INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY
2021 CLIMATE SURVEY REPORT

This introduction summarizes results of the 2021 climate survey, which sought answers to three key questions (1) Do individuals experience the department as inclusive, equitable, and supportive? (2) How commonly do individuals observe or experience differential treatment regarding marginalized social identities? (3) What are the most pressing areas for growth? We collected 105 total responses, primarily from faculty members (39%) and postdocs/graduate students (49%). Most participants reported high satisfaction with the overall climate and with the department's commitment to EDI issues, but the majority of participants (60%) reported observing or personally experiencing at least one form of differential treatment (such as microaggressions, lack of inclusivity, etc.) that centered on marginalized identities or experiences ranging from gender, ethnicity, sexuality, parenting status, and mental health. Although some of these experiences were reported by only a small subset of participants, they could serve as "canaries in the coalmine," highlighting critical areas for growth in the Department's approach to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Toward this end, we make the following specific recommendations for targeted action. Clarification and justification for each recommendation can be found in the full report.

#1: The Chair and the Executive Committee of our department should play an active role in pressing for a consistent base of institutional support (this should include base funding for the Diversity committee, funding to support diversity related fellowships for graduate students, and funding to support recruitment and retention of marginalized faculty and students). These sources of support would allow our department to pursue long-term planning and reorganization toward EDI initiatives.

#2: The department should provide stronger incentives to students and faculty regarding universal access practices across the department, such as more consistent education and implementation of formal disability accommodations.

#3: The department should pursue a broader series of conversations and initiatives (perhaps facilitated by the PIE committee and colleagues across campus working in Gender Studies and Ethnic Studies) on the complexity of gender (and the *intersections* between gender and other social positions/identities, including ethnicity, religion, and family obligations) as a site of marginalization.

#4: The department should use its full weight and institutional power to advocate for systematic institutional changes regarding the use of chosen names and pronouns on University forms (such as teaching evaluations).

#5: The department should conduct self-audits of the department climate every other year, including the development of measurable aims, with tangible outcomes (e.g., funding, compiling resources, training sessions, attending university senate meetings), in order to track progress on existing challenges and to identify new challenges as they emerge. These audits should incorporate anonymous and confidential exit interviews of graduating students. These audits should not be the sole responsibility of the diversity committee, although the committee can continue to play a critical role.

#6: The department should establish and support a new faculty service position (i.e., *Director of Professional Development*) to provide consistent mentorship and professional guidance for graduate students around EDI issues and to provide centralized guidance for Ph.D. students seeking non-traditional career paths (including connections with relevant resources across campus, such as Ethnic Studies, Gender Studies, the Tanner Center for Human Rights, etc.). Such a position would formally recognize the informal mentorship that often goes uncredited in the department.

#7: The department should commit to developing sustained strategies to support and maintain equity in mentoring experiences (for example, by actively encouraging and rewarding -- at the RPT level -- mentorship to students other than one's own primary students, in order to ensure that all of our students have equal access to the guidance that they need. Having a single faculty tasked with serving as a hub for professional development issues (Recommendation #6) can support this broader goal.

#8: The department should develop a more comprehensive and responsive approach to mental health and its interrelationship with other forms of social marginalization. Mental health emerged consistently as an obstacle to successful thriving and retention, and the department should (a) work closely with the counseling center so that clinical students have access to equivalent mental health care as other PhD students; (b) take directed actions to destigmatize mental health concerns within the department, and (c) systematically address issues of ableism in the department, with respect to mental health.

#9: The department should do more to acknowledge and address financial burdens facing students, including taking directive action to avoid assigning professional and laboratory opportunities and responsibilities in ways that inadvertently disadvantage students with limited financial resources, and we urge the department to push upper administration to revise current reimbursement procedures related to conference travel and other professional obligations faced by students.

In summary, although members of our department largely view the department's *goals and intentions* regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion as positive and supportive, there remain practices, procedures, and structural factors that do not align with these goals and intensions, and which present obstacles to well-being for multiple members of our community. Our recommendations are not offered as *solutions* to these obstacles, but as a starting point for the department's ongoing commitment to fostering an environment in which all faculty, staff, and students can thrive.

