University of Maryland
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Learning Outcomes Initiative:

Descriptions and Considerations

In September 2020, UMD's deans unanimously supported a proposal to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion learning outcomes (DEI LOs) into all undergraduate degree programs. This DEI LO Initiative has the potential to transform the campus climate and integrates seamlessly with Fearlessly Forward, UMD's 2022 strategic plan.

Fearlessly Forward articulates that UMD will:

- *Invest in the capacity of our students, faculty, and staff to learn, teach, work, lead, and engage in dialogue across difference, leveraging diversity and inclusion as central in all we do.*

- *Create an actionable and sustainable plan to tackle issues of social justice, equity, and antiracism, both locally and globally, through our research, education, and outreach.*

As undergraduate degree programs incorporate discipline-specific DEI LOs, they have a unique opportunity to share ideas and learn from each other. Toward that end, this document summarizes observations of the Provost's Commission on Learning Outcome Assessment (PCLOA), which provides leadership and organizational procedures for campus engagement in the learning outcomes assessment process. We hope these observations will help to guide programs as they consider their next steps in crafting and assessing DEI LOs.

Descriptive Types of DEI Learning Outcomes

Nearly all of UMD's 100-plus degree programs identified and submitted one or more DEI LOs in October 2021. Reviewing this set, the PCLOA identified and then codified patterns as a way to summarize and share observations. Four broad categories emerged in the analysis, and these patterns are reflected in the graphic below. Category descriptions, examples, and characteristics can be found in Table 1.
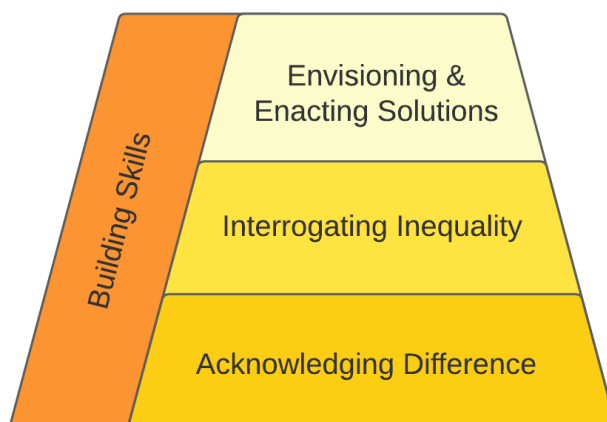
Table 1. DEI LO categories, samples, and characteristics.

DEI LO Category	Sample Learning Outcomes As a result of completing the program, students will…	Skills Associated with DEI LO Category	What are some characteristics of learning outcomes in this category?	Rationales	Considerations
Acknowledging Difference	*Be able to describe the ways the current demographic composition of professionals in the discipline have changed over time*	Skills associated with Acknowledging Difference include: ● Self-reflection skills ● Data interpretation skills ● Listening skills ● Communication skills ● Collaboration skills	● Document different experiences of people based on culture, language, location, resources, etc. ● Understand differences in disciplinary experiences of researchers, practitioners, clients/customers and others who are an important focus of the discipline. ● Learn assumptions, language, etc., important to acknowledge differences and show respect for groups.	● Naming and analyzing differences are foundational in discussion of diversity, equity, and inclusion. ● Sets the stage for an exploration of assumptions, beliefs, and biases related to difference.	● Some students may be ready to go beyond differences to discuss inequality. ● The recognition that interrogation of inequality associated with and based on difference is a logical next step.
Interrogating Inequality	*Be able to explain how ideas and research in [discipline] have been and continue to be used to marginalize and oppress groups* *Be able to explain how aspects of or practices in the discipline have been or can be used to examine equity and inclusion.*	Skills associated with Interrogating Inequality include: ● Self-reflection skills ● Data interpretation skills ● Listening skills ● Communication skills ● Collaboration skills ● Perspective taking skills ● Emotion regulation skills ● Debate skills	● Highlight scholars, practitioners, and histories from marginalized individuals/groups that have often been excluded from participation or recognition. ● Understand systems that create and reinforce marginalization or exclusion. ● Analyze the structures and histories of power and privilege that drive differential experiences of those involved in the discipline. ● Interrogate unconscious/shared paradigms within the discipline that have prompted marginalization and exclusion.	● Interrogating inequality, oppression, and power in the disciplines is at the heart of the DEI learning objectives initiative. ● An honest exploration of inequalities in the disciplines creates opportunities for advancements and participation in the disciplines by a wider range of groups and individuals.	● It can be difficult, uncomfortable, and emotional to explore and discuss historical and present-day inequalities, inequities, and oppression. ● Despite these challenges, discussions and activities related to inequalities in the discipline can be responsibly designed, incorporated, and facilitated.

