

# **Diversity and Inclusion Training Plan**

## **Department of Statistics, Virginia Tech**

### **Statistics Graduate Program**

The Department of Statistics at Virginia Tech, continually strives to inspire and nurture all in our community - understanding that each person brings distinct life experiences to the research and education of Statistics. With a diverse community, we have the opportunity to make robust, innovative, and unique science discoveries. To us, diversity includes, but is not limited to, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age, cultural background, life experiences, thoughts, ideas, and perspectives. We affirm that we enhance our professional work as researchers, teachers, staff members, and students by encouraging diverse voices from the Virginia Tech community and beyond. We will fully utilize expertise within the department, the broader VT community, and elsewhere available to ensure our educational and research goals. Our diversity and inclusion training plan includes the following parts

#### **1. Graduate Course**

We plan to leverage the Student Outreach Seminar (SOS) course to cover the broader topics of diversity and inclusion. The current SOS seminar course is a venue for students to discuss their research, hear about internship possibilities from corporate sponsors, get advice from more senior graduate students, and receive research guidance from faculty. We plan to expand the SOS course to a 2-credit course, with an augmented syllabus that covers a range of topics on diversity and inclusion. New Topics for the course include

- Virginia Tech principles of community
- Impact of personal actions and words
- Redress and shared responsibilities
- Implication of Individual Introspection

Specifically, we will require all of our first-year students to take this 2-credit course. The course will also cover topics to enhance students' understanding of differences in background, how to avoid coercion, harassment, intimidation, and exploitation, how to make professional judgement without personal differences and preferences, and how to be inclusive with equal courtesy toward all colleagues.

While the SOS Instructor of record will be responsible for the details of implementation, activities and instruction may draw from VT resources such as

- Taking and discussing results from the Harvard Implicit Association Test,
- Completing and discussing the module offered by Virginia Tech's Office of Inclusion and Diversity – Diversity: Inclusion in the Modern Workplace,
- Receive instruction on being an active bystander and introduce students the VT “Get Involved” webpage ([https://www.stopabuse.vt.edu/Get\\_Involved.html](https://www.stopabuse.vt.edu/Get_Involved.html)).

#### **2. Syllabus and Training Enhancement**

We will encourage faculty and instructors to include the Virginia Tech Principles of Community into the syllabi for all undergraduate and graduate courses offered by the Department of Statistics. The departmental expectations of civility, inclusion, and respect are embedded 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 ongoing efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

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).

The department diversity committee will provide the most recent diversity and inclusion statement to all faculty and instructors prior to each semester, along with additional campus resources. Further, the statistics department will strongly encourage faculty to diversify their training, research and teaching with resources to enhance the diversity and inclusion.

### **3. Diversity Forum to Continue Diversity and Inclusion Activities**

The department diversity committee has organized the diversity forum (virtual via zoom) through reading group and topic discussion on a broad subject on diversity and inclusion. The department will continue hosting workshops/training/reading groups/discussion going forward on diversity and inclusion related topics.

Furthermore, the department diversity committee has already designed and conducted climate survey among faculty and students, aiming for a better awareness of diversity and inclusion concern in the statistics department. We will analyze the survey results carefully to summarize the concerns and engage the discussion among faculty and students. Based on the analysis, we can refine the design of survey and plan to conduct the climate survey each semester.

#### **4. VT-VSU Seminar Collaboration**

The Statistics Department has collaborated with the department of mathematics at Virginia State University since 2020, and has established the VT-VSU joint seminar series to promote statistics program and education opportunities for the underrepresented students in the HBCUs. Seminars are organized by faculty/students from VT statistics department and faculty/students from VSU mathematics department. The presentation will be followed by an open discussion for all faculty and students to actively participate in.

#### **The Data Analysis and Applied Statistics MA Program in Blacksburg**

Note that the Data Analysis and Applied Statistics program only serves students who are currently enrolled in a graduate program from another department at Virginia Tech. Hence these graduate students will be a part of their home department's exposure, training and education on diversity and inclusion.