This report was generated by members of the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 Psychology Department Diversity Committee. Key members of the committee who worked on this report include (alphabetically) Logan Call, Manny Gutierrez, Kiran Kaur, Nicolette Molina, Dr. Jasmine Norman, and Yun Tang.

Faculty members who served on the Diversity Committee from 2020-2022 include (alphabetically) Drs. Anu Asnaani, Sheila Crowell, Lisa Diamond, and Cory Inman.

2021 CLIMATE SURVEY REPORT
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

What is the purpose of the climate survey? The purpose of this survey was to assess perceptions of the department climate regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and to identify priority areas for growth. We assessed three main areas: (1) how the department climate supports or hinders EDI, (2) whether people have access to available and necessary resources (e.g., inclusion and safety) (3) how the department can improve EDI efforts and/or address concerns within the department.

How was the climate survey administered? We distributed the climate survey to all current faculty, staff, graduate students via departmental listservs. Respondents were given the opportunity to enter their name in a drawing for 1 of 10 $50 Amazon gift cards (approximately proportionally dispersed across faculty/staff and students).

Who responded to the survey? We collected 105 total responses, primarily from faculty members (39%) and postdocs/graduate students (49%). Representation of different areas was relatively proportional to the size of the area (approximate respondent breakdown of faculty/students was 35% Clinical, 12% CNS, 19% Developmental, 18% Social, 16% chose not to disclose area). People were permitted to skip any and all questions; 6 people skipped more than half of the questions in the survey. Approximately 58% identified with one or more groups who are marginalized, stigmatized, or underserved in higher education (e.g., people of color, first-gen student, LGBTQIA+, international student). Of this 58%, 11% identified with at least two groups. Thirty-two percent of the respondents did not identify with any of these groups, and 9% preferred not to disclose.

How were the data analyzed, and who can I contact about questions? Data were analyzed by the chair of the Climate Subcommittee (Jasmine Norman), with input from the Diversity Committee and Subcommittee members. For confidentiality reasons, raw data will not be made available to faculty/staff outside of the Climate Subcommittee. Follow-up questions or requests can be directed to the Diversity Committee. Limited anonymized, quantitative data may be made available for internal use only. All scales were from 1 to 5 unless otherwise noted.

This report summarizes the answers to three key questions:

1. Do individuals experience the department as inclusive, equitable, and supportive?
2. How commonly do individuals observe or experience differential treatment regarding marginalized social identities?
3. What are the most pressing areas for growth?

After summarizing the responses in each domain, we provide targeted recommendations. However, we intend for these recommendations to serve as **invitations for additional discussion and refinement.** They are not demands or directives. We are aware that there are many perspectives and many approaches to these issues, and we hope that this report can guide the department's decision-making going forward. **Next steps:** we recommend that the Diversity Committee prepare and vote on **three action items for departmental prioritization.**

QUESTION 1: DO INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCE THE DEPARTMENT AS INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE, AND SUPPORTIVE?

Figure 1 below summarizes responses to four measures: Satisfaction with the overall climate of respondents' area (top left) and the department as a whole (top right), whether they felt the department valued equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) issues (bottom right), and the extent to which they felt they belonged in the department (bottom left). Responses are stratified by participants' self-identification as a member of one or more marginalized groups (due to gender, ethnicity, first-generation status, gender or sexual identity, etc).

On average people agreed with the statements "I am satisfied with the overall climate" of the Psychology department as a whole (denoted with the magenta bars in the graph) and their specific area. This perspective ranged considerably from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree), $M_{area} = 4.13$, $SD_{area} = .99$; $M_{dept} = 4.12$; $SD_{dept} = .88$.

There was a trend (although not statistically significant) for individuals in one or more marginalized groups to report lower experiences of belonging and lower perceptions that the department values EDI issues. Yet there is notable variation in responses within both groups, underscoring the fact that members of our departmental community have a **wide range** of experiences of inclusion and marginalization. This is an important point to keep in mind when designing policies and procedures: In many cases, procedural "solutions" to inequities may prove more successful for some individuals than others, and we need to keep this complexity in mind.

