

The Colorado School of Public Health

Our Plan for Dismantling Structural Racism and Advancing Inclusive Excellence

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Preamble

The Colorado School of Public Health recognizes that structural racism continues to harm the health of African Americans/Blacks, American Indians/Alaska Natives/Pacific Islanders and Latinx communities (see box). We have long been committed through our educational programs, research, and practice to address the social determinants of health. Now, in all that has followed the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Elijah McClain, Tony McDade, and others at the hands of law enforcement, that commitment has been strengthened and the urgency of our actions increased.

This is also a time for conversation within our school's community about what we can do to dismantle structural racism, as well as the ways we have been complicit. To that end as a tri-campus community we need to engage in honest conversations and actions to be part of long-needed solutions that will come only through policy changes and practice. There are no easy answers to solve the issues of injustice and racism in our society. However, to fulfill our mission of advancing health, will commit to change and accountability

The timing of this plan reflects the events of recent weeks and the startling wake-up call to all about the insidious nature of structural racism and its consequences for Black people. That call reaches more broadly as prejudice and marginalization extend to many groups in our societies: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQ, and more. The evidence is clear that health suffers from structural racism, prejudice, discrimination, inequities and lack of opportunity.

One critical starting point is to look at our diversity as a school. We know that we do not reflect the groups within our society that have poorer health because of who they are. We and other educational institutions have lamented our lack of diversity, but solutions have yet to be found in spite of what some perceived as well-intended efforts over many years. Our failures are a lesson and now is the time to rethink what we have been doing. We are at a moment when we want to commit to change and we need to set targets for what we can accomplish for the short- and long-term.

| Definitions |
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| <p>Racism: A system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call "race"), this system unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other individuals and communities. Dr. Camara Phyllis Jones</p> |
| <p>Racist idea: "My definition of a racist idea is a simple one; it is any concept that regards one racial group as inferior or superior to another racial group in any way." Dr. Ibram X. Kendi</p> |
| <p>Structural racism: "...a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with 'whiteness' and disadvantages associated with 'color' to endure and adapt over time," The Aspen Institute (2016)</p> |
| <p>Racist policy: "A racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups." Dr. Ibram X. Kendi</p> |

Racial Justice/Equity: The systemic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice or racial equity goes beyond “anti-racism”. It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures (Race Forward, 2015)

Our Plan

We need to look internally at what we can do within our school and externally at how our school can have influence. To begin the conversation, this plan has an internal focus—the domain where we can most quickly and readily make changes that will make a difference. Also, by focusing internally first, we can all do the work to change ourselves and our institution, thereby reducing the ways we may inadvertently do harm when we move outward. Our plan will be dynamic as we learn, strategize further, and take progressive steps. Additionally, these actions will be coordinated as part of the implementation of the diversity, equity, and inclusion plan, approved earlier this year, through which we will drive priorities moving forward.

Before the protests against racism that followed the killing of George Floyd, the ColoradoSPH had its standing Committee on Inclusive Excellence that served as a focal point for planning and discussion and that arranged speakers on relevant topics. In preparing the school’s strategic plan, the Inclusive Excellence Committee served as the working group that was instrumental in crafting the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion section. Subsequently, the Inclusive Excellence Committee and other groups elaborated plans for implementing the Strategic Plan; while slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, many elements of the plan will be moved forward.

This plan represents a draft for discussion and then action. It incorporates the Strategic Plan and addresses its implementation. To date, it has received comment from the Associate Deans and Chairs and the Inclusive Excellence Committee and is now brought forward for input from all.

Immediate actions to advance change: Broadening the Strategic Plan:

1. Racial Equity Assessment: The purpose of the assessment is to help identify how racism is operating within our organizational structures at ColoradoSPH. We will assess our:

- Structures: who, what, when, where of decision-making in regard to racial equity. What are the relevant realms of decision-making and resource allocation? Do we have an infrastructure that will sustain our commitment to racial equity?
- Policies: We will identify policies that create inherited group dis/advantage or allow segregation of resources. Reviewing all internal policies and practices such as hiring, promotions, leadership appointments, and funding. Is our commitment formalized into our strategic plan?
- Practices and norms: that either promote or hinder racial equity. How does ColoradoSPH work in alliance and with racial and ethnic organizations/communities? Do we have the tools to walk through resistance to our commitment?
- Values- What are our values, stated or unstated? Are our core values aligned with our racial equity commitment?

