

Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies
Resolution 2017-18A

Resolution to Incorporate an Inclusion and Diversity Education Component into Graduate
Education

Approved by Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies:	April 18, 2018
Reviewed by Faculty Senate:	April 25, 2018
First Reading by University Council:	April 16, 2018
Second Reading by University Council:	May 7, 2018
Approved by the President:	May 7, 2018
Effective Date:	Fall, 2019

WHEREAS, the Virginia Tech community strongly endorses a well-rounded educational experience for graduate students, and

WHEREAS, all graduate students and those associated with their education are expected to uphold the Virginia Tech Principles of Community and the Graduate School's Expectations for Graduate Study, and

WHEREAS, individual departments, colleges, and programs offer opportunities for graduate students to engage in educational programs that promote and strengthen their effectiveness working across disciplines, cognizant of the benefits of a diverse and inclusive environment while studying at Virginia Tech and thereafter,

WHEREAS, inclusion and diversity education at the graduate level would complement existing components developed by college or program diversity committees, InclusiveVT, AdvanceVT, required diversity-related pre-enrollment module and the undergraduate Pathways curriculum, and

WHEREAS, input and endorsement has been received from the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that all degree seeking graduate students (with the exception of professional students in DVM and MD unless also pursuing a graduate degree simultaneously) participate in inclusion and diversity educational programs as part of their graduate studies, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the particular inclusion and diversity educational program for a graduate student be selected and approved by the student's program, department, or college, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the details of the particular inclusion and diversity educational programs within each program, department, or college be submitted for approval to the Graduate School by the Graduate Program Director of a program or department, or its equivalent in a college, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Program of Study for all graduate students show a record of the student's participation in the particular inclusion and diversity educational programs delineated by the student's program, department, or college, as part of the student's graduation requirements.

RECOMMENDATION: Implementation to start with a rollout in Fall 2019 with some departments for incoming graduate students, followed by a continuous process of review and expanded implementation toward full adoption by Spring 2022. Details for inclusion and diversity education are found in the Appendix to Resolution **2017-18A**.

APPENDIX TO CGS&P RESOLUTION 2017-18A

The guidelines offered in this Appendix seek to clarify the intent of the Resolution and to make specific recommendations regarding its implementation. It is the aim of the Resolution to serve the needs of all graduate students, while acknowledging the distinctiveness of those needs across the range of departments, programs, and colleges (hereafter referred to as “academic units”). To comply with the terms of the Resolution, academic units are encouraged to make use of existing strategies and efforts to instill in their students a lasting awareness of the benefits of a diverse and inclusive environment and to instruct their students in this regard. Should measures existing in the academic units be insufficient, new measures will be put in place to satisfy the requirements set forth in the Resolution. The Office of Recruitment and Diversity Initiatives (ORDI) in the Graduate School and the Office for Inclusion and Diversity will be available to offer assistance with the identification of suitable instructional resources and formulation of these plans as needed and/or requested. Additional possible resources include the college diversity committee members and InclusiveVT representatives.

Satisfactory plans may, among other possibilities, take the form of specialized workshops, stand-alone courses, or follow-up substantive discussion/ reflections on required diversity related pre-enrollment module, or other modules incorporated into existing courses or incoming student orientation sessions. Possibilities include GRAD 5214 Diversity and Inclusion in a Global Society, existing courses offered by departments, workshops to be developed in conjunction with NLI, integration into existing departmental seminars, guest speakers and more. The plans will be individualized, designed and tailored to the academic units and could include a variety of options. The Graduate School will work specifically with each academic unit to develop the plans. Professional development opportunities for faculty seeking best practices and strategies for managing these discussions will be provided through NLI.

In all cases, the appropriate academic unit will submit for approval to the Graduate School the manner and method by which the requirement will be satisfied. Once the academic unit’s plan is approved, the completion of the requirement for any given student will be verified through that student’s Plan of Study. With regard to the extent of topics to be covered, again recognizing the range of appropriate emphases across different academic units, four topics have been identified as appropriate for all students and must be included. Other topics should be addressed, as identified by the individual academic units and appropriate to specific disciplinary needs. Lists of required topics and potential additional focus areas appear below:

Required Topics:

1. The Virginia Tech Principles of Community as they apply to the valuing of human diversity and inclusion.
2. The impact that personal actions and words have on self, others, and the communities—university, national, and global—in which we live; issues of privilege, bias, power, prejudice, and discrimination; concepts of multiple personal, social, and cultural identities.
3. Available avenues of redress and our shared responsibilities as active by-standers.

4. The process of individual introspection required both to understand one's own forms of implicit or unconscious bias and to create inclusive environments.

Additional Topics/Focus Areas (as appropriate to the particular academic unit):

1. Inclusion and Diversity in a global context; institutional and governmental policies affecting immigration, accessibility, affordability, and related matters.
2. Historical perspectives on diversity and the impact of traditions of privilege on the development of the discipline represented by the particular academic unit; inclusive pedagogy.
3. Effective strategies for inter- or intrapersonal conflict resolution; pathways to individual reconciliation of unconscious or implicit bias.