

Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources

EQUITY ASSESSMENT



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Local Context

Shoreline’s Partnership with Rubenstein School of Environmental and Natural Resources

Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Sciences (RSENR) contracted with Shoreline Consulting to conduct a comprehensive assessment, analysis, and set of recommendations to strongly position RSENR to implement an equity plan. Our experience in this field teaches us that organizations make progress in the areas of equity, diversity, and belonging through concerted improvement in key areas including leadership and governance, faculty and staff capacity and competency, offerings, and student services, and sustained partnerships. In each area Shoreline identifies qualitative and quantitative data from our research, proposes sample measures of formative and summative progress, identifies steps to consider that can leverage existing strengths at RSENR, and suggests iterative processes over time that allow for the systematic dismantling of oppression and the advancement of educational growth and equity.

Our research approach and the nature of our engagement has been purposefully deeply embedded in Rubenstein in the 2017-2018 academic year. We have had personal experiences of both culturally sustaining¹ and silencing practices within RSENR and the local community. We have identified cross-cutting themes and fundamental elements of the socio-cultural context and have identified many strengths. We emerge from this engagement with staff, students, and community with a report that is specific and that provides a roadmap to move forward. The roadmap of our report includes an element by element analysis of RSENR including leadership and governance, faculty and staff capacity and competency, pedagogy and student services, and sustained partnerships. And we are thankful for the opportunity to work together (See [Appendix A](#) for complete thanks and acknowledgements).

What does it mean to leverage strengths? Leverage is the simple mechanical property extended into the social realm to refer to points or places within a system where a small amount of effort achieves a differentially larger result. Thinking about leverage is not the only consideration in developing a plan: some things may need movement even if they take out-sized efforts. However, it does provide a good tool to sort out different proposed programs or plans.

What about strengths? This has two meanings for Shoreline. First, the entire topic of equity, access, diversity and belonging is often framed by highlighting lower expectations for certain groups of people based on demographics or characteristics that they share. This deficit approach fosters an “at-risk” narrative, in which people in poverty, people of color, and/or historically underserved groups and their families are pathologized and marginalized. In contrast, a strength-based paradigm means recognizing and amplifying the strengths each person brings to the community and

¹ *Culturally sustaining pedagogy* is a theoretical stance proposed by Django Paris (2012) that “seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (Paris, 2012, p. 93). We expand on this theory to reach beyond pedagogy into practices that foster multiple ways of being and knowing.



not defining student by systemic barriers with the students and communities. Not only is it a more equitable approach, but it acts as a stronger conduit toward making sustainable change.

The second is that in all of our research at Rubenstein, we saw strengths and complexities among the strengths. There are many places where we saw concerns and situations that need immediate attention, but what parallels the concerns were steadfast discrete strengths. The clearest example of concerns indicating a strength is the level of honesty and risk participants took to participate and tell their story. The stories themselves point the way for change; the fact that the stories have been shared demonstrate that an existing relationship is a strength and that leadership has the capacity to create welcoming conditions.

Rubenstein Context, Complexity, and Pitfalls

Shoreline's framework for analysis is broad enough to apply to a wide variety of institutions. However, in every engagement, unique perspectives, contexts, and conditions emerge that stand-out. In this section, we identify, characterize, and describe three such elements for Rubenstein.

Not Grabbing the Third Rail too Early: Tenure

The topic of the unfairness of the tenure process vis a vis the goal of a more diversified staff and faculty is a theme from a number of interviews, focus groups and in discussions of this draft document in May by students as well as faculty/staff. The Dean's recommendations include a review of promotion and tenure metrics to include new criteria that acknowledge staff engagement in diversity, equity, and belonging efforts. The Shoreline plan includes a reference to this in our recommended strategic plan.

This theme is pulled to the top because of its potential as a distractor from higher leverage efforts. Our assessment is that this topic is a "third rail"² that could be tremendously powerful if handled correctly; we believe in all the power inherent in the "third rail." Also, we believe there are likely unintended consequences of beginning leadership and faculty conversations about high stakes metrics so early in Rubenstein's journey. We recognized it as a strength that leadership wants to proceed here and we own that this area is one in which we have limited content expertise regarding the history and readiness for this change at Rubenstein and UVM. Certainly the dynamics of the promotion and tenure process review would not occur in isolation and would therefore provide an opportunity for supporting other elements of the plan.

² A "third rail" is a colloquial term used to indicate a topic that is controversial to discuss. It is a metaphor of the rail on a train track that hold a live electric current.



“My best hopes are that this becomes a transparent conversation and it examines the whole system. Academic hierarchy, competing issues of prioritizing research over engaging with students. And that we actually diversify our faculty, the whole system.”

—Focus group participant

Learning from and Caring for Trailblazers: Women in Science

Equity, diversity, belonging, and access efforts with respect to supporting women at RSENR is a key strength and the identity where the school community has demonstrated successes. We identify this work as the crucial “on-ramp” for future efforts to support all of the other identities on campus. This places the women at RSENR in a unique position that needs to be nurtured and understood in the context of the plan and work moving forward. Women can partner with others because they have forged new pathways and developed capacities that they can share. We see this strength as a portal to future growth. However, although women may be the best served non-dominant identity, they still experience oppression and an equity gap (in terms of how they are treated, how they are paid, how they are promoted and more) with respect to their male counterparts.

Our assessment is that the highest leverage activities for RSENR to focus on are those that concern the identities of race/ethnicity. This does not mean gender-blindness; rather it means to consider gender and gender equity in the context of other identities, specifically race/ethnicity. The unintended consequence is that if resources are a constant, new efforts to improve the conditions with respect to other identities could displace or oppose existing successful efforts to promote women in science. For example, if \$10,000 was historically allotted to support female faculty members and a new intervention tapped the same to support staff of color, the support for women would decrease.

Not Abdicating Accountability: Role of Students

Students are both the focus of Rubenstein’s short term and long term outcomes and agents in the ecosystem they inhabit. Our experience forming relationships with Rubenstein students has been powerful and their contributions have advanced our understandings. To some degree, our engagement and specifically the site visits have catalyzed student activism. We also observe that the leadership at Rubenstein has gained a level of trust with students advocating for dignity and that there are clear conditions for co-construction moving forward. For example, the learning objectives for students with respect to Working Across Differences (WXD) (see [Appendix B](#)) requires faculty professional learning that can be co-constructed.

However, the learning goals for faculty and students are different and although the groups can construct solutions together, faculty and the school are *responsible* and *accountable* for creating a welcoming environment and meeting school goals with respect to equity, diversity, and belonging. A key theme for the reader and implementer of this plan moving forward is to keep an eye on these distinctions and make them transparent. The following table shows two examples of distinct learning outcomes and differing accountability.



Table 1. Learning Outcomes and Different Accountability

	STUDENTS	FACULTY
Racial Identity Development	Deep and reflective understanding of their own racial identity. Accountable for their work.	Generalized understanding of racial identity development writ large. Accountable for every student understanding and engaging.
Engaging in Critical Conversations About Race and Culture	Accountable for their own behavior and participation.	Accountable for a safe classroom space; facilitation.

RSENR student interviews, focus groups, classroom visits, informal conversations, faculty/staff meetings, and survey responses at RSENR also revealed explicit and implicit bias and racism among students. It is crucial to remember that the student body is socially constructed and individuals are not necessarily versed in counter hegemonic narratives. The promise of harnessing the interest and energy of students should be balanced by the unintended consequence of further worsening disparities by re-creating systems of oppression endemic in mainstream culture. For example, expecting students to have the knowledge of how to operationalize equity in a college setting and navigate teaching their peers and faculty (in uneven power dynamics) has the potential result in them being targets of both intentional and non-intentional racism.



Methodology and Analytic Frames

Data Collection

Focus Groups and Interviews

Shoreline conducted multiple focus groups with a total of 62 participants on campus composed of homo and heterogeneous groups. An additional 15 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. All of the data are transcribed, thematically analyzed, and described in the findings section of each of the elements below. The general set of questions is the same for focus groups and interviews (see [Appendix C](#)); however, especially with the interviews, the flow of the conversation sometimes extended beyond the question prompts and sometimes the 60 allotted minutes did not allow for all the questions to be addressed.

Figures 1-4 depict the demographic distributions of the focus group participants, based on their self-reporting.