DEI LO Category	Sample Learning Outcomes As a result of completing the program, students will…	Skills Associated with DEI LO Category	What are some characteristics of learning outcomes in this category?	Rationales	Considerations
Envisioning and Enacting Solutions	*Be able to create new disciplinary practices and organizational structures that are just and equitable.*	Skills associated with Envisioning and Enacting Solutions include: ● Research skills ● Creative thinking skills ● Communication skills ● Problem solving skills ● Perspective taking skills ● Collaboration skills	● Create and implement approaches to ensure more equitable disciplinary communities and societal structures that are rooted in knowledge of historical oppression.	● Many students are highly engaged and motivated when given opportunities to apply skills learned in their discipline to the development of solutions to real-world problems. ● Opportunities for disciplines to learn about and learn from some of the Living and Learning program student projects. ● Strong connection to components of UMD Strategic Plan.	● Some disciplines may not view this category viable and appropriate for incorporation in the program content. ● In that this category is at the "top" of the visual diagram, some disciplines may view incorporating DEI LOs in this category as the ultimate goal and purpose of the DEI LO initiative.

Reflection Questions

● In which descriptive categories do your program's DEI learning outcomes tend to fall? How well do those categories reflect your faculty members' aspirations for student learning within your discipline?

● To what extent might your faculty members be interested in pursuing other types of DEI learning outcomes? If so, which ones and why? How might pursuing these learning outcomes prepare your students to contribute to the practice of your discipline?

Frequencies of DEI Learning Outcomes Across Programs

Campus programs appropriately focused on different categories of DEI learning outcomes. The following graphic illustrates frequencies tabulated for each DEI Learning Outcome category. Some programs submitted several DEI learning outcomes, resulting in frequencies that far exceed the number of undergraduate programs/majors offered by UMD. Furthermore, many submitted DEI learning outcomes contained compound actions or statements, therefore, for the purposes of analysis, it was necessary to break down DEI learning outcomes into distinct DEI learning outcomes statements. Table 2 contains the number of DEI learning outcomes statements submitted in each category in Fall 2021 and Fall 2022.

Table 2. Number of distinct DEI LO learning outcomes statements by year and DEI category.

	# of distinct DEI Learning Outcomes statements submitted	Building Skills	Acknowledging Difference	Interrogating Inequality	Envisioning & Enacting Solutions
Fall 2021	160	48	124	54	13
Fall 2022	189	54	136	68	18

Quality Attributes of DEI Learning Outcomes

In addition to analyzing descriptive DEI learning outcome information, the PCLOA considered attributes that affected the quality or utility of outcomes. Because campus programs are implementing this curriculum change together, there is limited external guidance. We, therefore, need to share feedback to discern standards. Toward that end, Table 3 summarizes our preliminary ideas and suggestions for reviewing campus DEI learning outcomes.

Table 3. DEI LO Attributes, Dimensions, and Descriptions.

