

CMSI encourages all of our affiliated faculty and teaching assistants to look critically at your courses and ask how you can make them equitable and inclusive. Below you will find suggested language for your syllabi to establish your commitment to DEI principles in the classroom from Day 1, as well as a checklist to help you assess and improve how your courses are serving and supporting UC Davis' diverse student body.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Template Statement**

*Modify and use this template on your syllabi to communicate to students your commitment to DEI principles in the classroom, and to open the door for them to provide feedback on how you can improve. This template is adapted from the Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences statement.*

I am committed to creating a community that respects each person as an individual. I promote diversity, equity, inclusion, creativity, and rigorous intellectual inquiry for all members of my classroom, research group and the University community as a whole, through excellence in research, teaching, mentoring, and service. Diversity and excellence – in perspectives, scientific approaches, and contributions to society – are the cornerstones of our success as an institution. I am committed to the UC Davis Principles of Community. I encourage individuals, representing all races, creeds and social circumstances, to join our community of scholars with a common interest in the world around us and beyond.

As part of this course, I am especially committed to increasing the representation, expertise, and voices of populations that have been historically excluded from participation in US higher education and the research enterprise. You may observe this commitment in our course readings, in the way in which discussions are moderated and facilitated, and in the design of the course. If there is any way that I can additionally improve the inclusion of members of this course please bring your ideas to the teaching staff.

UC Davis is committed to educational equity in the academic setting, and in serving a diverse student body. I encourage all students who are interested in learning more about the Student Disability Center (SDC) to contact them directly at [sdc.ucdavis.edu](http://sdc.ucdavis.edu), [sdcc@ucdavis.edu](mailto:sdcc@ucdavis.edu) or 530-752-3184. If you are a student who requires academic accommodations, please submit your SDC Letter of Accommodation to me as soon as possible, ideally within the first two weeks of this course.

### **Territorial Acknowledgement**

In addition to the DEI statement in the template above, consider adding a Territorial Land Acknowledgement to your syllabus, and discuss this on the first day of class (and/or during class times that connect to this topic). Utilize resources such as [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca) to learn more about the land you are on.

As scientists, it is important to recognize how our discipline has been impacted by, and benefited from, colonialism, and how this impacts the Native Peoples whose lands we now use. In your acknowledgment of native land, include a connection to how indigenous peoples managed, farmed, utilized and understood marine and terrestrial resources. Connect indigenous marine practices and traditions directly as possible to your course materials.

## **Checklist for building equity, inclusion, and decolonizing practices into your classroom**

*Use this checklist to self-assess all of the opportunities you have to make your curriculum serve a more diverse student body in a way that is equitable and inclusive.*

*Reflection questions to ask yourself as a professor or teaching assistant*

- What cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives do your students come from? What is the dominant culture in your classroom? Is there a group that benefits from this narrative?

*The Curriculum*

- Have you included materials, readings, examples/illustrations and images that reflect contributions and perspectives from groups historically underrepresented in the field? Have you *highlighted* the contributions and achievements of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, and other marginalized groups in your field?
- Have you provided non-white historical context for your subject matter? Specifically, when telling the historical narrative of discovery in your field, have you incorporated indigenous histories and/or the relationship between your field and colonization?

*The Learning Environment*

- Could you invite marginalized voices into your classroom by inviting guest lecturers, featuring peer-reviewed research from those scholars, or using multimedia that includes marginalized scholars?
- Do you intentionally use different modes of instruction that tap into the diverse perspectives in your classroom: cooperative learning, independent work, role-playing, research projects, etc.?
- Are you encouraging students to draw from their diverse experiences and abilities to make classroom learning material more applicable? Have you included course assignments that allow students to express their identity, or assignments that explicitly ask students to think about the intersection of science, economics and policy with environmental justice, racism, or other issues?
- To improve access and inclusion for your students, consider:
  - Insert closed captioning on your lectures (easy to do in Powerpoint or Google Slides).
  - For online learning, provide opportunities for “checking in” (hands raised, polls, etc) that don’t require their video to be on at all times.
  - Introduce yourself using your pronouns; normalize giving students the opportunity to do so.
  - Learn how to pronounce your student’s names. This is a good resource for that:  
<https://cloud.name-coach.com>
- Do you provide a flexible syllabus in terms of participation and assignment due dates, so that students can make up assignments or absences easily and without significant penalty?
- Do you set up course norms that facilitate dialogue, hearing from multiple voices, and respecting the importance of both listening and speaking? For example:
  - Are you moderating the most dominant voices in the classroom or structuring your classes in a way that lifts up marginalized voices?
  - Do you use techniques that allow people to share in written and verbal forms that are less intimidating than speaking to an entire classroom?
  - Do you foster a two-way dialogue or is the instructor the only individual that’s assumed to educate?

## **Links/citations to resources:**

1. [How to Decolonize a Classroom](#), Dr. Celeste C. Hayes
2. [Inclusive teaching practices tips & checklist](#), Trefny Innovative Instruction Center, Colorado School of Mines
3. [Creating Inclusive College Classrooms](#), Dr. Shari Saunders and Dr. Diana Kardia
4. [Creating and Engaging and Inclusive Environment](#), Center for Educational Effectiveness, UC Davis
5. [Decolonising Science Reading List](#), Dr. Chanda Prescod-Weinstein
6. [Teaching Resources-Highlighting Diverse Scientists](#), by Dr. Melissa Ward
7. [Teaching & Mentoring for Equity, Justice & Inclusion](#), compiled by Dr. Tessa Hill
8. [Learning within the Context of Culture](#), Brown University
9. [Creating Inclusive Classrooms- Resources for Continued Learning](#), UC Davis Office of Campus Community Relations
10. [Inclusive Teaching Strategies](#), Dr. K. Tanner

Want to learn more? Check out UC Davis' [Professional Development Courses for DEI](#).

*These resources were compiled and edited by A.M. Saley, A. Smart, T. Mata, M. Ward, T. Hill, and P. Shukla. Thank you to all of our peers for their foundational work and our colleagues for input.*

*See something missing or want to give feedback? This document is a work in progress. E-mail [cmsi@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cmsi@ucdavis.edu).*