Figure 1. Age Group

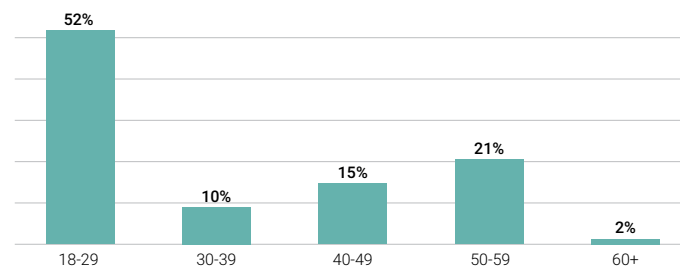


Figure 2. Role

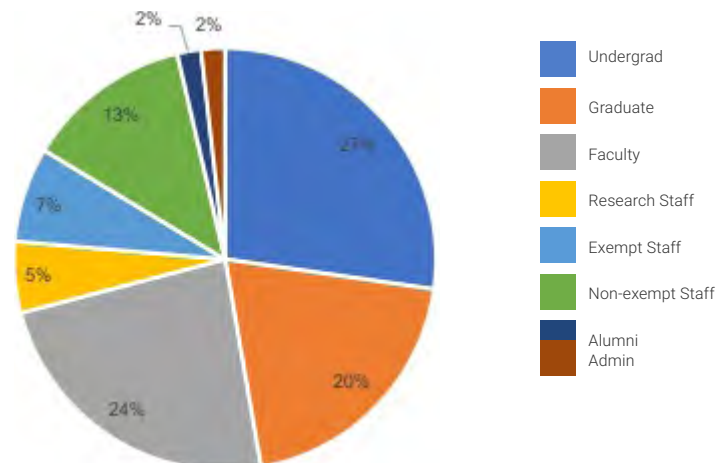




Figure 3. Gender

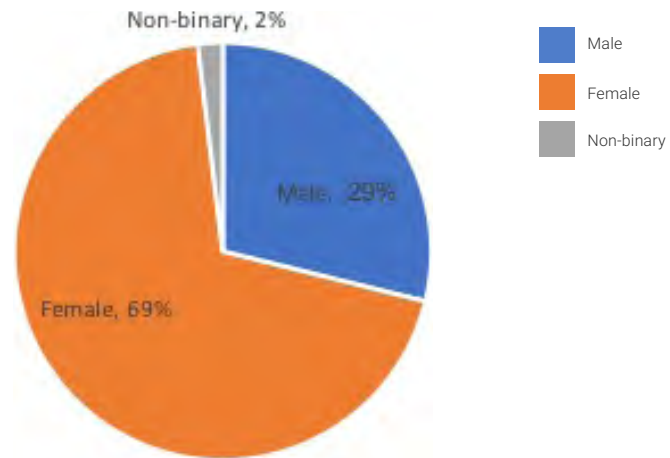
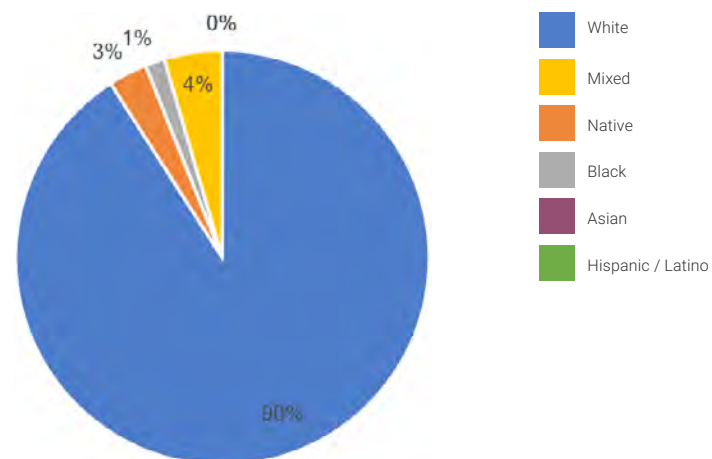


Figure 4. Race/Ethnicity



Climate Survey

Shoreline develops customized survey tools that are meant to inform and to help formatively improve the implementation of an institution's equity, diversity, access, and belonging plan. This is distinguished from a tool that is meant to compare institutions between contexts who may or may not be implementing any similar plans. As such, our goal is always to identify questions that are understandable and valid in a particular context and encourage organizations to adopt, adapt, and sustain this survey/feedback practice.



Our typical cycle to accomplish this is to draft questions, engage with stakeholders, modify and then re-engage to converge on the best questions. At RSENR, this process was significantly accelerated and deeply shaped by the direct involvement of students who originally met with Dr. Shadiin Garcia (Principal of Shoreline Consultants) on one of her first visits. As their project for the senior capstone course NR206: Environmental Problem Solving and Impact Assessment, the students were able to directly engage with students and staff, many of whom had no access given our original validity plan. Being part of the target audience themselves, they breathed life into the work and through their social networks; they have already raised expectations and interest about the survey and possible next steps. Collaborating with these students and a number of faculty on this project has been a joy for Shoreline, it has produced compelling data from a large sample, and it suggests the potential power for collaborative work in this area to continue.

The final survey included 20 highly-validated questions where respondents indicated their level of agreement with a statement. As a set of questions, it measures the set of constructs originally posited by Shoreline to measure the climate at Rubenstein. In addition, three critical short answer questions were included to elicit perceived strengths and areas of improvement at RSENR and a final question asked what respondents learned from the survey.

The final survey also included open-ended demographic and short answer questions. Our decision to use open-ended demographic questions produced data that was harder to classify in the interests of allowing respondents to name their identity. The finalized survey was distributed through email, classes and meetings. A total of 438 respondents filled out the survey in Spring 2018.

The quantitative results of the survey are reported in the Leadership Element section of the report and the short answer responses are included throughout the report to describe themes and provide direct quotes.

Frame: Equity Lens

Shoreline has developed an equity lens to provide common vision, understanding, and language for engaging with organizational equity goals. Because this work is not a one-size-fits-all effort, this lens has been modified from Shoreline's foundational framework to align with Rubenstein's unique mission, strengths, aspirations and positionality.

The equity lens is comprised of guiding analytical questions that can be applied to various dimensions of RSENR's work. These questions are designed to support RSENR in the clear articulation of its goals, intentional policies, investments and systemic changes needed to reach its goals of an equitable system, and to create clear accountability structures to ensure active progress and opportunities to correct where there is no consistent evidence of progress. The equity lens confirms the importance of recognizing institutional and systemic barriers and discriminatory



practices that may have limited access and success for potential Rubenstein supporters and stakeholders. We recommend the use of the lens in future work at RSENR and have presented point by point examples of its utility of the guiding questions in a few of the elements.

1. Who are the groups affected and what is the intended impact of the program or resource to advance opportunities for historically underserved students and communities? How do you harvest and disaggregate data on race, ethnicity, and native language?
2. What can be done/has been done to ensure that the decision being made does not ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences or risks (e.g. strength vs deficit framing, authentic co-construction with affected groups, culturally sustaining approach)
3. Does the program or resource help eliminate opportunity gaps and systemic barriers (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)?
4. Does the program or resource identify and build on community strengths?
5. How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by the strategic investment or resource allocation?
6. What is the plan for continued and meaningful community engagement to formatively evaluate progress and make course corrections based on data and changing contexts?
7. What is your commitment to professional learning for equity, diversity, and inclusion? (e.g. What resources are you allocating for training in culturally sustaining instruction/guest services?)

Progress Measures

Organizations benefit by having progress measures that are logically connected to long term outcomes and that are sensitive to interventions. For example, a long term goal to increase diploma attainment rates for African American students needs progress measures to see if the system is changing appropriately to create the conditions for that to happen in a sustained fashion. In each of the areas of analysis, we are including some suggested progress measures based on this year's climate survey and extensively on the work of Dr. Ann Curry-Stevens Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations (Curry-Stevens, et al, 2014)).

The discipline to keep track of progress and regularly attempt to make meaning of the data that informs decision-making is critically important. Our suggestions for progress measures are intended as a draft starting point for Rubenstein to understand the concept. Future work will be to develop theory of change or logic model.



In addition, constructing measures that are graduated enough to show formative progress over relatively short time frames can affirm the hard foundational and relational work that is being done. In this regard, we suggest Dr. Curry-Stevens' rating scale:

- 0 – Not yet thinking about this
- 1 – Thinking about this
- 2 – We are assessing this feature in our work
- 3 – We have an initial improvement effort underway
- 4 – Benefits are in evidence from implementing this approach/element
- 5 – This is entrenched across the organization

However, for RSENR, we suggest “rooted” instead of “entrenched.”



Analysis

The following four subsections address the organization elements of leadership and governance; faculty and staff; offerings and services; and mutually thriving partnerships. Shoreline’s analysis for each element consists of our findings, a set of proposed progress measures, and steps to consider that leverage existing strengths at Rubenstein and among its partners. We have not replicated findings in the text, even though some of the collected data are germane to more than one element. The most prominent example of this is the climate survey. In this report, all of those data are contained in the leadership and governance section. However, the learnings from that survey inform the faculty and staff section as well.

“I think there are a few system shifting people within RSENR... But I think that the things that exist in pockets and probably have for a long time are people who are committed to actually making RSENR a more truly welcoming, inclusive, diverse place. And that, for me those seem like some of those folks as individuals and collectively maybe helpful in being sustaining ...I feel like – some of those folks through their conversations with other staff and faculty and relationships with them asking good questions, that sort of have the potential to shift other people’s thinking and the larger culture.”

–Faculty member

Element 1: Leadership and Governance

Culturally sustaining communities lead with a commitment to diversity, equity, access, and belonging that is woven into structures and systems of governance, policy, and administration. Rooting organizational processes and practices systemically and structurally supports comprehensive aims for equity at all levels of the organizational system. Focus groups, interviews, and the climate survey contribute to two key findings with respect to leadership and governance:

1. A belief among stakeholders that Rubenstein Leadership acts with good intentions paired with an appetite for leadership to succeed in improving diversity, equity and belonging and a belief that they can do it, despite many uphill struggles to come.
2. A shared history which includes prior failures that needs acknowledgement and processing. Specifically leadership needs to define why the effort is happening now and what will be learned from past efforts to improve changes of future success.

Intentions and appetite

These “good intentions” have been credited with awakening hope institutionally. At the same time, there were compelling and important equity-minded values that were found to be present but inconsistently operationalized. There were also resounding themes of both gratitude for this assessment and fear that there would be no follow through.

