

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Statement

The Department of Entomology at Rutgers University aims to create a diverse and inclusive environment for all members, e.g. students, researchers, faculty, and staff. Improving the representation of underrepresented communities within the field of entomology is a priority. We are committed to transforming the culture of both our department and the field by implementing short and long-term initiatives. The department embraces individuals from different ethnicities, nationalities, religions, gender identities, sexual orientations, disabilities, political affiliations or socioeconomic backgrounds. Diversity is an essential component of our academic program, and preparing the next generation of entomologists to work effectively and collaboratively is crucial.

Current DEI Initiatives

Our department has procedures in place to best facilitate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We have taken the following steps to recognize and address matters of DEI within our department:

- A departmental DEI faculty committee was established in May 2021 and is composed of four faculty members of various academic levels and backgrounds formulated to develop and progress DEI within the department and at the college level. These faculty also aid in national and university DEI initiatives and participate in recruiting underrepresented groups on campus.
- We integrate DEI initiatives into our curriculum and seek to offer a positive environment for all students, and this committee is dedicated to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. Introductory content for every class focuses on statements and resources for DEI and provides mental health awareness resources. We strive to make our classrooms a safe space for every student.
- The student organizations also promoted the inclusion of a DEI chair within their organization and worked together with the faculty to host departmental seminars and events to promote DEI in entomology. The department seeks to obtain fellowships to recruit graduate and undergraduate students from underrepresented groups and hold ourselves accountable for sustaining these efforts through the DEI committee. We include DEI training in our program handbooks and student orientation. We are responsible for properly communicating channels to report bias and discrimination through university protocols.
- Recognizing the inherent bias documented in standardized testing and the economic hardship taking the test can bring has led the department to change its policy on GRE testing. As a way to alleviate this bias, we do not require GRE testing for admission to the graduate program or consider GRE scores as factor in decisions made about departmental funding opportunities.
- We acknowledge our responsibility to increase diversity and provide an inclusive environment to everyone, seek fellowships and opportunities for underrepresented groups, and recognize that our biases and attitudes may influence how we interact with others.
- Our seminar series aims to include a broad representation of scientists, inviting speakers from underrepresented groups and setting time aside for students and postdocs to present their research. Beginning in 2020, the department set out to dedicate seminars highlighting important DEI work and experiences. Our department is constantly working on increasing awareness about these issues through conversations, seminars, and workshops. Our overall goal is to conduct outstanding research in entomology while training the next generation of leaders to represent our society and solve problems within the field, in an environment that is inclusive to all.

Inclusivity Statement

The Department of Entomology at Rutgers University opposes ethnic, race, and cultural biases that negatively affect underrepresented groups. We are committed to forming a diverse and embracing community in our department by developing appropriate curriculum, activities, and academic environments. In addition, we strive to provide an inclusive agenda for our outreach to a broader community, understanding that change needs to happen at the community level.

Safe Workplace

We are committed to providing a safe, productive, and diverse environment for students, researchers, staff, and faculty that encourages the intellectual growth of its members. Unwanted words or actions that facilitate or condone harassment prevent academic success, and should an incident occur, we have a reporting system. Victims and witnesses of sexual harassment, racism, discrimination, or bias are encouraged to seek help and resources from our department chair: George Hamilton, departmental administrator: Francine Botti, or program directors (Undergraduate: Chloe Hawkings; Graduate: Anne Nielsen).

Mental Health Awareness Initiative

Recognizing that the academic environment can often be an overwhelming environment to work in, the department believes it is essential to make resources known and accessible for students, researchers, faculty, and staff.

Resources

SEBS DEI: <https://execdeanagriculture.rutgers.edu/commitment/>

EntoPOC: <https://www.entopoc.org/>

Counseling Services: <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

Center of Social Justice Education & LGBT communities: <http://socialjustice.rutgers.edu/about-us/>

Compliance and Title IX Reporting: <https://nbtileix.rutgers.edu/resources/faqs-student-complainants-and-respondents>

DEI committee

Alvaro Toledo (chair)

Anne Nielsen

Cesar Rodriguez-Saona

Chloe Hawkings

Marisa Shinal - Student Representative/ DEI chair undergraduate club in entomology