



From the Associate Dean of DEI

Welcome to the Nicholas School of the Environment's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion newsletter!

If you would like to add announcements or information to future NSOE DEI newsletters, please email me at nicolette.cagle@duke.edu.



If you have any feedback about DEI initiatives or issues in the Nicholas School that you'd prefer to leave anonymously, please use this [DEI at NSOE feedback form](#).

Dr. Nicki Cagle,
NSOE Associate
Dean of DEI

COMMUNICATE

DEI & Admissions

Did you know that NSOE is committed to equitable admissions processes?

In the Nicholas School, all application readers receive anti-bias training. This year, DEI training will be integrated throughout the whole reader training experience and will consider each application component, including transcripts, essays/writing, recommendations, and resumes.

Plus, the GRE requirement and application fees have been dropped for the Fall 2022 admission cycle, making it easier for students from all backgrounds to apply.

The Nicholas School also offers a number of scholarship opportunities to support students from a diversity of backgrounds:

- The Nemergut Scholarship (supports applicants with a diversity of perspectives),
- the Tanaka Merit Scholarship for applicants with international perspectives,
- the FUNED Scholarship (supporting Mexican students),
- the COLFUTURO Scholarship (supporting Colombian students), and
- Service Volunteer Fellowships for applicants who have served as volunteers in AmeriCorps, City Year, Peace Corps, and Teach for America.

In addition, the Nicholas Scholars program - our largest merit scholarship program - provides scholarships based on academic excellence; diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives; and leadership potential. In 2016, the Nicholas School also instituted a need-based grant program for our professional programs; we have raised \$17M out of a \$25M target for financial aid for students!

DEI Implementation Survey Results

The results of the DEI Implementation Survey are in! Based on feedback from the Nicholas School community, including students, staff, and faculty, we have identified priority objectives and activities for the Spring semester.

Priority Objectives

- The Nicholas School will use practices that support the recruitment and retention of staff and faculty from a variety of backgrounds, particularly those under-represented at NSOE; and
- All students, staff, and faculty will feel like they are a valued part of the community.

We will measure our progress towards these objectives with our NSOE Inclusion & Belonging Survey in Spring 2022.

Priority Activities. The Nicholas School community also identified priority activities, concerning pedagogy and recruitment. The good news is that NSOE has already made progress on a number of these activities!

Which priority activities is NSOE already engaging in?

Priority #1. Waive application fees for low-income students. Did you know that for Fall 2022 admissions *all* application fees are waived?

Priority #2. Provide training on culturally inclusive teaching and course design to NSOE Faculty. Did you know that all faculty received culturally inclusive teaching training in Fall 2021 and that workshops are offered on this topic every Fall and Spring?

Priority #3. Ensure that course evaluations address fair treatment & culturally inclusive teaching practices, and that problems are addressed. Did you know that DEI questions are included in NSOE course evaluations? And this year, the AD of DEI will work one-on-one with faculty members to support their growth as culturally inclusive educators.

The Nicholas School also has work to do! The Implementation Plan also showed that our community seeks to:

- Decolonize the curriculum by updating core courses to address systems of oppression, &
- Integrate environmental justice into the curriculum.

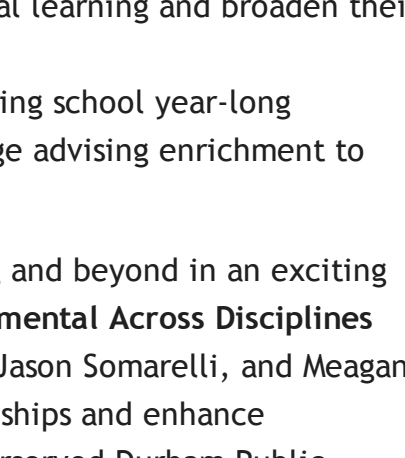
NSOE Curriculum & Culture Survey

This semester, PhD and MEM students formed the *Student Advisory Committee to the AD of DEI* to better understand how members of our community are feeling about their experience at NSOE. To that end, students created the [Curriculum & Culture Survey](#) to assess the state of NSOE's curriculum and culture, and identify areas for improvement. **We invite you to provide your feedback and participate in this survey today by clicking the link above.**

CELEBRATE

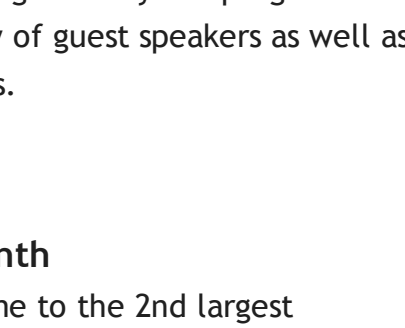
Introducing AHEAD!

Currently, three Nicholas School supported programs work to address environmental injustice and the need for a more diverse workforce and student population in environmental health fields in Durham.



These programs include:

- The [Environmental Science Summer Program](#) (ESSP) - an annual two week summer program where high school students learn about environmental studies through fieldwork,



- [HackBio](#) - intensive day programs to engage high school students in experiential learning and broaden their exposure to STEM careers, and

- [bioSTEMs](#) - a student organization providing school year-long environmental science, health, and college advising enrichment to students at Northern High School.