“I feel that I’ve been blessed with a dean, with deans, that have in different ways, at different levels, have at least supported, rhetorically. ... Supported, at least had good intentions around this.” –Faculty member

“We have been wanting an assessment or audit like this for a long time but I think now we have leadership in both the dean’s office and in some faculty that can help make the result of it stick. I think faculty who push the dean’s office help create the appetite for work like this.” –Focus group participant



Dean Matthews really wants authentic change to happen. She may not know how to do it exactly but her heart is exactly where it needs to be. –Interview faculty member

The shared history of areas to address are many. Examples that reached data saturation or strongest themes include but are not limited to:

- Work that is incomplete and/or needs to be further iterated
“Having the rubric about difference is great; having an assessment is great; having it in our mission is great, but it is not enough.” –Faculty Member
“It needs to be mentioned that change happened in the past and now because of currently hurting students and staff. This is a result of pain. Real pain.” –Faculty Member
“The cluster hire was important but it needed to have reached it’s full potential.” –Faculty Member
- **Active patterns of oppression present alongside lack of barriers removed and/or active deconstruction of ISMs: sexism, racism, classism, and heteronormativity**
“It is one thing to be happy that we have the gender neutral bathrooms but another altogether to have to use them to cry because your classmates are targeting you after an NR6 class and your professors, while kind, didn’t and can’t help.” –Student focus group participant
- **Lack of representation writ large (faculty, staff, administrators, and practicing environmentalists)**
“The three most powerful people in this school are all white, have dominant identity that way. I think that the ability to get close to this, the things that we’re talking about requires some kind of consciousness that someone who comes from mainstream dominant identity, it’s simply harder to grasp because the lived experience isn’t there. I think of all the PhD’s and post-docs who are coming out right now, of color, in the country and around the world that would be amazing people to bring in, even to a school of environment and natural resources. I just don’t see the representation of the faculty, even sort of the cluster hire/global equity hire was majority white in identity. So those are some larger patterns.” –Focus group participant
“There are committees and boards and teams to assess the success of in quotes “the D1 courses.” But they don’t actually assess anything. To be a D1 course, you have to have your syllabus approved. But then once that, and a faculty has to apply for that. But then there’s no assessment. There’s not follow up. There’s nothing. When students are like, “these classes are really bad. This is a negative experience.” You either have to go through 100 different channels or walk up 100 ladders. By then nothing happens or you’ve graduated. Or there’s nowhere for you to actually say anything. And even if you can, no one does anything.” –Focus group participant



- **Cost (including overall tuition, fieldwork expenses for graduate students and researchers, added costs of field courses, the “Carhartt privilege” and access to gear)**

“Leadership has control over costs, but without any experience knowing what it is to grow up without Carhartt or Columbia gloves would never occur to them.” –Focus group participant

“The cost of this education is so much. If I am going to pay this, have my family barely make ends meet, then I better at least learn more beyond the white environmentalists saving birds.” –Student interview

“It is great that we at least someone had used gloves and gear for some our field experiences but I am the person who has wear the used pairs...standing next to the kid whose father probably has stock in REI.” –Focus group participant

We have also heard simultaneous appreciation for attempts to mitigate this reinforcing the aforementioned appetite and intention:

“We have a session with our UTA’s about “what does it mean to” – what does a welcoming environment look like. She specifically addresses clothing and gear and what does it mean to fit in here? And how can we – what can we do? I don’t know the answer to that but the students, some of them, are thinking about that. Having all this gear available that people can use – though I’m not sure if that gets at it or reinforces the lack.” –Faculty focus group

- **Lack of accountability, evaluation, and reporting processes**

Both faculty, staff and students raised concerns that there is no clear process for what to do when oppression occurs. This spans HR processes, course evaluation processes, and specific discrimination.

Most responses have indicated that processes are impacted by degree of relationship with leadership. Some students feel they have direct access to Dean Matthews and Dean Strong (all students of color interviewed and in focus groups have felt direct access to Dean Vea-Fagant³) but other indicated they don’t know where to go.

*“I feel completely comfortable walking into the Dean’s Office to talk to Allan or Dean Matthews but my friends have said that they don’t all feel that way.”
–Student focus group*

“I would never go to the Dean’s office. Besides, they already know the problems with NR6, we will see if they do something or not.” –Student focus group

³ There an overwhelming, beyond saturation, theme of Dean Vea-Fagnant providing support, advice, and comfort not tied to favoritism or access, but rather that everyone has access to Dean Vea-Fagnant.



"As a faculty member, I have seen the leadership pressure us on publications and research dollars so I would never go to them to discuss [what you called] oppression or -isms." –Faculty member

Among staff and faculty there has been concern on hiring processes that have not followed consistent structures and or are not transparent.

It is customary here to conduct a search and to bring the candidates in for interviews where the entire RSENR community is invited to meet the final candidates and provide feedback. This approach has promoted inclusivity and perhaps has allowed the school to hire the best possible candidate. There have been up to three job openings that were never posted and therefore no internal employee had the opportunity to apply for the position. UVM HR rather strongly does not allow these types of hires but will grant exceptions if the unit can justify it. Three in a row to be really stretching things.

"If the dean's office is going to break rules, then I think they should at least tell us why so we understand." –Faculty interview

*"I was on a committee where there were no interview questions, but that relate to the actual, authentic meaningful diversity, equity inclusion intentions. But it was more of the obligatory "we must ask a question about this." It didn't really seem like it was in alignment. It didn't speak to the position. It didn't speak to how you would implement something. It was kind of a broader cookie cutter question."
–Staff interview*

"When racist stuff occurs, there is no clear process. I watched a student who was advocating and others try to get help but they had nowhere to go so they did their thing."

Accountability measures and processes are missing for the faculty when they do raise concerns.

"After I reached out to the professor and nothing happened, I had nowhere to go. I wanted to drop out." –Student

"In Rubenstein cultural appropriation is rampant. With professors, with students. ... I feel like certain professors have Tibetan prayer flags hanging in their offices. And then I feel like sometimes professors justify that by "oh I went on sabbatical in Tibet once" or "oh I went to Malaysia for a conference and I got these there." It doesn't make it better. I was a class last year...And it was a mess. The students were saying all this s---. Then the professor was tokenizing but came, trying so hard to come across appreciative and welcoming but it was the exact opposite...I had nowhere to go to stop this even when I told the professor. I was told nothing could be done."



2018 RSENR Climate Survey

The findings from the 2018 RSENR Climate Survey are dispositive to all parts of this analysis. Because one of our key recommendations is that leadership institutionalize and resource the survey process moving forward, the results are presented in this section. All of these data are collected and analyzed by Shoreline's partners from NR 206; excerpts of their final report are included in [Appendix D](#), which includes a detailed statistical analysis.

The climate survey questions probe constructs that Shoreline asserts are the key components of a climate that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive. The survey also asks demographic questions to allow for the comparison of these constructs among different groups at Rubenstein. For the five demographic groupings (race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and income), respondents were divided into two groups:

- **Race:** white and people of color
- **Gender:** male and female
- **Religion:** religions and non-religions
- **Sexual Orientation:** heteronormative and LGBTQ
- **Income:** Less and greater than \$75,000

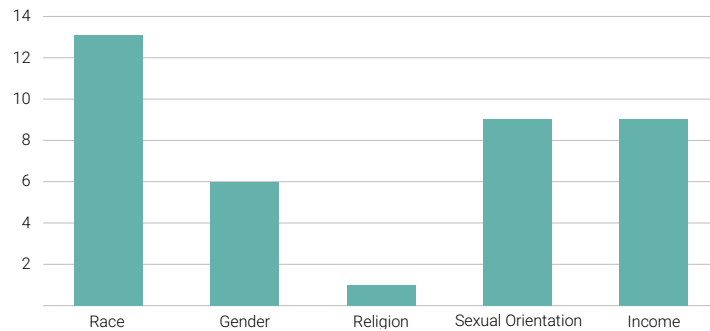
The questions allowed respondents to indicate a range of responses to each question and for this analysis, Shoreline grouped responses into two options: agree/strongly agree or neutral/disagree/strongly disagree. Chi-Square tests were carried out on all questions to quantify differences between observed and expected counts across the demographic groups.

One method to group all of the data is how different questions are answered by participants from different identities. In [Appendix E](#), each of the 20 climate questions are listed. Next to them, each demographic grouping (race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, income) is placed in a column that shows whether members of that group answered the questions differently. For example, for the first question, "Most people in Rubenstein are devoted to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion", there is no significant difference in how people answered that question between the "religious" and "non-religions" groups or between heteronormative and non-heteronormative groups. In contrast, there is a significant difference in how "white" and "people of color", males and females, and different income groups answer the question.

One way to further examine these data is to consider what it means about the perception of climate based on your identities. For a person of color, your perception of the RSENR climate is different from white students in 13 of the 20 dimensions of climate that were surveyed. The data also suggest that the number of dimensions of difference in perception increases if you identify in particular intersections of categories. By contrast, in every dimension but one, answers do not differ based on students' religious identity.



Figure 5: The number of questions out of 20 where answers differed depending on the respondent's identity.



The survey, which included undergraduates, graduate students, faculty and staff, allowed Shoreline to probe the question of whether for a given identity, respondents are more likely to see specific questions differently:

1. Race: People of color feel differently from white people with respect to whether racism is comfortable to talk about.
2. Gender: Genders feel the same with respect to whether sexism or gender identity is comfortable to talk about.
3. Religion: Religious and non-religious respondents feel the same with respect to whether religion is comfortable to talk about. In fact, no group demonstrated any difference with respect to this question.
4. Sexual Orientation: People of non-mainstream sexual orientations feel differently with respect to whether homophobia or gender identity is comfortable to talk about.
5. Income: Respondents in the lower half of income levels feel differently with respect to whether classism is comfortable to talk about.