Responses to four primary climate measures
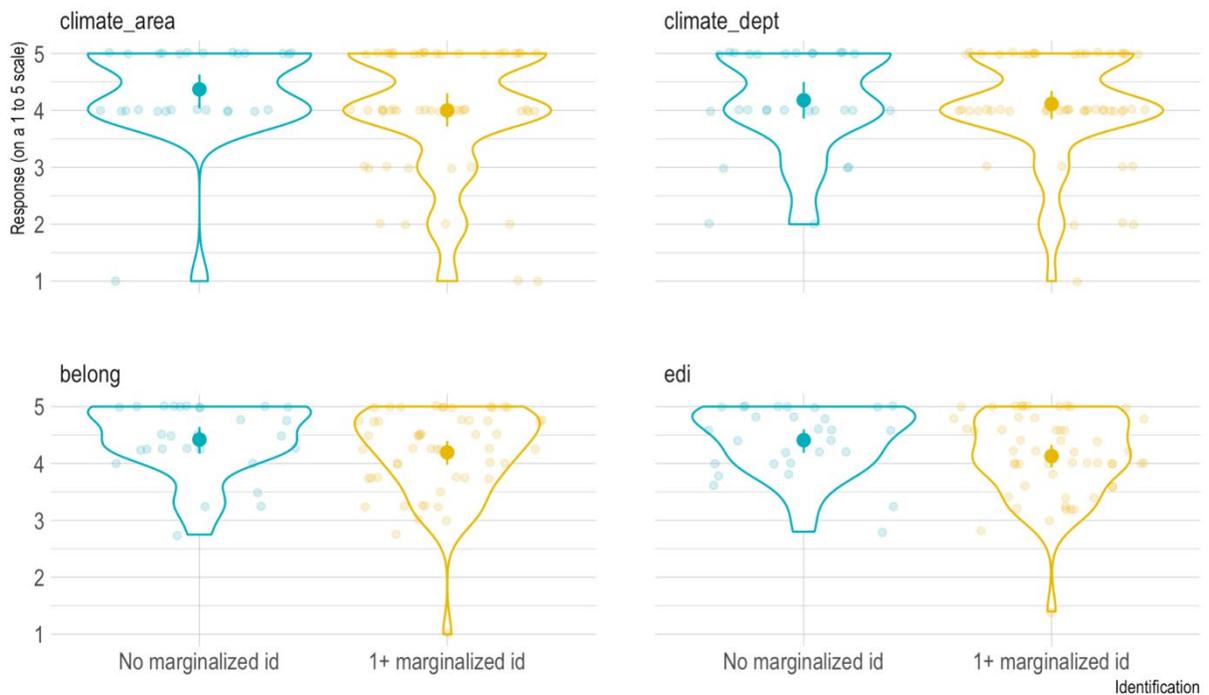
QUESTION 2: HOW COMMONLY DO INDIVIDUALS OBSERVE OR EXPERIENCE DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT REGARDING MARGINALIZED IDENTITIES?

The majority of participants (61%) reported observing or personally experiencing at least one form of differential treatment (such as microaggressions, lack of inclusivity, etc.). Figure 2, below, stratifies all reported instances according to the type of social marginalization involved.

Differential treatment regarding *gender* was observed/experienced most frequently, followed by *mental health*, *race/ethnicity*, *financial standing, age, and religion*. Importantly, instances of differential treatment commonly involved **more than one** marginalized identity, which is consistent with current research on workplace EDI efforts which has emphasized the importance of attending to **intersections** across different forms of social marginalization. In essence, the lived experience of a first-generation college student **differs** as a function of their race/ethnicity, their SES, their sexual/gender identity, etc.).