2. A Broader Look at Inclusive Excellence: Issues of equity and inclusive excellence are broader than the emergent issue of racial equity. Our school’s community is diverse in many ways and we need to achieve a culture that acknowledges and sustains our diversity. Inevitably, the activities proposed with regard to racial and ethnic equity will expand:

- The assessment approach outlined above in (1) will be extended more broadly.

- Similarly, the broad look will cover policies, practices and norms, values and external forces/partnerships.

3. Educating Ourselves: Provide ongoing antiracism and bystander training for faculty, staff, and students to ensure an inclusive and equitable community dedicated to the development of public health scholarship and to practice that advances health equity. Partner with community organizations to bring training to the ColoradoSPH.

- Train all faculty members about creating inclusive classrooms and facilitate discussions about race and resiliency. Ensure that faculty are more aware, culturally conscious, and capable of communicating about race and racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Implicit bias training; for faculty and staff should be able to reflect and do reflexive thinking on what they present and how they present and what they teach and practice perpetuates stereotypes and prejudice.
- Advance campus discussion about racial justice by inviting speakers who will provide historical and other background on such topics as anti-racism and the history of discrimination against people of color.
- Training opportunities for the school's faculty, staff, and students that will make us more aware, culturally conscious, and capable in communicating about race and racism, diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Implementation of a series of seminars for faculty, staff and students on social determinants of health, giving initial emphasis to structural racism and its history, sociology of populations, and public health among diverse populations.

4. Appointment of an Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Will serve as an institutional leader and focal point for follow through on the Plan for Dismantling Structural Racism and Inequity and Strategic Plan and more. This is a long-needed position for the Colorado School of Public Health. The position has now been announced and the search started on July 15. The Search Committee is chaired by Dick Hamman and its membership includes: Spero Manson, Nathifa Miller, Debashis Ghosh, Tessa Crume, Molly Gutilla, Katie Dickinson, Glen Mays, Rose Grose and Nicole Reed

5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan Implementation: Implement the recommendations (as feasible in the COVID-19 era) in Area 4 (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) of the Strategic Plan.

There are three goals within Area 4 (see Appendix):

- **Goal 1:** Build and maintain a diverse group of faculty, students and staff
- **Goal 2:** Provide programs that ensure an inclusive and equitable community dedicated to the development of public health scholarship and to practice that advances health equity
- **Goal 3:** Foster a diverse and inclusive environment through campus engagement activities and training that celebrates diversity to enhance cultural proficiency

These three goals have a broad span; some are ongoing, e.g., expanding the pipeline of students and recruiting a more diverse faculty, while some are new but can be readily implemented. They remain as relevant now as when completed in the fall of 2019. The implementation plan includes timelines, action steps, evaluation metrics, and locus of responsibility for each goal.

6. Curriculum Mapping: A comprehensive mapping of the curriculum for its content related to the social determinants of health, health equity, social justice, including structural racism. This mapping will provide a framework for addressing gaps (this was included in the Strategic Plan).

7. Partnerships: In an effort to expand our educational pipeline continued and accelerated networking to establish partnerships with institutions of higher education that have diverse student bodies.

8. Expand Communication with Leadership: Arrange regular town hall meetings facilitated by ColoradoSPH leadership open to students, staff, and faculty. This will streamline communication across the ColoradoSPH campus community.

- Amplify student voice through establishing specific channels for communication.
- Engage students in key venues for policy formulation and decision-making.

9. Strengthening Our External Influence: Planning and implementing a process to better understand the external roles of the Colorado School of Public Health and its points for leverage and action in combatting and reducing structural racism and the social determinants of health more generally.

- The school has an external Advisory Board that should be broadened in its membership to better reflect the state and its populations; the Advisory Board itself has proposed such broadening. The Advisory Board can become an even more valuable resource for our external presence, partnering, and engagement.
- Map the landscape of external stakeholders relevant to our efforts to address racism and equity as a starting point for planning an externally-facing agenda for action.

APPENDIX:
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN – AREA 4

Area 4 : Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Introduction: This focus area encompasses strengthening the ColoradoSPH community culture by fostering inclusive excellence, to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the school's academics, research, practice and service.

