



February 2024 Newsletter

NCARE Conference



The AGEP-NC team organized a panel session titled "Dismantling injustice through institutional change: Using empirical data to inform change supporting racially minoritized STEM doctoral students" at the North Carolina Association for Research in Education - NCARE 2024 Conference in Greensboro on February 16, 2024. Drs. Dilara Yaya-Bryson, Lisa Merriweather, Cathy Brawner, and Yvette Huet were the panelists, and they shared information about the background of AGEP-NC, evaluation snapshots, and striking results from the social science research efforts. The panel session drew great attention from the conference attendees.

Newly Adopted Departmental Plan to Promote Success of Diverse Doctoral Students: NCSU Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering



We are pleased to announce the adoption by NC State's Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering of the newest AGEP-NC departmental plan to promote the success and preparation for faculty careers of doctoral students from underrepresented minority groups.

The Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering has formed a Climate Committee to focus on supporting, recruiting, and retaining students and faculty to ensure a cohesive community within the department. This committee comprises faculty, the graduate program director, and student representatives. The department developed a mission statement with regard to climate and performed initial climate surveys. Based on these, they have taken the following first steps.

- Additional education about the importance of DEI in fostering a diverse, engaged, and inclusive community. Some recommended available trainings have been posted on the department's climate website, and they have started an MAE Conversations Series.
- Additional social events to engage students outside the classroom (like POP and Krispy Kreme Challenge teams) have been initiated, but more is needed.
- Mechanisms for reporting discrimination, harassment, or any grievances have been publicized on their climate website.
- Improved descriptions and classification of research areas have been updated on the department website to highlight applications and connections to Grand Challenges, and make the identification of research advisors more straightforward.

The department plan proposes the following longer-term changes to department practices:

- **Culture and sensemaking for faculty mentors:** Define a set of expectations for mentor behavior and best practices, create a Handbook for Mentors, and develop a Statement of Understanding for all graduate mentors. Use the MAE Conversations series to discuss culturally responsive mentoring.
- **Individual development Plans with annual reporting:** Require PhD students to submit annual student activity reports and to create individual development plans with their primary mentor to identify areas of strength and growth; discuss research, teaching, and professional development plans; plan and record annual goals for research and program progress; and identify barriers/obstacles to success.
- **Professional Development:** Create a guidebook for potential awards, Graduate School programs and opportunities, professional societies on and off campus, and conferences.
- **Teaching and Communication Development:** Encourage PhD students to teach as part of a mentored teaching experience and encourage academic-minded students to take academia prep courses or complete the Teaching & Communication Certificate.
- **Community Building:** Listening sessions, informal faculty/student social events, and additional orientation to the culture and values of the department.



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