Figure 2a. Reports of differential treatment regarding different social identities.
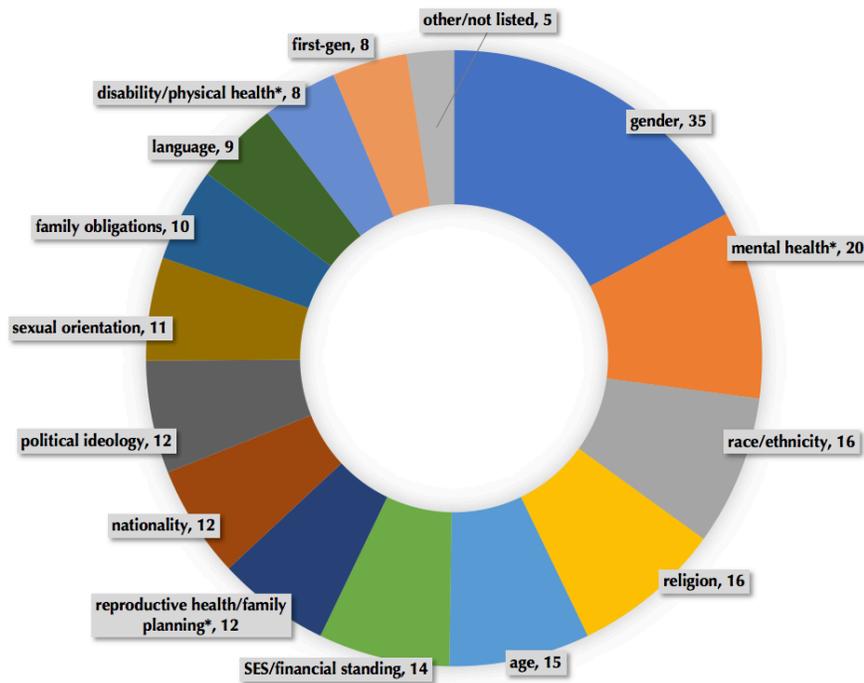
*Health as a combined category = 40 mentions

Instances of differential treatment include experiencing or witnessing differential treatment during interactions with faculty members or within academic gatherings such as research groups or conferences, the existence of structural barriers within different academic institutions or procedures, and differential treatment within instructional contexts. Some forms of differential treatment (for example, regarding mental health) were more commonly reported by students/postdocs than by faculty staff. We do not provide specific breakdowns in this report, but we are happy to conduct additional analyses and answer additional questions.

Some of the examples that participants provided were helpful in clarifying the complexity of the issues involved, especially in cases where there is a gap between **intent** and **impact**. For example, some respondents have noticed that individuals with marginalized identities are often implicitly treated as "spokespeople" for their identity group (i.e., being asked about their personal experiences or being inappropriately tasked with the responsibility of educating their own colleagues or students about inclusiveness). In such cases, the **intention** is often to provide marginalized individuals with an opportunity to give voice to their experience, but often the **impact** is to increase the overall social and interpersonal burden for marginalized students and faculty. This is a well-known problem that has a long-history in diversity-related initiatives regarding ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexual/gender identity (stretching back to the civil rights movement). Our department can benefit by **engaging actively with existing scholarship and expertise** on how to navigate the difficult space between empowering and overburdening marginalized students and faculty.

Another common example of differential treatment (especially around marginalized identities involving mental health, religion, and parenting status) involves the delegation of laboratory or classroom responsibilities. Notably, the specific nature of differential treatment was often complex: For example, some individuals reported invalidating experiences regarding the *presence* of parenting obligations, and others reported invalidating experiences regarding the *absence* of parenting obligations (specifically, negative judgements about women who have chosen to remain childless). The fact that *gender* emerged as the most common "identity site" for negative experiences, and that gender intersects powerfully with other forms of social identity (such as caregiving responsibilities), bears close attention. Of all the forms of social marginalization that we included in the survey, gender-based marginalization arguably takes the most diverse range of forms, owing to its intersection with practically every other form of social identification. Quite simply, the meaning of "parent" as a social identity, and a site for marginalization, varies dramatically as a function of gender, as does the meaning of "mental health," "age," and "political ideology." There is arguably no form of social marginalization that does *not* intersect with gender. As we discuss on the following page, this suggests that gender, broadly defined, is an important area for growth and reflection in the department.

Notably, we also asked participants about *positive* experiences regarding different social identities: 91% indicated they had observed, or personally experienced, such positive instances, particularly around ***sexual orientation, race/ethnicity***, ***mental health,*** and ***family obligations***. Yet as noted below, interactions that are experienced by some individuals as positive (such as open discussion of family responsibilities, and accommodations afforded to individuals with parenting responsibilities) may be experienced by other individuals as negative (i.e., *women* who have chosen to remain childless feeling judged for their decision, given that it violates conventional gender expectations for women). This highlights the fact that true inclusivity cannot be achieved by isolated policies or procedures (such as providing accommodations for students or faculty who have children). Rather, true inclusivity requires that **all members** of the department **take responsibility** for **creating a *culture*** (alongside relevant policies and procedures) that values the complexity of all of our intersecting social identities, and that makes it safe for *all* of our community members to bring their whole, authentic selves to work.