These three programs are combining this Spring and beyond in an exciting new merger - the **Applying Health and Environmental Across Disciplines (AHEAD) program** led by Drs. Nicolette Cagle, Jason Somarelli, and Meagan Dunphy-Daly. AHEAD will foster mentor relationships and enhance environmental health involvement among underserved Durham Public Schools high school students. Students will engage in a hybrid program featuring biweekly zoom sessions with a variety of guest speakers as well as several weekend field trips and lab experiences.

Celebrating American Indian Heritage Month

Did you know the state of North Carolina is home to the 2nd largest American Indian population east of the Mississippi river and the 7th largest American Indian population in the U.S., according to the 2020 Census?

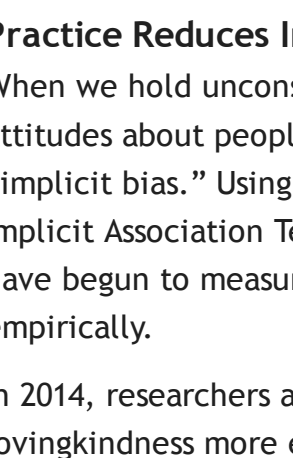
This year, Governor Roy Cooper [declared](#) November to be "American Indian Heritage Month" in North Carolina, a month dedicated to honoring the eight state-recognized tribes: the Coharie, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the Haliwa-Saponi, the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, the Meherrin, the Sappony, the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation and the Waccamaw Siouan.

Despite this recognition, there remains a dire need for our state and academic institutions to do more to support the preservation of Indigenous culture, tradition and history. Read [this guest column](#) from the Duke Native American Student Alliance (NASA) and Eastern Band of Cherokee tribe member, Kyra Hoskin, to learn how Duke can support Native American students and consider signing [this petition](#) to make your voice heard on the issue.

EDUCATE

Graduate Biology Course "IDEA"

Ph.D. candidates Raymond Allen, Lauren Carley, and Anita Simha co-designed a course that will be offered for the second time this Spring that explores historical figures in the field of biology through an anti-racist lens. The graduate course, titled ***Introduction to IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism)***, will create a space for important conversations that explore the history of racism and oppression in biology. Interested? Read more about IDEA [here](#).



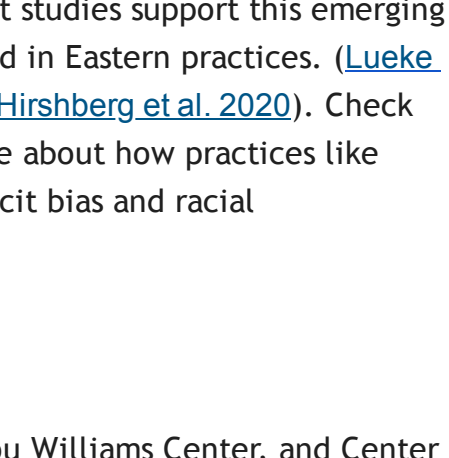
Climate Change & Arctic Identities

In a guest column, Nicholas School alumna Michaela Stith '18 shares her insights about the corrosive confluence of environmental, social and economic injustices faced by Indigenous, Black and dark-skinned residents of the Arctic region. Read her column [here](#) and consider reading her May 2021 book, "Welp: Climate Change and Arctic Identities," available online.

Studies Show Mindfulness

Practice Reduces Implicit Bias

When we hold unconscious beliefs or attitudes about people this is called "implicit bias." Using a tool called the Implicit Association Test (IAT), scientists have begun to measure implicit bias more empirically.



In 2014, researchers at Yale [demonstrated](#) that practicing mindfulness and lovingkindness more effectively reduces implicit bias than merely learning about and discussing racial issues. Subsequent studies support this emerging pathway for healing and social change, rooted in Eastern practices. ([Luecke and Gibson 2016](#), [Hanley and Garland 2019](#), [Hirshberg et al. 2020](#)). Check out [this article](#) from mindful.org to learn more about how practices like meditation and yoga could help reduce implicit bias and racial discrimination.

Anti-Racism Trainings

Duke's Office for Institutional Equity, Mary Lou Williams Center, and Center for Multicultural Affairs will offer a selection of anti-racism trainings this Spring. You can select which training(s) you attend, but please note that **you are required to attend at least one.**

Race and Racism in the U.S.

- Facilitated by J'nai Adams, Associate Director, Center for Multicultural Affairs & Q. Smith, Associate Director, Mary Lou Williams Center for Black Culture
- Workshop for first-year international students new to the U.S. (if you are an international student and not new to the US, you can opt into the other trainings)
- Friday, January 28, 2022 - 1:00-3:30pm ET - Zoom links to follow

Reckoning with Race - Part 1

- Facilitated by Pam Bivens, Assistant Director for Diversity and Inclusion, Duke University
- All first-year domestic students and first-year international students not new to the U.S
- Friday, January 14, 2022 - 1:00-3:30pm ET - Zoom links to follow

Reckoning with Race - Part 2

- Facilitated by Pam Bivens, Assistant Director for Diversity and Inclusion, Duke University
- All second year + domestic and international students not new to the U.S.
- Friday, January 28, 2022 - 1:00-3:30pm ET - Zoom links to follow

"Knowing that you love the earth changes you, activates you to defend and protect and celebrate. But when you feel that the earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond."

- Robin Wall Kimmerer
