MCPH Program Response to Diversity Resolution
Department of Religion & Culture (CLAHS)
School of Visual Arts (CAUS)

I. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the details of the particular inclusion and diversity educational programs within each program, department, or college be submitted for approval to the Graduate School by the Graduate Program Director of a program or department, or its equivalent in a college, and

II. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Program of Study for all graduate students show a record of the student's participation in the particular inclusion and diversity educational programs delineated by the student's program, department, or college, as part of the student's graduation requirements.

RESPONSE to RESOLUTION I:
Required Topics:
1. "The Virginia Tech Principles of Community as they apply to the valuing of human diversity and inclusion" and

2. "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."

> Policies I. A and B (copied below) of the MCPH Program's Standards and Policies document currently includes language concerning non-descrimination policy
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> > 1A. The MCPH Program does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, veteran status, national origin, religion, or political affiliation.
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> > I.B. As part of the University, the MCPH Program is subject to titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, the Vietnam Era Veteran Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Federal Executive Order 112146, Governor Allen's State Executive Order Number Two, and all other rules and regulations that are applicable. Anyone having questions concerning any of those regulations should contact the [Office for Equal Opportunity](http://www.vt.edu/equal_opportunity.php) (http://www.vt.edu/equal_opportunity.php).
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> Appended to this current policy in our Standards and Policies document, we will also add the following statement about the Virginia Tech Principles of Community:
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> "The MCPH Program expectations of civility, inclusion, and respect are embedded in, and reaffirmed by, Virginia Tech's Principles of Community: Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of

Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

> • We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.

> • We affirm the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.

> • We affirm the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.

> • We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.

> • We pledge our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

Our Fall Orientation event, required of all incoming students, will include a 1/2 hr discussion period for the VT Principles of Community. Specifically, we will discuss

a. The Principles themselves
b. The Principles as written into the MCPH S&P documents
c. The University's seriousness of purpose regarding these policies as evidenced by the required diversity training courses organized by the Graduate School;

The 9-credit foundational sequence of the MCPH Program-- RLCL/ART 5104: History and Methods in MCPH I; RLCL ART 5204: History and Methods in MCPH II, RLCL/ART 5304: MCPH in the Public Sphere-- all address issues of diversity and inclusion such as those mentioned by the GS Resolution. Specifically, they examine how the materialization of culture (e.g. as "art") and the material display of (reified) "culture" reflect and "impact [how the] personal actions and words have on self, others, and the communities… in which we live." We reflect on how "issues of privilege, bias, power, prejudice, and discrimination; concepts of multiple personal, social, and cultural identities" shape, intra alia, artistic production and aesthetic sensibilities. Examples from these courses include the following:

a. In RLCL/ART 5104, Week 8 & 9 are dedicated to postcolonial theory and race & ethnicity, respectively. In Week 9, we read, inter alia, Gayatry Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in which she offers a critique of the eurocentrism of Michelle Foucault's analysis of modern biopower. In Week 10, we read the foundational works in constructivist

anthropology, Frederik Barth's introductory essay to "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" which we pair with Kimberly Crenchaw's foundational essay on Intersectionality.

b. In RLCL/ART 5304 rotates in its thematic content, but always addresses topics relevant to contemporary issues of diversity. For example, in Spring 2021, we thematized the section around the following topic "Humanities in Times of Crisis." Here is the course description with some relevant passages underlined:

> "[This section of 5304] explores expressive forms as they are employed in the face of stress and change (e.g., natural disasters, epidemics, political unrest, economic collapse, migration, climate disruption). We'll consider a range of genres (e.g., rumor, legend, memes, personal narrative, music, protest signs, zines, murals, exhibits) and modes (e.g., parody, history, propaganda, ethnography, display) that people have used to frame events, shape responses, and process experience. We'll theorize *crisis* and (*public) humanities,* engage with scholars who analyze the work specific forms do in specific contexts, and address fears that the Humanities themselves are in crisis. Throughout the semester, faculty guest speakers will share how their own scholarship responds to various calls for urgent action. Readings may include *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms (*Hutcheon, 2000), *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Stallybrass and White, 1986); *A New Deal for Native Art: Indian Arts and Federal Policy, 1933-1943* (McLerran 2012); *The Kiss of Death: Contagion, Contamination, and Folklore* (Kitta, 2019); *Black Lives Matter and Music* (Orejuela and Shonekan, 2018); and *When They Blew the Levee: Race, Politics, and Community in Pinhook, Missouri* (Lawrence and Lawless 2018)

Diversity Event Attendance Requirement: The MCPH Program will initiate a new requirement that all MA students attend two diversity-related campus events during their first year. For example, students may choose to participate in the Graduate School's HBCU/MSI Summit in the Fall for one of these events. The Plan of Study will be revised to include a separate signature line from the director affirming that this requirement has been met.

Redress/Shared Responsibility: The following information concerning the redress of any violations to the abovementioned principles of community will be added to the MCPH website and noted during Fall orientation:

"Complaints about professional misconduct (integrity and civility) are concerns of both the persons victimized and the MCPH Program (and its administrative departments). Students who have suffered or witnessed another student's violation of the VT Principles of Community should, in a timely fashion, initiate a complaint with departmental authorities. These include the student's graduate advisor or one of the two MCPH co-directors.

For concerns about faculty conduct, the student can contact the chair of the Department of Religion & Culture or the Director of SOVA, or, if necessary, the Graduate School Dean.

For help with interpersonal conflict resolution, the student can contact the Graduate School Ombudsperson

All complaints and grievances will remain confidential <u>except</u> those pertaining to sexual harassment/assault. Mention of sexual harassment/assault must result in a phone call to the Human Resources Title IX coordinators. Reports of sexual harassment/assault result in HR officer outreach to alleged victims, who then choose whether to authorize continued investigation. Students may also opt to reach out to HR Resource Title IX coordinators themselves. Students wishing to initiate confidential discussions about sexual harassment/assault may wish to contact the Women's Center Conseling Staff or Cook Counseling.

Students concerned about another student's disruptive behavior, threats, incivility, or harassment may also report that behavior to the Student Conduct division of the Dean of Students Office.

Students concerned about breaches to academic integrity can report those concerns to the Graduate Honor System.