a phone call to the Human Resources Title IX coordinators, as noted below.
- SPIA director — discussion of concerns about faculty conduct, all of which remain in confidence other than sexual harassment/assault, mention of which must result in a phone call to HR Title IX, as noted below.
- Graduate Student Ombuds — discussion of any concerns related to treatment by others, including officials, in the university, all of which remain in confidence other than sexual harassment/assault, mention of which must result in a phone call to Human Resources Office, Title IX.
- Dean of Students Office — reports of concerns about student conduct, including disruption, threats, incivility, and harassment
- Graduate Honor System — reports of violations of academic integrity.

For **confidential** discussions of issues of civility, you may contact:

- The Women’s Center’s Counseling staff (concerns about gendered conduct, sexual assault, sexual harassment)
- Cook Counseling Center

4. Attend the Graduate School Orientation Session and workshops for incoming PGG students, which includes information on University resources on inclusion, diversity, and equity and meeting with ombuds representative.

5. Opportunities to attend guest speaker series on topics of diversity and inclusion.

6. Opportunities to be involved in and join the SPIA DEI committee (formed in Fall 2021), which will help further implement programmatic and curricular changes related to diversity across the school