

STACEY STEARNS

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Diversity Statement

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) must be an active pursuit that challenges our worldviews to be effective. Are we creating safe identity spaces for diversity? Are we elevating diverse voices and taking their ideas seriously? Are we advancing the needs of diverse audiences? Are we serving as an ally? I continuously reflect on these questions and take steps to improve. Addressing diversity is ongoing. We must create a culture shift where diverse audiences feel safe, heard, seen, included, and respected. We must make transformative efforts in our systems and seek justice.

My personal experiences on diverse teams, with friends and colleagues, with BIPOC family members, and traveling internationally widen my lens. DEI is one of my values and my mission is to elevate voices and help create environments where everyone has transformational opportunities. All people should be treated as an individual and see themselves in their chosen realm. Our environments shape our values. We need environments that embrace diversity and can help build them. Diverse teams foster creativity, and these perspectives bring new ideas and create inclusion for larger audiences. Communicators have opportunities to elevate voices through our platforms.

Diversity Statement in Action

- Daily experiential learning activities and diversity practice for personal growth. Examples:
 - Diversity Learning Community member in the Association for Communication Excellence (ACE). Activities include the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Assessment in 2019, IDI action plans, webinars, readings, and group discussions.
 - CAHNR Environmental Justice Book Club and Extension Diversity Learning Group.
 - Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace – online course with ESSEC School of Business (France) – fall 2020.
 - Anti-Racism – online course with University of Colorado Boulder – fall 2020.
 - Leading for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Higher Education – online course with the University of Michigan – fall 2020.
 - Reading, podcasts, travel, collaborating with others, and ongoing classes.
- Elevating diverse voices by sharing my platforms and making space for others. This includes advocating for diverse groups through my involvement in equestrian, agricultural, trail, and civic organizations.
- Volunteering for diverse organizations. An example is with Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture programs. I was a communications and marketing volunteer for Endrina Maxwell, an agribusiness owner in Malawi for two months in the summer of 2020.

Translating my Diversity Statement to CAHNR

Exclusiveness was a principle used in forming higher educations. Therefore, addressing the structure of our system is imperative in order for us to become a diverse and inclusive college. My ideas for translating my commitment to diversity to the CAHNR Office of Communications include:

- A page on our website for DEI initiatives with our commitment, goals, and progress. Examples include the [LSU AgCenter – Diversity, Inclusion and Opportunity Page](#) and [Salesforce Equality Page](#). UConn diversity experts would guide page development.
- An internal e-newsletter for faculty and staff with content from CAHNR's structural racism and diversity committees as well as the UConn Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
- DEI champions on the strategic communications committee. Some members could be representatives of the CAHNR structural racism and the diversity committee.
- Incorporate diversity into our strategy and content calendar. Consider diversity and inclusion in every communications decision that we make and schedule diversity reviews.
- Celebrate diversity in CAHNR through multimedia campaigns including the screens in the student lounge and other spaces. We want diverse audiences to see themselves in our space.