Beyond the differences in the responses among different groups, Shoreline also created rank orders of the questions based on two methods. In [Appendix E](#), the questions are ranked by the minimum level of agreement from the identified survey groups. [Appendix G](#) shows the same questions ranked by the range of responses among the identified groups.



The fundamental questions about physical and emotional safety are the most positive and showed relatively small variations among groups; although both questions are still answered significantly differently by persons of color. Because this is the first use of this survey and the conditions of its administration may be unique and not easily replicable, Shoreline recommends caution with respect to immediately responding to the relative rankings of the individual questions and more attention to the fact that identity clearly affects the perception of culture and what is comfortable to talk about in Rubenstein.

We aligned some strengths next to possible next steps, but here is a list of thematic strengths that are prevalent in this element (even if not listed in steps to consider):

- Personal leadership on the part of Deans and other staff to take risks and talk about race
- Use of faculty retreats for professional learning about power and privilege
- Gender-neutral bathrooms and pronoun use
- Growth of women in science - look at demographics
- Development and existence of the MLS program
- Students feeling empowered to speak out and partner with leadership.
- Consistently higher than average 3-year retention rates as compared to other units at UVM.



Steps to Consider that Leverage Rubenstein Strengths

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP	RUBENSTEIN STRENGTH
Professional learning for the Dean and Assistant Deans as a team.	Appetite, capacity, presence;
Develop a strategic implementation plan	Dean's recommendations; student demands; faculty and staff appetite
Develop a more transparent internal and external communication strategy that is asset/strength based	Existing staff integrity
Formally adopt and resource a plan to recruit and retain faculty and staff of color and track progress (data and exit interviews)	Strength and capacity yet to be developed
Formally adopt and resource a plan to recruit and retain students of color and track progress (data and exit interviews)	Mission of Rubenstein
Develop a transparent accountability system for immediate safety concerns (micro-aggressions, trauma, erasures, silencing)	Mission of Rubenstein
In public facing communication acknowledge past oppressions and address current next steps	Strength and capacity yet to be developed
Develop and implement equity centered accountability processes for discrimination	Strength and capacity yet to be developed
Develop and implement equity centered HR processes	Strength and capacity yet to be developed

As we mentioned on page 10, our suggestions for progress measures are intended as a starting point for Rubenstein to apply as it develops its own theory of change or logic model.



Sample Progress Measures

	OUTCOME	SCORE
0 – Not yet thinking about this	Systems of recruitment and retention are in place to provide a welcoming environment to staff and faculty of color.	
1 – Thinking about this		
2 – We are assessing this feature in our work	The Dean’s Office has processes to ensure that it sees and hears students, faculty, and staff	
3 – We have an initial improvement effort underway	The Dean’s Office understands and operationalizes multiple ways of being and knowing at Rubenstein	
4 – Benefits are in evidence from implementing this approach/element	Leadership has a racial equity theory of change with respect to how changing specific conditions at RSENR affect long term impacts	
5 – This is rooted across the organization	RSENR disaggregates (recognizing multiple identities) data on retention and graduation rates	
	The Climate Survey is supported by leadership and considered in decision-making with a goal of having questions responses be less predicted by membership in a group	

Shoreline’s year-long assessment process coincide with a passionate campus movement for racial equity. After a series of racially charged events on campus, student leaders initiated protests to demand a more just response from the administration. These demands focused on transforming diversity courses and providing more equity training for faculty and staff. This campus action included members of RSENR’s student community, who also provided RSENR administrators with a list of demands specific to the Rubenstein School. While many administrators across campus abstained from direct responses, Dean Mathews met students’ demands with a letter detailing how the school would respond ([Appendix H](#)). In the table below, Shoreline has used the equity lens tool to organize and analyze the elements of the Dean’s proposal.



COMPONENT OF EQUITY LENS

SHORELINE ANALYSIS

Who are the groups affected and what is the intended impact of the program or resource to advance opportunities for historically underserved students and communities?

Create a climate that is safe, where multiple perspectives are welcomed and differences are embraced.

Create a welcoming and empowered climate in the School, one where every person feels valued, heard and included.

What can be done/has been done to ensure that the decision being made does not ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences or risks (e.g. strength vs deficit framing, authentic co-construction with affected groups, culturally sustaining approach vs savior approach)

Formally designate a team to lead diversity and inclusion efforts that will include Associate Dean Allan Strong, Assistant Marie Vea-Fagnant, and representation from undergraduate and graduate students.

Reiterate the expectation that all Rubenstein School faculty and staff participate in the school-wide diversity and inclusion professional development series.

Does the program or resource help eliminate opportunity gaps and systemic barriers (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)?

Include a new metric of “demonstrated evidence of efforts to advance diverse perspectives and inclusion” in scholarship, instruction or engagement for all faculty. *(Note: Annual performance reviews for faculty and staff already include a similar requirement.)*

Review and revision of the format and learning outcomes for the D1 first-year course, Race, Culture and Natural Resources (NR6), starting in Fall 2018.

Initiate a review, by the RSENR Faculty Standards Committee, of promotion and tenure metrics to consider the inclusion of a criterion that addresses engagement in diversity, equity and inclusivity efforts.



COMPONENT OF EQUITY LENS

SHORELINE ANALYSIS

Does the program or resource identify and build on community strengths?

Implement the recommendations of the Equity Assessment that is currently underway by Shoreline Consulting and intended for completion in June 2018.

How have you intentionally involved stakeholders who are also members of the communities affected by the strategic investment or resource allocation?

Formally designate a team to lead diversity and inclusion efforts that will include Associate Dean Allan Strong, Assistant Marie Vea-Fagnant, and representation from undergraduate and graduate students.

What is the plan for continued and meaningful community engagement to formatively evaluate progress and make course corrections based on data and changing contexts?

Implement the recommendations of the Equity Assessment that is currently underway by Dr. Shadiin Garcia and intended for completion in August 2018.

What is your commitment to professional learning for equity, diversity, and inclusion? (e.g. What resources are you allocating for training in culturally sustaining instruction/guest services?)

Ensure professional development for NR6 faculty

One thing that is immediately clear from this initial analysis is that the components of the Dean's proposal fulfill different parts of a coherent plan. Although they may be staged, certain critical elements, such as forming the designation of a team, are foundational and should come first. In general, these recommendations should be implemented together (with some additional elements) instead of piecemeal.



Element 2: Rubenstein Faculty and Staff

A high percentage of the comments from focus groups, interviews, and the climate survey focused on improvements in RSENR conditions that currently result in microaggressions, pain, and trauma for students, staff, and faculty. The key findings that create these unsafe conditions are:

1. Lack of competency in pedagogy, facilitation and content knowledge of equity and systemic -isms, resulting in the systemwide perpetuation of said -isms
2. Inconsistently welcoming ecosystem (not just the classroom)
3. Faculty and staff relationships are critical for retention and more structures are needed to develop and sustain relationships that are the foundation of diversity, equity, and belonging.
4. The equity “work” is not evenly distributed/owned

Faculty

In the words of focus group and interview participants, the faculty in Rubenstein represents the key leverage point for change. The degree to which the RSENR resource allocations can impact the professional capacity and competency of faculty is the rate-limiting step in many of the suggested next steps outlined in this document; meaning faculty capacity has to come first for the other efforts to be successful. Across populations and question prompts, the climate at RSENR varies across environments (classrooms, dorms, meeting rooms, common spaces). Much of what was discussed in terms of climate is the classroom climate and what can faculty do to make it welcoming, which is often defined as faculty recognizing multiple ways of being and knowing in their curriculum and classroom practices. With respect to faculty competence in this regard, the prevailing perception is that faculty are competent in their fields in a traditional, mainstream sense, and less competent with respect to identifying and logically addressing systematic oppression within their field and adjusting pedagogy appropriately.

Some RSENR faculty are committed to professional learning in these areas and significant ongoing work has produced an aligned set of learning outcomes designed so that “Students will be able to critically examine dimensions of difference and apply a sophisticated understanding of power and privilege to their lives and work.” This is a huge RSENR strength to build on. However, successfully addressing issues of oppression in real time that are nuanced, immediately present in the context of RSENR, and possibly traumatizing for groups of students, requires a different set of skills and capacities. Our research strongly indicates students and staff pinpointing lack of faculty competence in this regard including but not limited to the integration of multiple perspectives across all content areas; ability to facilitate conversations about oppression, power, and privilege; ability to foster and create conditions for more than white, mainstream values; and ability to address acts of racism in a classroom, meeting, university setting.



Students reported instances where multiple perspectives were not welcomed or acknowledged.

"I would like to be able to share my points of view, even when they differ from my academic advisor and feel like they're being respected even if they're different than maybe how he would approach something. I would like to feel my point of view is valid even if it's different." –Graduate student

"I feel like NR 1 and NR6, the two intro classes for Rubenstein – every first year student has to take them. They weren't necessarily welcoming because I feel like those two classes, at least for me, just reinforced dominant narratives of the environment. "This is ecological science." I think course structures have changed since then but this is "THE" way to see the environment. Maybe we mention traditional ecological knowledge sometimes. But it was all just this one way to do things." –Focus group participant

Students reported being singled out and subjected to microaggressions and/or experiencing a general lack of responsiveness when issues of oppression or inequity were called out.