QUESTION 3: WHAT ARE THE MOST PRESSING AREAS FOR GROWTH?

Below we summarize participants' responses regarding key areas for growth, paired with specific recommendations. As noted earlier, we intend for these recommendations to serve as starting points for strategic change, and we invite an active and sustained departmental conversation on these points. We situate these recommendations in the context of respondents open-ended contributions. Many of these recommendations, however, are also closely tied to the quantitative data presented above.

Theme 1: Translating values into action with *coordinated institutional investment*

Participants noted that our department has the right values regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion, but needs more strategic investment in "consistently translating [our] values into concrete behaviors that are distributed equally across the department." Respondents noted that this requires significant and **coordinated investment** in EDI goals across the department, the college, and upper administration. As one respondent noted "we need a stronger and more flexible commitment from upper administration to support (resources and financial) the individualized needs of diverse graduate students". Echoing this theme, another person mentioned, "For real and sustained progress, we need RESOURCES from College and central administrators. Specifically, stable access to funds and a multi-year commitment of those resources." Importantly, the need to secure *consistent administrative resources* for EDI initiatives is something that has received increasing attention across the entire University.

> RECOMMENDATION #1: The results of our survey suggest that the Chair and the Executive Committee of our department should play an active role in pressing for a **consistent base of institutional support** (this should include base funding for the Diversity committee, funding to support diversity related fellowships for graduate students, and funding to support recruitment and retention of marginalized faculty and students). These sources of support would allow our department to pursue long-term planning and reorganization toward EDI initiatives.

> RECOMMENDATION #2: We need to provide **stronger incentives** to students and faculty regarding **universal access** practices across the department, such as more consistent education and implementation of formal disability accommodations. Students seeking reasonable accommodations often face implicit marginalization (i.e., being viewed as insufficiently ambitious, or unwilling to "work hard"). Faculty should include information about disability accommodations not only in the syllabi for undergraduate courses, but should also take care to provide this information to all of the undergraduate and graduate students working in their lab. All department members should take advantage of the new accessibility features (such as captioning) that are available in Canvas, Zoom, and PowerPoint (we are collecting a list of these resources, along with other EDI-related resources, to be distributed broadly to all faculty, students, and staff). The Diversity TA has already taken on responsibility for updating and diversifying curricula, but these changes will require longer-term and larger-scale efforts. For example, the department could request small summer teaching grants and CSBS or university-level stipends for revamping courses to make them more accessible and inclusive, with the aim of increasing enrollment and student

success overall. The only way to ensure that all members of the department sustain these efforts is to provide meaningful incentives for doing so.

Theme 2: Critical self-evaluation

Respondents mentioned the need for honest, critical, and ongoing self-evaluation of the department's implicit and explicit practices regarding EDI issues. The fact that the department has the "right" values and intentions should allow us to take even bolder and braver steps to enable authentic action in areas for ongoing growth. Over the years, the very meaning of concepts such as "diversity" and "inclusion" have undergone notable shifts, and the department needs to be willing to challenge our own misconceptions and address some of our own blind spots. Two areas emerged for growth and self-evaluation in the department, and we therefore offer the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION #3: We recommend that the department pursue a broader series of conversations and initiatives (perhaps facilitated by the PIE committee and colleagues across campus working in Gender Studies and Ethnic Studies) on the complexity of gender as a site of intersectional marginalization. Gender is one of the "oldest" sites of social marginalization, and the complexity of participants' experiences regarding gender and parenting suggests that we need to remain mindful of the **intersections** between gender and other forms of social marginalization when pursuing EDI initiatives.