Goal 1 : build and maintain a diverse group of faculty, students and staff

| OBJECTIVES | SUCCESS MEASURE(S) |
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| Recruit, appoint, promote, and retain skilled, committed, and diverse faculty and staff. | <p>Increase in the number of skilled, committed, and diverse faculty and staff hired at ColoradoSPH.</p> <p>Increase in the duration of employment of talented and diverse staff and faculty at ColoradoSPH.</p> <p>Increase in the number of promotions and leadership positions held by diverse faculty and staff at ColoradoSPH.</p> |
| Recruit and retain a talented, engaged, and diverse student body. | <p>Increase in the number of diverse students enrolled at ColoradoSPH.</p> <p>Ensure an excellent graduation rate of diverse students.</p> |
| Create a strong public health educational pipeline program to continuously identify, recruit, support, and mentor underrepresented students and faculty. | <p>Increase in the number of pipeline projects/initiatives that provide education, mentorship and professional development of undergraduate, graduate, and post-docs.</p> <p>Increase in the number of diverse students enrolled at ColoradoSPH.</p> <p>Increase in the number of diverse faculty hired at ColoradoSPH.</p> <p>Increase in the duration of diverse faculty employment at ColoradoSPH.</p> |

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| Secure funding to support recruitment and retention of faculty, staff who belong to historically marginalized and identified priority populations (e.g., first generation, Hispanic/Latino, African American/Blacks, Native American and rural populations) | Expanded funding available to recruit and retain faculty and staff who belong to historically marginalized and identified priority populations |
| Promote student and faculty diversity by ensuring that eligible NIH grants are using the diversity supplement option | Increase of under-represented minorities among faculty and students carrying out research |

Goal 2 : provide programs that ensure an inclusive and equitable community dedicated to the development of public health scholarship and to practice that advances health equity

| OBJECTIVES | SUCCESS MEASURE(S) |
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| Hire personnel and earmark budget to support the advancement of ColoradoSPH's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. | <p>Increase in the number of staff and faculty dedicated to supporting the advancement of ColoradoSPH's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.</p> <p>Expanded funding earmarked to support the advancement of ColoradoSPH's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.</p> |
| Assure that the curricula of all programs contain clear and distinct learning competencies and courses regarding diversity, inclusion, cultural proficiency and the achievement of health equity and identify the required and non-required courses and other learning experiences that encompass this material. | <p>Presence of clear and distinct learning competencies regarding diversity, inclusion, cultural proficiency and the achievement of health equity throughout the curricula of ColoradoSPH.</p> <p>Identified set of required and non-required courses and other opportunities that encompass this material.</p> <p>At least one course specifically focused on diversity, inclusion, cultural proficiency or the</p> |

| OBJECTIVES | SUCCESS MEASURE(S) |
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| | achievement of health equity is required for students within every degree program and on all campuses of the ColoradoSPH. |
| Train all faculty, students, and staff through co-curricular and tailored activities to create an inclusive environment. | Increase in the number of trainings and experiences available to faculty, students, and staff to create an inclusive environment. |
| Recognize outstanding teaching and mentoring that reflect the School's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. | Increase in communications and activities that highlight outstanding teaching and mentoring reflecting the School's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. |
| Recognize exceptional staff whose work reflects the School's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. | Increase in communications and activities that highlight exceptional staff members whose work reflects the School's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. |
| Engage in research that develops and evaluates evidence-based solutions to health disparities that are driven largely by social, economic, and environmental factors. | Increase in the number of research publications that develop and evaluate evidence-based solutions to health disparities that are driven largely by social, economic, and environmental factors. |
| Partner with local and regional leaders to advance equity and social justice. | Increase in the number of relevant partnerships that are focused on or reflect ColoradoSPH's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. |

Goal 3 : Foster a diverse and inclusive environment through campus engagement activities and training that celebrates diversity to enhance cultural proficiency

| OBJECTIVES | SUCCESS MEASURE(S) |
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| <p>Offer training and community engagement activities that activate and prepare our school to improve public health and promote social justice to advance health equity.</p> | <p>We have dedicated personnel responsible for leading strategic diversity and inclusion efforts that advance inclusive excellence in support of ColoradoSPH values, goals, and priorities.</p> <p>Professional development and multicultural events are held annually.</p> <p>Diversity and inclusive excellence efforts are embedded in the goals of all ColoradoSPH departments and centers.</p> <p>Pipeline projects/initiatives that provide education, mentorship and professional development of undergraduate, graduate, and post-docs.</p> |
| <p>Conduct climate surveys to assess and periodically re-evaluate perceived inclusivity within the ColoradoSPH, workforce and student body.</p> | <p>Positive results of climate survey, with metrics depicting change in each of the measures over time, and, where possible, comparison to partner institutions.</p> |