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Catherine Cotrupi  
Interim Assistant Dean and Director, Office of Recruitment, Diversity, and Inclusion  
Graduate School, Virginia Tech  
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Dear Dr. Cotrupi:

Please find below a revised description of how the M.S. and Ph.D. programs in the Department of Science, Technology, and Society (STS) meets the Diversity and Inclusion Requirement set by the Graduate School in the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies Resolution 2017-18A. **This approach updates our policy of 2021 by simplifying and clarifying which courses meet the requirements.**

As a reference, we include below the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies Resolution 2017-18A requirement that the following topics and potential additional focus areas be incorporated into graduate education:

- 1: The Virginia Tech Principles of Community as they apply to the value of human diversity and inclusion.
- 2: The impact that personal actions and words have on self, others, and 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.
- 3: Available avenues of redress and our shared responsibilities as active by-standers.
- 4: The process of individual introspection required both to understand one's own forms of implicit or unconscious bias and to create inclusive environments.

Additional Topics/Focus Areas:

**5:** Inclusion and Diversity in a global context; institutional and government policies affecting immigration, accessibility, affordability, and related matters.

**6:** Historical perspectives on diversity and the impact of traditions of privilege on the development of the discipline represented by the particular academic unit; inclusive pedagogy.

**7:** Effective strategies for inter- or intrapersonal conflict resolution; pathways to individual reconciliation of unconscious or implicit bias.

The graduate program in the Department of Science, Technology, and Society Philosophy aims to fulfill the Diversity and Inclusion Requirement as follows:

**Departmental Orientation.** Every entering STS graduate student will participate in a departmental orientation prior to, or near the beginning of, the start of the academic year. Led by the Department Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies, the orientation will include a discussion on how to maintain an inclusive and supportive climate. In addition, students will receive pedagogical training that explicitly addresses issues of diversity and inclusion. Students will be given a copy of the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, which we will discuss during the orientation meeting, and will be provided with resources regarding departmental and college dispute resolution, the university policy on harassment, discrimination and assault, and on campus resources for equity-related issues. In pursuing a resolution to a dispute, students will be advised to follow the appeals process described in Section 2 of the STS Handbook. Given the nature of the dispute, students will consult with either, or any combination of, their Advisory Committee Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, the Department Chair, and the Ombuds Office (Topics 1, 2, 3, and 5.)

**Seminar on Diversity and Inclusion.** Every entering STS graduate student will participate in a seminar—independent of orientation and regular class meetings—led by a faculty member on matters of inclusion and diversity. Included as part of our weekly departmental seminar series, this session will take place during the student's first year in the program. During this seminar students will take up issues of diversity and inclusion and will be given resources that include strategies for promoting inclusivity in their scholarship. Students will reflect on the ways in which issues of privilege, bias, power, and prejudice can impact their ability to participate comfortably and

effectively in an academic community. Students will also explore strategies for creating inclusive environments and intervening fruitfully in situations involving discrimination. (Topics 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7.)

**Coursework. An emphasis on Topics 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 run throughout our MS and PhD curriculum which has two formal student learning outcomes: (a) “Adopt a global perspective on science and technology, which includes, but decenters perspectives of elite groups of the Global North, and is substantively shaped by scholarship from marginalized groups,” and (b) “Develop and demonstrate ethical and social awareness, through practice and a focus on values such as curiosity, justice, equity and inclusion.” These topics are addressed extensively in STS 5024: Introduction to Science and Technology Studies and in all of our other core courses. In STS 5024, Students explore historical, sociological, philosophical, and policy issues related to race, sex, inclusion, oppression, and diversity and reflect on one’s own forms of implicit or unconscious bias in the conduct of research and utilize studies of institutional and government policies affecting immigration, accessibility, affordability, and related matters to in order to cultivate the tools to undertake similar analysis in their own research.**

I believe this plan meets the Graduate School’s new Inclusion and Diversity requirement as stipulated by the Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies, Resolution 2017-18A. Please let me know if questions arise.

Sincerely,

Matthew Wisnioski  
Director of Graduate Studies

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Matt Wisnioski  
Director of Graduate Studies

Associate Professor