"And NR6 was just like, I feel like NR6 pitted me against my classmates." –Focus group participant

"And I was like 'I'm from there [naming a place] and we definitely don't call it that. [The male faculty member] continues) to keep on calling it that and it furthers that history – and it then does this thing where I am, I had this outburst in class and then the professor told me I was wrong and it confirmed that I was wrong. And it does something to my credibility. But also maintains – it also strengthens their view of the professor as the one who knows. This white man is the one who knows." –Focus group participant

"This whole class is about different frameworks and interdisciplinary work and yet this is what we're getting...And even when a student like me brings it up, nothing happens... Nothing ever happened. I sent emails to the professor and tried to talk about it and "thank you for sharing." That was it. There was "oh we'll do better." You didn't. And you're the professor. You should be doing better in the first place. A student shouldn't be telling you this is wrong." –Student

"I think it goes back to professors not knowing how to facilitate conversations properly. That is a pattern that is institutional. The institution doesn't train professors properly. Or train them in the right things." –Focus group participant

"In a large lecture class setting with high attendance, the professor said that Pueblo people no longer exist. He just erased me and a nation of people in one fell swoop." –Dr. Garcia



Some staff and faculty report similar personal experiences.

"But then also, and I don't know if this is a lack of willingness to not look at teaching practices and microaggressions and pieces that our students and staff and faculty of color feel regularly. As just as many of our white identified staff and faculty have not been pushed to do the work that we're asking some of our students to do and so, you know, a white male faculty member who are incredibly well- intentioned and well-meaning and maybe very much in a progressive mindset but is still offending people regularly and contributing to systemic oppression." –Focus group participant

"And having to build projects and keep that relationship going. And some of them are my friends. ... And I was like, "I don't want to know." I have created these boundaries in our personal relationships that I will never talk to you about these things so that we can have relationship." - Focus group participant

Many faculty agree individual and systemic improvement on understanding equity, diversity, access and belonging and that any such effort requires attention to available time and resources and the fact that faculty already feel overloaded.

"...but I think from a faculty perspective: 'I'm an expert in my field and this is where my learning is and I don't have the time and I don't really know if I have the energy nor desire to do some of this other learning.'" –Faculty member

"Oh I've seen it. Where the faculty comes together, you know, is in – well I think all the core curriculum assessment stuff we do is one place. Like just the whole rubric of working across difference has really elevated our collective sense of at least what the terms are. So that is a concrete example for me of like wrestling with these rubrics around cultural competency. And realizing – most of us are like "I'm not even on like number one!" And yet we're expecting our students to get to number three by the time they've graduated. So that is an active place where the rubber hits the road to me. There's a lot of self reflection. " –Faculty member

"First semester I came here I taught a D2 course. No training. Nothing. It's really hard to, especially, we're not trained how to deal with students who have no clue how to address it. I mean we don't know how to manage the conflicts in class." – Faculty member

Some faculty identified the fact that too few members are involved in existing and ongoing equity, diversity and inclusion efforts. More would need to become involved as partners in order to share the load and promote retention of staff of color.

"I'd hope for more solidarity and allyship from faculty and staff who do have dominant identities so that the heavy lifting doesn't always have to fall to the underrepresented or marginalized identities where the impacts occur." –Faculty member



“NR6 in particular is an example where we really have consistently worked on these issues. And I agree with you (referring to another participant) on the core curriculum –the assessment. But my question is who shows up to that? The only people being affected by that – the only impact it has are the people who are actively participating. ...The ones who maybe are being impacted are not the ones who need to impact.” –Faculty member

A few individual faculty members and other staff emerged as Rubenstein champions in making the environment welcoming. The overwhelming response when students and alumni of color were asked what sustains them at RSENr was that Marie Vea-Fagnant sustains them.

“She saw the inkling of leadership and was like “go for it.” Saw the potential. She is the reason I am still at UVM. That’s one person. It wasn’t UVM. It was Marie. It wasn’t Rubenstein. It was Marie.”—Student

“Marie was a mentor. I struggled a lot with the school and the University in general because it was the first time I was in a predominantly white environment and the culture was very different from what I was used to growing up in Brooklyn. So she was someone that was always there to listen to me without judgment and she was that resource, that person that made me feel comfortable and was the reason why I didn’t drop out or change school. She believed in me. She believed in my potential.” –Alumni

At the January 2018 faculty retreat, faculty were prompted by the question of what they would want/need if they were assigned to teach NR6, NR207, or NR306. Across the hypothetical course assignments, four themes are consistent among responses.

By far the most common identified need is professional learning in classroom pedagogy to be more effective in creating safe spaces and effectively facilitating discussions about racial equity, power and privilege, identity, working across differences, and other related topics. A second common theme is continued development of faculty content knowledge and use of standards, curriculum, and assessments. Especially with respect to NR6, a common theme is whether and how the NR6 outcomes (Identity Development, Intercultural Competence, Power and Privilege, and Engaging with Tension) are sustained and spread into the rest of the degree program. Faculty want to know what they could tell students in terms of exactly how the core competencies introduced in NR6 would be supported over their career at RSENr. The final common theme is a request for deep, introspective, and personal learning in equity and a necessary precursor to any learning moving forward.

Blackboard jungle: The school has attempted to provide community members with diversity and equity training. Some examples of this include an annual invitation for faculty and staff to attend UVM’s Blackboard Jungle program (with program fees paid by the school), equity discussion at the last four faculty retreats, and a course model in NR6 that was intended to provide instructors with an opportunity to gain training through weekly collaborative discussions. While these efforts are well intended, they have not been sufficient to address the needs or amplify strengths of the community.



Staff

Shoreline's engagement with Rubenstein and UVM staff beyond administration and faculty is limited and ad hoc. Unlike the work with instructional and program staff, any observations in this section should be considered to have surface validity but be less generalizable without further inquiry. This is not to suggest that it should be pushed aside though, but to examine other ways to safely lift the concerns.

Interviews from both former and current non-faculty on the topic of the climate of the Dean's office identified that it was not a welcoming and sustaining work environment. In fact, participants are hesitant to be truthful because the N size of the sample is so small and they do not want to be identified. Examples of the environment include but are not limited to lack of clear process to address incidents of racism or sexism; pay inequity; promotion inequity; inconsistent hiring processes; clear and transparent working processes when inequities occur.

"It seems customary here to conduct a search and to bring the final candidates in for interviews where the entire RSENR community is invited to meet the candidates and provide feedback. This approach has promoted inclusivity and perhaps has allowed the school to hire the best possible candidate. There have been up to three job openings recently that were never posted and therefore no internal employee had the opportunity to apply for the position. UVM's HR department generally does not allow these types of direct hires but will grant exceptions if the unit can justify it. Three direct hires seems to really be stretching things." –Interview quote

In the process of validating the RSENR climate survey, students interviewed custodial and grounds staff who are UVM employees located at Rubenstein. No organizational chart would have ever led Shoreline to engage with and lift up this perspective. We capitalized on this emergent event to provide additional details about the climate at RSENR, and it is a reminder that UVM is both a hierarchy (by intentional design) in which RSENR sits and an ecosystem that touches Rubenstein in different ways. It is crucial to realize that a complex organization like a university has institutional structures designed to function in a more transactional and less relational way. RSENR cannot fundamentally change the built-in barriers and disconnects in its university context; what it can do is be open and inquisitive, as the students were, to the potential partners working in parallel right around them.

We aligned some strengths next to possible next steps, and here is a list of thematic strengths that are prevalent in this element (even if not listed in steps to consider):

- Staff and faculty are dedicated and work beyond a 40 hour work week
- Amazing pedagogical approaches that center access and deep learning for students
- Interest in and intentions to heal the current climate
- Partnerships across Vermont and New England



Steps to Consider that Leverage Rubenstein Strengths

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP	RUBENSTEIN STRENGTH
Comprehensive Orientation for new employees and exit interviews for leaving employees	Institutional knowledge of key faculty and staff; desire to improve
Working Across Differences Rubric: create a parallel rubric that identifies required staff competencies.	Existing body of work and staff dedication and relationships around the work.
Develop an equity lens; and develop sustained professional development on equity writ large and equity specific to each undergraduate major	Partnerships with external partners in each major
Embed equity competencies into faculty yearly review	Strength and capacity yet to be developed
Restructure NR6 so content does not reside there	Strength and capacity yet to be developed
Develop a process to vet all syllabi and content with an equity lens	Strength and capacity yet to be developed



Sample Progress Measures

	OUTCOME	SCORE
0 – Not yet thinking about this	Faculty have content knowledge appropriate to the intended student learning outcomes.	
1 – Thinking about this		
2 – We are assessing this feature in our work	Faculty have the expert facilitation skills required to provide safe and stimulating conditions to work across differences	
3 – We have an initial improvement effort underway	All staff engage in job-embedded professional learning to improve organizational cultural responsiveness and culturally sustaining pedagogies	
4 – Benefits are in evidence from implementing this approach/element		
5 – This is rooted across the organization	The Climate Survey is supported by leadership and considered in decision-making with a goal of having questions responses be less predicted by membership in a group	