Issue	Dimensions	Description	Sample Learning Outcome	How might this issue affect the program and/or students?
No DEI learning outcome		Did not include or identify any LOs as relevant to DEI in the discipline		Less developmental feedback and fewer resources are available to aid the program.
DEI focus	**Majority group focus**	Frames learning in terms of majority group members' needs, suggesting that DEI LO Initiative is designed to serve, support, and develop skills of majority group members	*Students will demonstrate skills in communicating effectively with diverse members.*	Implicit adoption of majority member perspectives implies that non-majority members have no need to learn and/or that they are the "problem."
	Inclusive focus	Frames key learning outcomes in ways that incorporate needs of both majority and minority members.	*Students will demonstrate skills in communicating effectively with those who differ from them in race, gender, and nationality.*	Broadening perspective to incorporate majority and minority members lays groundwork for an inclusive approach and clarifies content nuances.
Generality vs. specificity	**General and/or self-referential**	Mentions learning about or committing to DEI without indicating why these efforts might be relevant or important	*Students will demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion in society.*	Students may become confused or skeptical regarding why DEI is part of their major coursework, which can elicit their anger, apathy, or cynicism.
	Specific	Indicates logical basis for why DEI concerns are important to the discipline and/or signals range/types of associated benefits	*Students will identify how diversity and inclusion practices contribute to greater disciplinary effectiveness.*	Specificity about DEI impact offers a rationale to skeptical or uninformed students and demonstrates seriousness of purpose.
Connection to the discipline	**Disconnected from discipline**	Focuses on *what* students will learn without reference to the discipline; could apply to any discipline	*Students will connect and build relationships with external groups.*	Students may lack clarity about how or why DEI is relevant to this discipline, which can undermine their motivation and learning.
	Clear connection to discipline	Ties DEI concerns explicitly to core issues within the discipline	*Students will build relationships with key external constituency groups whose follow-through is critical to professional success.*	Linking DEI and performance of the discipline helps to focus both instructional efforts and students' attention.

Issue	Dimensions	Description	Sample Learning Outcome	How might this issue affect the program and/or students?
Which aspects of diversity?	**All the same**	Lumps together disparate social identity groups under the "diversity" banner	*Students will demonstrate an understanding of the experiences of diverse social groups.*	An undifferentiated focus can imply that the needs of disparate subgroups are the same and risks giving attention incommensurate with needs.
	Differentiated	Identifies specific areas of difference on which to focus student learning; this could be a function of key issues in the discipline	*Students will demonstrate the ability to take the perspective of clients who differ from them in race, gender, and disability status.*	Identifying specific subgroups on which to focus aids (a) faculty members in designing & delivering instruction, and (b) students in understanding that the challenges faced differ by diversity attribute.
Teamwork dynamics	**Unspecified teamwork dynamics**	Advances communication, team, and/or leader skills without specifying how intertwined power and social status dynamics will be directed	*Students will foster team environments that include ideas from all contributing members.*	Team power dynamics can be used to include/encourage as well as to exclude/intimidate others. Clarifying how such skills are to be used can reduce misuse/unintended harm.
	Specifies team power & status dynamics	Indicate the types of power and status dynamics that need to be managed in pursuit of inclusion and equity	*Students will foster team environments that elicit contributions from all members.*	Recognizing and addressing how to reduce exclusionary power/status dynamics is key for effective instruction & student learning.
What will students learn?	**Appreciation of differences**	Focuses on "appreciation" of differences as a learning experience or outcome	*Demonstrates an appreciation of national, geographic, ethnic, racial, and linguistic differences.*	Merriam-Webster defines "appreciation" as "a feeling of great approval and liking." How might the degree program effectively measure students' attitudes and feelings?
	Cultural sensitivity	Sidesteps specifics by specifying broad outcomes such as cultural sensitivity	*Will demonstrate cultural sensitivity when working on teams with diverse members.*	Defining what students need to know or do with greater precision will aid course design and assessment
	Knowledge or skills	Identifies knowledge or practical skill as focus for student learning	*Students will describe the contributions of scientists from diverse backgrounds.*	Specific knowledge and skills make it easier to assess student learning & offer direction for instruction.
Rationale for DEI within discipline	**Instrumental value**	Suggests that addressing DEI issues offers a means to an end or are surface-level concerns requiring "lip service."	*Students will be able to articulate how diversity increases organizational profits.*	Absent a highly nuanced teaching approach, this may promote further exploitation of marginalized groups.

Reflection Questions

- Review the issues and dimensions listed in the table above. To what extent do your program's DEI learning outcomes fit into various dimensions? Which, if any, of these might create challenges for your program as you develop your curriculum map, instructional activities, and assessment tools?

- Which of your program's DEI learning outcomes might you consider revising and why? In what ways might you modify those DEI learning outcomes? What sources of guidance might you consult as you develop your curriculum map (e.g., librarians, professional association, colleagues at other universities)