

# FREC Diversity and Inclusion Committee Mission Statement and Committee Responsibilities

## Mission, Guiding Principles, and Key Definitions

### Mission Statement:

The FREC Diversity and Inclusion Committee is committed to establishing and maintaining a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and just community that collectively strengthens the Department in all aspects of education, research, and public engagement.

### Guiding Principles:

We promote respect for the rights and privileges of all, and we seek to understand and appreciate human differences. We believe that we are better collaborators when our students, staff, and faculty reflect the diversity of our country, including, but not limited to: race, gender, ethnicity, sexual identity, socio-economic status, age, ability, religion, national and regional origin, and political philosophy. All should feel that they are welcomed and critical members of the FREC community, no matter their identities. We are committed to supporting the ongoing changes and learning that are necessary to fully incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice into the Department's structures and values.

### DEIJ Defined:

The FREC Diversity and Inclusion Committee has adopted the following definitions of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice to guide our committee charge. **Diversity** refers to the variety of personal experiences, values, and worldviews that arise from differences in culture and circumstances.. **Inclusion** is fostering a sense of belonging by centering, valuing, and amplifying the voices and perspectives of those who experience more barriers or disadvantages based on their identities. **Equity** acknowledges unbalanced conditions that exist in society and involves allocating resources to ensure that everyone receives fair treatment and has access to the same opportunities. As we advance these principles, we aspire to move further toward **justice**—the dismantling of barriers to resources and opportunities at Virginia Tech and beyond.

## Committee Responsibilities

- Act as stewards of the D&I plan for the department.
- Coordinate with College and University-level D&I efforts to support InclusiveVT's [Four Institutional Goals](#) and Virginia Tech's [Principles of Community](#)
- With input from faculty, staff, and students, define what diversity, inclusion, and equity mean for FREC, describe why they are important to us, and identify

everyone's shared responsibilities towards creating and sustaining a diverse, inclusive, and equitable department.

- Define metrics related to D&I and determine how to track and report them.
- Seek to understand the current status of practices and barriers related to D&I in the department, including sentiments of faculty, staff, and students. Provide mechanisms, opportunities, and safe spaces to listen to and learn from colleagues and students who identify with underrepresented groups.
- Coordinate and/or share opportunities and trainings to promote growth and foster on-going conversations related to equity and inclusion throughout the department.
- Make recommendations for the department on matters that relate to D&I, which may include: recruitment, retention, inclusive practices in the classroom, inclusive practices in Extension work, and application of a critical lens to identify how decisions at all levels may advance or hinder D&I efforts.