Element 3: Course Offerings

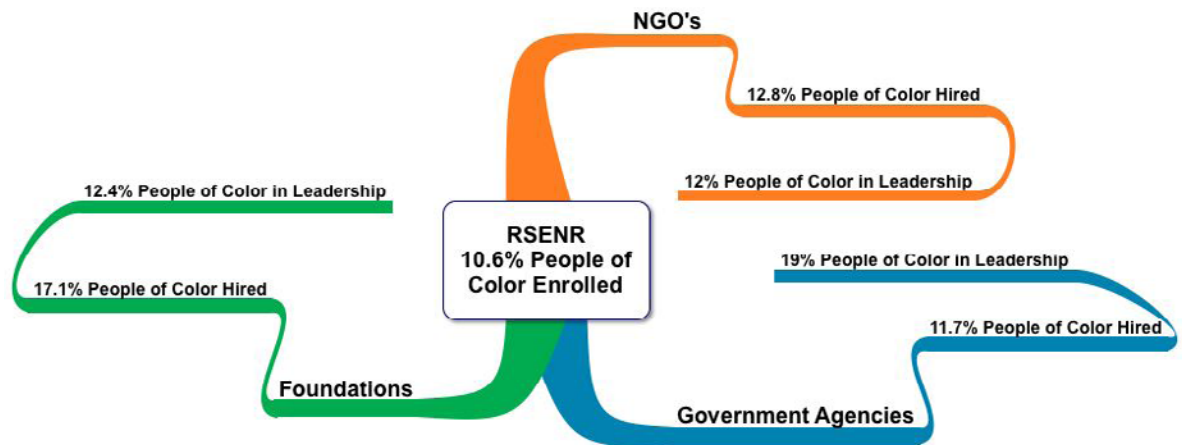
One element for an equity analysis for any institution is their stated and operationalized goals from a service or product perspective. In the case of Rubenstein, beyond internal community goals, the key services are to students pursuing degree programs, to researchers advancing the field, and to partners to co-create knowledge and timely solutions. With respect to this report, our equity focus has been on services to students and the strengths of new and potential partnerships to meet student service goals. The key findings are:

1. No use of equity lens
2. Mainstream conservation paradigms dominate course offerings, especially beyond the core classes resulting in course content not embodying multiple ways of being and knowing
3. When content does have some “equity,” it is deeply othering and from a Western Science frame
4. The Working Across Difference rubric is not understood or implemented across all faculty
5. Analysis of assignments of core learning objectives to core courses suggests that NR6 is not resourced appropriately
6. The effects of a lack of alignment between the core classes and the degree programs is idiosyncratic depending on the field of study. For example, deeper contextualization of the core learning objectives in more advanced coursework differs in the field of Forestry and Natural Resources as compared to Parks, Recreation, and Tourism

The Rubenstein strategic priority in this area is to “Deliver distinctive education programs in environment and natural resources to prepare the next generations of leaders capable of working in complex and rapidly changing socio-ecological systems.” The initial equity question with respect to this strategic priority is “Who is being served by these programs to become the next generation of leaders?”. A comparison of the current RSENR student body to recent analysis of the field demonstrates that the school is less racially diverse than the workplaces and leadership positions in the governmental and nongovernmental sectors and in foundations that support environment and natural resources.



Figure 6. RSENR enrollment over a two year period using Fall 2015 and 2016 data from the UVM institutional research office; international students were not included in the calculation. Workforce data obtained from Dorceta Taylors’s “The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations” (Taylor, D. E., 2014).



With respect to the staff at RSENR, the percentage of people of color is lower than the student body and lower than the typical profile of foundations, government agencies, and NGO’s. Data from the UVM Institutional Research department shows the following distributions among different groups of staff. To avoid revealing personal information, these data are show in employee groups larger than 10. Table 2 shows adjusted percentages of staff of color (not counting in the numerator or denominator nonresident international staff nor staff who are classified as “unknown”). Figure 7 shows the numerical diversity of the different staff groups and includes international staff and those classified as “unknown”.

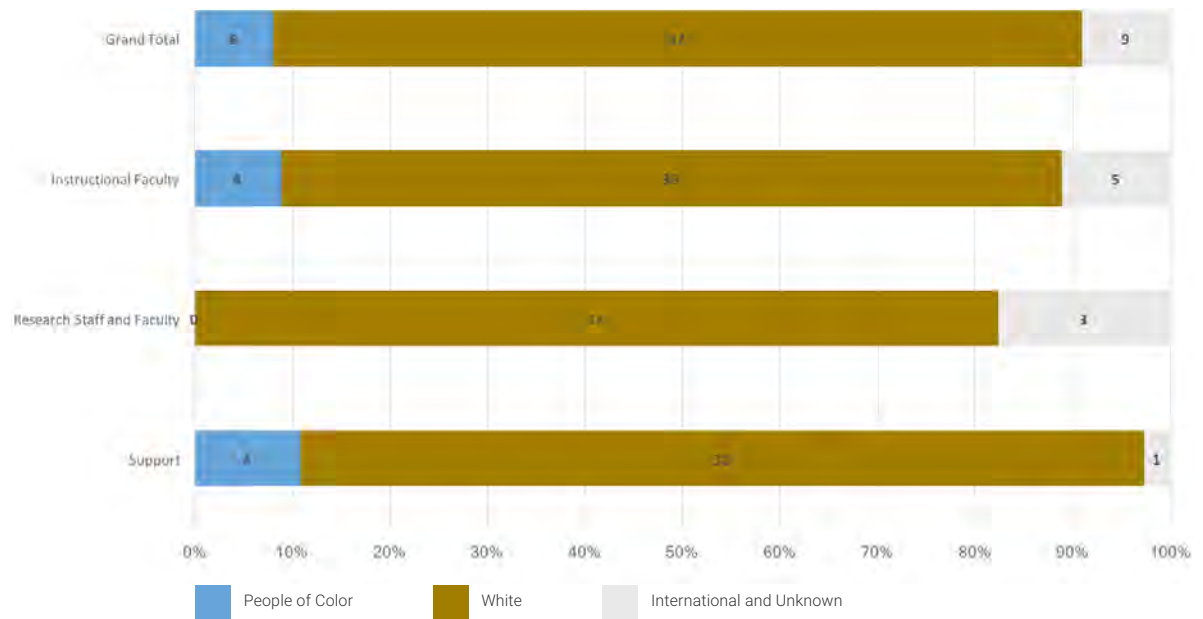


Table 2. Adjusted percentages of staff of color.

EMPLOYEE GROUP	ADJ. % OF PEOPLE OF COLOR*
Support	11.1%
Research Staff and Faculty	0%
Instructional Faculty	10.0%
Total	8.9%

*Does not include “unknown” and “international”.

Figure 7. 2017 RSENR Staff Race/Ethnicity.



With respect to preparing RSENR graduates with the skills to understand rapidly changing social and ecological systems and studies, many participants in focus groups and interviews identify fundamental inconsistencies with respect to what is taught and why it is taught that are rooted in the school and the greater context of the discipline.



"Efforts to diversify – I think the efforts are there. The efforts are strong. I think the challenges that once we're there; we're confronted with a culture and an education that really doesn't speak to where we come from or who we are. So the education and the curriculum at the Rubenstein School is very rooted in mainstream conservation and environmental sustainability paradigm and philosophy. It's not, it's very status quo. I think we're in, in a lot of those classes we're talking about ecosystems and biodiversity and mega fauna. And now we're starting to talk about people. But it's still not rooted in anti-oppression work, which – you know the students of color that they recruit often times, probably come from low income backgrounds and probably come from communities where struggles related to race and class are our whole lives. So if our education isn't infusing that, then immediately we're like "well this environmental education, these four years I'm not really learning anything I can take back to my community. I think that's the challenge. The diversity efforts are there but I think it's more about the culture. And the underlying assumptions of what we're being taught. So I think if there were more courses, I think if environmental justice was a bigger core tenant of the curriculum, then it might resonate with students more. And they might see themselves more in the school, in the education. I don't remember being taught about any environmental leaders of color, or environmental leaders of the global south, indigenous environmental leaders. It was always Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Thoreau, Jane Goodall. I mean. I never learned about any of these people. So yeah, I don't know if that makes sense." –Focus group participant

"The school and UVM is really teaching to white students. Every professor is teaching to a white student. Even professors and faculty of color. Everyone is forced to teach to white students – to the stereotypical Rubenstein student." –Focus group participant

*"The principle behind the college is one. And who gets to be in college. Who comes here is the groundwork. And the people who come here are people often from dominant backgrounds and identities. So the system serves those people. So if its serving people who can afford to this, people who can afford to go on those trips and can afford to have these experiences – um – it's based on working off their worldview to make the material – and it's presented in a way that they can understand it. Um. It makes it hard. And in the few moments where you are – a few moments – I remember examples where I had to – people would say "there's no nature in a city" and I had to be the one who was like, "You're wrong. And here are all the ways that you are wrong."... In other classes there was not that space so I had to be the one, once again sustaining myself, to be like "you are wrong." The biggest problem in – we're not going to solve environmental issues through green consumerism. People's like everyone's like way into the environmental world cannot be through recreation and outdoor experiences. Because I could get killed, raped, murdered and no one would give a f*** and my mom is screwed and has to pay my student loans now. And – it's also sometime – the faculty is aware that there is this thing that's happening but they're not necessarily sure how to approach it." –Focus group participant*



The Core Curriculum for all Rubenstein undergraduates includes a set of 8 classes (24 credits), five of which are taken in year one and year four, with the remaining two in years 2 and 3. There is a common curriculum map for these 8 courses with respect to student developmental progress in 6 core competencies (composed of 20 learning objectives) and 4 core knowledge areas (composed of 19 learning objectives).

"By offering a scaffolded set of required core courses grounded in environmental and natural resource content, we prepare our students to successfully integrate and apply knowledge across disciplinary boundaries in their personal and professional lives." –RSENR Undergraduate Core Curriculum Goal Statement, Adopted by the Rubenstein School Faculty, December 2015

Consideration of the entire curriculum map provides a context for which core courses are responsible for what level of learning for each competency and knowledge area. The map also provides a metric for the degree of coverage and scope of responsibility for each core competency and knowledge area and the associated learning objectives.