Our department must also wrestle more directly with the broad range of marginalization introduced by *gender diversity* (i.e, gender identities/expressions that do not align with birth-assigned sex/gender, including nonbinary and transgender identities). We think that a broader conversation about the *meaning* of gender is important for both historical forms of gender marginalization (women experiencing differential treatment based on their family circumstances) and newer forms of marginalization (marginalization of gender-diverse individuals through lack of consistent and respectful use of pronouns and institutional obstacles to having their names and pronouns included in professional communication). Along these lines, we recommend that the department support the ***voluntary* inclusion** of **pronouns** on lab webpages, email signatures, and Zoom display names (especially during teaching). Displaying pronouns provides a powerful and unambiguous signal to *all* individuals who interact with members of our department that our community understands and respects gender diversity, and that we strive to create a fully inclusive environment for all individuals to bring their authentic selves to work (notably, we do not advise <u>requiring</u> anyone to list or state pronouns in public spaces, because such requirements are antithetical to the goals of self-determination and safety).

RECOMMENDATION #4: We also recommend that the department use its full weight and institutional power to advocate more forcefully for systematic institutional changes regarding the use of chosen names and pronouns on University forms (such as teaching evaluations). Up until now, faculty members and students have had to troubleshoot these issues one by one, going to different university offices and IT support centers to fix gaps in the institutional architecture around gender. For example, some University resources continue to default to legal names, whereas other University resources have been updated so that they default to

chosen names. We need **broader institutional** and **campus-wide support** to correct these problems and to provide more consistent and accessible "workarounds" in the meantime. For example, instructors should make all students aware of how students can change their name in Canvas (e.g., https://diversity.utah.edu/initiatives/initiatives/chosen-names-and-personal-pronouns/; https://lgbt.utah.edu/resources/transresourceindex.php). These recommendations are designed to create a sense of **shared responsibility across the entire department** for creating a truly inclusive space. The "work" of creating an inclusive department cannot be accomplished through individual actors working alone: It must be a shared priority.

RECOMMENDATION #5: We recommend **self-audits** of the department climate every other year. That is, the department and Diversity Committee should continue to collect data on climate issues and develop key areas of prioritization. In the interest of ensuring efforts of respondents are not wasted, we highly recommend that the Diversity Committee use these data to guide their actions for the following year. This should include the development of **measurable** aims, with **tangible** outcomes (e.g., funding, compiling resources, training sessions, attending university senate meetings).

Theme 3: Pairing recruitment and retention

Participants consistently suggested greater attention to supporting the retention and thriving of marginalized students and faculty in our program. Over the years, the department has invested considerable resources in *attracting* diverse faculty and students in our program, but we need similar investment in developing "teaching, learning, and mentoring strategies that promote success among marginalized and underserved individuals." As another example, one person noted "recruitment and the retention of marginalized or underserved students, faculty, and staff, should strive to reach representation equivalent to national population averages, regardless of local demographics." It bears noting that similar issues have been articulated by departments across the University (i.e., the need to devote as much attention to *retention* as to *recruitment*). Thus, the Psychology Department may find it helpful to combine efforts with other departments.

RECOMMENDATION #6: Following the recommendation of one participant, we recommend the creation of a new service position (parallel to the current *Director of Graduate Studies* position) to provide consistent mentorship and professional guidance for graduate students around EDI issues, including issues around navigating academic collaborations and filling gaps in our graduate training program (which are likely to become a more pressing problem if we are truly successful in recruiting a more diverse pool of graduate students with more diverse educational and social histories). Having a single faculty member tasked with this role (i.e., "**Director of Professional Development**") will ensure consistent departmental commitment to our shared vision around EDI issues at all levels of professional development, and is also consistent with the department's new initiatives around providing more consistent training for Ph.D. students seeking non-traditional career paths. This position could also provide more guidance for *undergraduate* Psychology students wrestling with professional development issues around EDI issues. For instance, this faculty member could assemble and distribute professional development resources that help bridge the gaps in knowledge of first-generation students (a highly intersectional class of EDI that is prevalent in our department) for attaining a Ph.D. program, Postdoctoral, or Faculty

appointment. This faculty member could also help the department stay aware of ongoing changes in the diverse career paths that our students take upon graduation and help shape initiatives to ensure we are helping students understand these wide-ranging paths. Having a single faculty member overseeing these efforts (and given protected time, through a course release, to follow through on initiatives) is the best way to ensure that the department's commitment to these initiatives is sustained, accountable, and effective.