[Appendix I](#) presents an analysis of the assignment of core competency and knowledge area learning objectives to the core courses. A simple metric is calculated in Table 3: the total number of learning objectives divided by the amount of course credit.

Table 3. Learning Objectives Per Credit.

COURSE	LEARNING OBJECTIVES PER CREDIT
NR 1+2	4
NR 9	5.75
NR 6	8
NR 103	4.67
NR 104	5
NR 205	5.67
NR 206	5.25
NR 207	14

Using this metric, NR 6 is the most "overloaded" of the first year courses. In fact, the only class more overloaded in the core in this sense NR 207, which is the senior cousin



to NR6 in that it is the key class with respect to capstone experience for the Working Across Differences learning objectives.

Further, RSENR has had 120 students per year (60 per semester) enter the school as transfers with about 180 new first years each year. This means up to 40% of students who enter the school do so as transfers. Transfer students do not take NR 6, as NR 6 is tied in with first year advising. This means that nearly half of incoming RSENR students the past few years have not taken NR 6. While this is not to suggest that they should participate in NR6 in its current form, but the fact that these two routes exist is structurally problematic, as it seems to indicate that RSENR values and requires NR 6 for some students, but not all.

Of the 6 core competencies, Working Across Differences (WXD) is the most pertinent for this report. The learning objectives are Identity Development, Intercultural Competence, Power and Privilege, and Engaging with Tension and their developmental coverage in the core classes is designed by RSENR as follows:

Table 4. Learning Objective Assignment for Working Across Difference Core Competency.

Core Competency Learning Outcomes	3. Working across Difference				
	A. Identity Development	B. Intercultural Competence	C. Power and Privilege	D. Engaging with Tension	
Learning Objectives					
NR1+2: Natural History and Human Ecology		2	2		Year 1
NR9: Vermont: Natural and Cultural History		2	2		
NR 6 - Race and Culture in Natural Resources	2	2	2	2	
NR 103 - Ecology, Ecosystems, and the					Year 2-3
NR 104 - Social Processes and the Environment	2		2		
NR 205 - Integrating Science, Society, and Policy					Year 4
NR 206 - Environmental Problem Solving and Impact				2	
NR 207 - Power, Privilege, and the Environment	3	3	3	3	
Core Competency Learning Outcome Statements	Students will be able to critically examine dimensions of difference and apply a sophisticated understanding of power and privilege in their lives and work.				
Modified 8.21.17	Levels of Instruction				
	1	2	3		
	☉	◐	●		Exposure
		◑			Emphasis
			●		Capstone



Focusing on the details for NR 6, Table 4 shows that it is the key class with respect to initial exposure and emphasis for the WXD learning objectives. The most overloaded freshman core class is also the class responsible for 50% of the WXD learning objectives, an apparent structural inequity that differentially affects student learning for these particular objectives.

Independent of any of the numerous comments about NR 6 from focus groups and interviews, Table 3 and Table 4 collectively argue for a reconsideration of learning objective assignment or credit value for NR 6. It is less clear that the same is true for NR 207, since the capstone objective completion presumably can be met in multiple categories with the same project.

Participants in interviews identify the time gap between the required classes which address the working across differences objectives as something that needs to be improved. In addition, the adoption rate of the rubric is in its initial stages and it remains to be discovered the extent to which this plan will be effective.

Beyond the core learning outcomes and their distribution across the required classes, Rubenstein has six undergraduate majors with their own set of learning outcomes. Since the majors are associated with unique epistemologies, histories of systematic oppression, and current socio-cultural contexts, some of the common learning outcomes need to be mapped and contextualized in the undergraduate majors.



Key equity lens questions and observations regarding this course progression and common learning outcomes plan include:

COMPONENT OF EQUITY LENS	SHORELINE ANALYSIS
<p>NR 6 is only 2 credits; RSENR gave it four objectives</p> <p>Does NR6 and the WXD objectives ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences or risks?</p>	<p>Too much emphasis is placed on NR6 because it is the place where all of the WXD outcomes are introduced. Problematises that course as evidenced by the many complaints about the class, change in evaluation system, faculty nervousness about teaching.</p> <p>Students are introduced to personally engaging and paradigm shifting content and then do not have sufficient avenues to further contextualize that WXD learning in core or major specific classes.</p>
<p>Does NR 6 and the WXD objectives help eliminate opportunity gaps and systemic barriers (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, nancial, programmatic or managerial)?</p>	<p>Core competencies are mapped in phases through all core classes, which help eliminate programmatic barriers. However, WXD objectives are not universal among core classes and in evidence for classes outside the core.</p>
<p>Does NR6 and the WXD learning objectives identify and build on community strengths?</p>	<p>NR 306 has an equity learning outcome.</p>
<p>What is the plan for continued and meaningful community engagement to formatively evaluate progress and make course corrections based on data and changing contexts?</p>	<p>Potential in Dean's recommendations.</p>

We aligned some strengths next to possible next steps, and here is a list of thematic strengths that are prevalent in this element (even if not listed in steps to consider):

1. Learning outcomes addressing equity
2. Collaborative nature of outcome design/integration/assessment
3. Having NR6/NR207/NR306, at all -
4. Presence of social impact in courses
5. Innovative opportunities (e.g. Masters in Leadership for Sustainability; Economics for the Anthropocene)



Steps to Consider that Leverage Rubenstein Strengths

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP	RUBENSTEIN STRENGTH
Create the conditions necessary to foster a learning environment that centers relationships, co-construction, and strength based approaches	Faculty interest, capacity, collaborative nature, and innovation
Provide meeting time to talk about the common learning outcomes and dive into the complexity and nuance of how the ideas can be applied in different course contexts.	Content knowledge among the faculty of the individual degree programs
NR6 Redesign	Existing body of data from faculty and students.
Review of core class competency load and exploration of a sophomore class that advances WXD learning outcomes	Existing matrix and the thinking and relationships among those who created it

	OUTCOME	SCORE
0 – Not yet thinking about this		
1 – Thinking about this	Equity-informed common learning outcomes inform every RSENR core course	
2 – We are assessing this feature in our work	Core competencies are aligned across all majors and made relevant in different majors	
3 – We have an initial improvement effort underway	Common learning outcomes are assessed	
4 – Benefits are in evidence from implementing this approach/element	Students, staff, partners, and community have a meaningful role in assessment and changes in the common learning outcomes	
5 – This is rooted across the organization		



Element 4: Mutually Thriving Partnerships

The concept of a mutually thriving partnership is one where the partnership has supporting conditions or structures that allow partners to mutually thrive. The key findings with respect to partnerships in the areas of diversity, equity, and belonging were:

1. Opportunity for more equity informed service learning implementation with regard to equity, diversity, and inclusion. (Not every student gets the same experience and not scaffolded in alignment with WXD).
2. Strong partners on campus who support students and potential for more collaboration around course offerings.
3. Opportunity for more connections beyond Rubenstein, especially with respect to recruiting partners as guest lectures or panelists who represent a diversity of viewpoints and ways of being and knowing.
4. Strong foundation of existing partnerships and trust with student activists.

Rubenstein, with its undergraduate, masters, and PhD programs, is involved in a multitude of partnerships. Every Vermont site visit has increased our list and we are confident that what we have learned still only represents a fraction of what is happening.

In the undergraduate school there are over 100 partnerships for student service learning and internships. Although the conditions of these opportunities are disparate, they all utilize a reciprocity model wherein the services rendered benefit both the student interns and the communities. Because partners come to RSENR with their needs, the projects can be naturally community driven. RSENR has historically employed a staff member who is the steward of student learning and who works with faculty to operationalize the placements and maintain program integrity. However, this year they did not have someone involved in that role.

A type of more ad-hoc partnership that is referenced by many participants are those between faculty guest lecturers or presenters. A number of participants comment on the lack of diversity and missed opportunities for more diverse engagement.

*"I remember my first year. They brought in this speaker – John Francis – a black environmentalist who traveled the US on foot, said no to gas automobiles, planes. Even said no to ambulance once. I was like "this is so cool." I have never really seen a person of color environmentalist – that was my first year. And it was at a talk they brought him into Aiken – which was really amazing. And since then, I haven't really – I haven't really seen a person of color in, giving a big presentation like that. Which like – budget – how many people? They're out there. They just need to look harder."
–Focus group participant*



"And we need to work on being able to call out a professor who brings panels [of community partners] into the classroom to talk about land use or electricity or water, like what happened last semester and every single person was white, Cis, straight and the same perspective as everything else people learned in school." –Student

Students identify many partnerships with cross campus units and resources that sustain them on campus. All of these are already local for Rubenstein students and are identified in the Rubenstein School Handbook.

"I think the whole university asks students what their preferred pronouns are and when you get the roster, you get the list of preferred pronouns. So you don't have to put students on the spot by asking everyone. It's a detail that has a big impact." –Student

"Outside of the Rubenstein school, it was the ALANA student center – the community center for students of color and everyone really –and allies. It was definitely centering our experiences as people of color. That was a place that was a home away from home. It was a tiny pocket of space and community where I felt comfortable being who I am." –Alumni

A number of specific partnerships are mentioned that would be beneficial for Rubenstein to expand (like clubs) or create.

"I would love for us to also bring in some external groups like the Center for Whole Communities (located in Burlington), which would push the conversation forward. Also, I think it would be great to bring in a scholar in residence or other ways of attracting diversity to the college." –Survey response

Partnering with other departments who understand the content or other universities would be amazing. Like the ethnic studies department or the National Equity Project. –Student response

With respect to equity, diversity, and belonging, the critical and nuanced relationship between Rubenstein and its Masters in Leadership for Sustainability (MLS) program bears closer examination. Listed above in the strengths of leadership and governance is the decision and support to create this program within Rubenstein.