RECOMMENDATION #7: We need to develop new strategies to support and sustain **equity in mentoring experiences**, such as providing clear-cut expectations and guidelines regarding the availability of mentorship and guidance from faculty members other than one's primary advisor. Although the "single advisor" model is a strength of our program, it can introduce inadvertent (and sometimes "hidden") inequities into student experiences (for example, timeliness of feedback, opportunities for professional development, etc.). In our research, we found that many Ph.D. programs have addressed these issues by assigning students a secondary mentor or providing structured and formalized opportunities for students to gain feedback and guidance from other members of their Master's and Dissertation committees. For example, one suggestion was to create a dedicated no-advisor meeting with committee members to chat about the project. This practice has been implemented in other programs as a solution to potential advisor abuse, but it further serves to provide students with training to become individual researchers and discus their research without their advisor present. Many students are reluctant to overburden their other committee members by asking for additional feedback and mentorship (because they know that those committee members have their own primary students). We need to **actively encourage and reward (at the RPT level) secondary mentorship activities** (i.e., mentorship offered to students other than one's own primary students), in order to make sure that all of our students have equal access to the guidance that they need.

Having a single faculty tasked with overseeing professional development issues (Recommendation #6) could also support this broader goal, potentially by working closely with PIE to conduct anonymous and confidential exit interviews to more effectively and consistently identify future areas for growth (although the PIE committee serves as an anonymous way to discuss student concerns around mentorship, PIE meetings within small areas do not provide very reliable anonymity. Having an additional procedure for addressing concerns anonymously will help to provide more consistent improvement on these issues).

RECOMMENDATION #8: Our department needs to address some of the gaps in institutional supports for students and faculty with mental health concerns. **Mental health** emerged consistently as an obstacle to successful thriving and retention. The pandemic has made the entire University community more aware of mental health concerns, and has provided an opportunity for our department to make lasting, responsive changes to the way that we support personal and professional well-being. Toward this end, we recommend that our department (a) work closely with the counseling center so that clinical students have access to equivalent mental health care as other PhD students; (b) take directed actions to destigmatize mental health concerns within the department (for example, actively publicizing sources for support, similar to the way in which Safe Zone stickers have successfully publicized access to support for LGBTQ+ individuals); (c) systematically address issues of

ableism in the department, with respect to mental health. This can include—but should not be limited to—individual wellness workshops. We need a more comprehensive and responsive approach to mental health and its interrelationship with other forms of social marginalization.

RECOMMENDATION #9: The department should do more to acknowledge and address financial burdens facing students. Although the department has made laudable efforts to increase graduate student stipends, the plain truth is that our graduate students are economically burdened, and this can create obstacles for professional success (for example, conference travel). To **reduce inequities related to financial burdens**, the department needs to take more directive action to avoid assigning professional and laboratory opportunities and responsibilities in ways that inadvertently disadvantage students with limited financial resources (for example, those who cannot afford to travel or who do not have the flexibility to take additional off-hour duties). The department needs to establish clear policies and procedures to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to thrive, independent of their access to additional financial resources outside of their stipend (such as the income of a cohabiting partner). For example, making sure that official duties can be met equally well by students relying on public transit can help to address day-to-day sources of economic inequity. The chair and senior faculty of the department should also push upper administration to **revise current reimbursement procedures** related to conference travel and other professional obligations faced by students. In particular, students should not have to carry the financial burden of professional activities on their personal financial accounts (debit or credit cards). The accounting system should be revised to have University, Faculty, or Department resources available to purchase flights and pay conference fees up front.

Toward the achievement of our shared goals, our subcommittee has compiled a list of relevant resources, and we encourage the department to consult and use these resources as we work toward implementing our vision of a truly equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplace.

- Making inclusive syllabi: https://ctle.utah.edu/inclusiveteaching/syllabus.php
- Universal access in instruction: https://www.washington.edu/doit/equal-access-universal-design-instruction
- On enhancing racial diversity in academia (many useful references included): https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/universities-say-they-want-more-diverse-faculties-so-why-is-academia-still-so-white/
- https://attheu.utah.edu/facultystaff/destigmatizing-mental-illness/
- https://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/CGS_JED_Grad%20Student%20Mental%20Health%20Report.pdf
- https://www.mypronouns.org/
- Guide on gender-inclusive teaching: https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-beyond-the-gender-binary-in-the-university-classroom/
- Grammar and writing: APA now endorses the use of "they" as a singular pronoun. "Someone left their phone on the beach!"