Because MLS has been developed and influenced by the experience and expertise of many professional affiliates from the professional world, it has created the conditions and the space for a program to emerge that is foundationally about equity and partnerships and potentially less structurally oppressive for members of non-dominant identities. As all of Rubenstein works to meet strategic goals, MLS and its network of affiliates are a local strength that can be the exemplar for many mutually thriving partnerships.



We aligned some strengths next to possible next steps, but here is a list of thematic strengths that are prevalent in this element (even if not listed in steps to consider):

1. Over hundreds of existing partnerships in the undergraduate school
2. Connections to cross campus units and resources (Mosaic Center for Students of Color, LGBTQA+, etc.)
3. Model of professional affiliates (e.g. MLS)
4. Students as partners (student members on Diversity Task Force, DEAT, Student Activists, NR 206 Survey developers)

Steps to Consider that Leverage Rubenstein Strengths

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP	RUBENSTEIN STRENGTH
Align the current service learning implementation with regard to equity, diversity, and inclusion. (Not every student gets the same experience & not scaffolded in alignment with WXD)	Dedicated staff to support the service learning program.
Develop a more formal partnership with departments like Critical Race and Ethnic Studies and outside community organizations to collaborate on initiatives like NR6 development.	Existing relationships and students able to take course outside of their majors
More intentional recruitment of diverse partners.	Faculty interest
MLS partnership conversation	In-house experience
Engagement with thought partners in racial justice in the environmental world with respect to leadership, staff professional learning, and pedagogy and student services	Incredible resource of current partners
Creation of a course titled, "Equity Assessments" whereby students collated, assessed and presented the data on a live dashboard of RSENR's Equity Plan	Talented students; relationship with Alex Yin (Director of Inst. Research)



Sample Progress Measures

	OUTCOME	SCORE
0 – Not yet thinking about this		
1 – Thinking about this		
2 – We are assessing this feature in our work	Invited guest lectures represent the diversity of the field, both in identity and ways of understanding environmental science and natural resources.	
3 – We have an initial improvement effort underway	Partnerships are formatively assessed and modified using an equity lens.	
4 – Benefits are in evidence from implementing this approach/element		
5 – This is rooted across the organization	Important partnerships are nested in supporting conditions that allow them to sustain and thrive.	



Conclusion

"I think there's a lot of talk about wanting to act but some of the issues that we're talking about right now, some of it is sitting in the discomfort of trying to talk across difference. ...So an inclusive environment might be somewhere where you can have those discussions, have the discomfort, and still continue working together."- Graduate Student

"So my hope is that a critical mass of faculty read this report and get it. So that they then support what it's going to take to institutionalize the recommendations and those habits. Those annual habits, biannual habits.... And my worst fear is that nothing changes... My worst fear for all plans – is where so many plans end up: on a shelf. They're interesting reading for a period of time. But then they end up on a shelf. ...Who's the advocate for the plan? And with faculty being busy and overwhelmed ... Again, the institutionalization of the thing. Because it's outside of curriculum and research – so why do faculty even think about it?"

—Focus group participant

"I don't really want to be singled out more than I already have."

—Focus group participant

Some of the most prevalent hopes participants expressed are for increasing the presence of staff, faculty, and students of color in the Rubenstein School and more community dialogue that welcomes diverse perspectives and positionality. Hopes also include an interest in more teaching, learning, and training, not relying (and thereby causing more damage to) on underrepresented/marginalized folks to teach about power, privilege, and race/ethnicity. An underlying sentiment of hope is for change that will be sustained and for action. The most prevalent fear is that (even with future practices in place to increase diversity) marginalized individuals would be singled out. Other fears include that this assessment will result in inaction and/or extra work.

I guess for me hopes is the Rubenstein doing something about equity. In the NR6 class, they talk about how – even Dean Mathews came in talking about it's not about equality its about equity. But right now. they're not doing anything to show it. So I guess showing it.....I guess I feel like other students of color, making them feel more inclusive and welcomed. Where they feel comfortable in their classes and with their professors.—Student participant

We have identified strengths, opportunities for growth, and steps to consider across elements of leadership and governance; faculty and staff; offering and services; and mutually thriving partnerships. The following is a potential plan that RSENR could adjust to continue their equity journey. We purposefully created this plan to be broad in scope to allow for co-construction and emergence.

In order for Creating conditions for Phase 1 to begin, Shoreline recommends 2-3 strategy meetings mapping out a timeline for creation of first steps toward operationalizing Phase 1 and the creation of a communications plan on presenting the RSENR Equity Assessment results including future work and learning. We would be remiss if we did not state clearly, that current conditions are damaging student, staff, faculty, and the community. Changing the current nature of NR6; continued engagement in 2017-2018 demands from NoNamesForJustice and creating a harm/accountability process should be a top priority.



Table 5. Recommendations.

Phase 1 – Two Years		
Action Item	Strategy	Result/Product
Create a DEAT Team	Allocate FTE for lead person(s) (external and internal); Identify key persons to participate as part of their service; include student and community partners; Allocate a budget	Racial Equity Theory of Change, Equity Lens, Harm Process; and an Equity Plan
Build RSENRC Capacity	Community of Practice: Begin with common language, roots causes of inequity, aka equity writ large	Paradigm shift for learning
Develop a Communication Process	Allocate FTE for lead person: work in concert with DEAT team	Communication plan with the following elements: Accountability, transparency, input, dashboard with real measures Informed stakeholders, partners, and future students/staff/faculty

Phase 1 – Two Years		
Action Item	Strategy	Result/Product
Continue DEAT Team	Using a Racial Equity Theory of Change; leverage Communities of Practice to co-construct a recruitment, retention, and hiring plan	Recruitment, retention, and hiring plan
Continue RSENRC Capacity	Leverage first year learnings to extend focus to pedagogy, content knowledge, and content specific fields of focus	WxD, and core competencies operationalized school wide
Communication Process	Conduct community engagement process with key stakeholders	Input on current process, input on future partnership development



Appendix A

Thanks and Acknowledgements

First, we offer our compassion to particular faculty, staff, students and the larger community member have been and continue to be deeply impacted by both intentional and unintentional acts of oppression at RSENR, and Shoreline would like to sincerely thank them for their vulnerable and courageous participation in this assessment. We understand, personally, the myriad emotional waves sharing your stories elicits and fervently believe that bringing truth to light matters on multiple levels.

Second, we would like to thank everyone who participated in the assessment from the survey to the focus groups to the classroom visits to one on one conversations.

Third, we sincerely appreciate the work of the Diversity Equity and Assessment Team for digging into the weeds with us and helping steward the work.

Fourth, we could not have completed this assessment without the help of the Deans Marie Veal-Fagnant, Allan Strong, Nancy Matthews and MLS Director Matt Kolan. And finally, Jacqueline Boudreau and Jackie Bruning were exceptionally critical in the success of the work as they created the conditions necessary for the site visits and more.

And finally, we cannot express enough thanks to Sonya Buglion Gluck, Kirsti Carr, Kunal Palawat for their wisdom, guidance, and solidarity.



Appendix B

Working Across Difference Rubric



RUBENSTEIN SCHOOL
OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES



RUBRIC FOR WORKING ACROSS DIFFERENCE

Students will be able to critically examine dimensions of difference and apply an advanced understanding of power and privilege to their lives and work.

Objective	Definition	Key Term	(3) Competence	(2) Building Capacity	(1) Exposure
Identity development	The process of constructing one's understanding and sense of belonging to groups that share specific traits or culture.	Identity	Demonstrates an advanced awareness of one's group memberships that provides insights into one's own culturally mediated biases, values, and sense of self.	Demonstrates moderate awareness of one's group memberships that provides insights into one's own culturally mediated biases, values and sense of self.	Demonstrates a limited awareness of one's group memberships that provides insights into one's own culturally mediated biases, values and sense of self.
Intercultural competence	A set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction and meaningful relationships across a variety of cultural contexts.	Multiple perspectives	Recognizes and invites multiple, even incommensurate truths; recognizes nuance in worldview, values, and ways of knowing; demonstrates an advanced ability to navigate ambiguity and non-closure.	Recognizes, but does not invite, multiple truths; recognizes moderate differences in worldview, values, and ways of knowing; demonstrates moderate ability to navigate ambiguity, uncertainty, and non-closure.	Recognizes multiple truths; recognizes significant differences in worldview, values, and ways of knowing; demonstrates limited ability to navigate ambiguity, uncertainty, and non-closure.
		Building relationships across differences	Demonstrates advanced ability to build and navigate meaningful relationships across differences and to act in ways that attend to and are responsive to impacts across differences.	Demonstrates moderate ability to build and navigate meaningful relationships across differences and to act in ways that recognize nuanced impacts across differences.	Demonstrates a limited ability to build and navigate meaningful relationships across differences and to act in ways that recognize significant impacts across differences.
Power and privilege	Power is the capacity to exert influence or control in a system. Privilege is a system of advantages, benefits, opportunities and choices not available to all.	Power and privilege	Demonstrates advanced awareness of how prevailing historical context, cultural rules and norms, mainstream and margin dynamics, and implicit and explicit biases affect power and privilege at an individual and systemic level.	Demonstrates moderate awareness of how prevailing historical context, cultural rules and norms, mainstream and margin dynamics, and implicit and explicit biases affect power and privilege at an individual and systemic level.	Demonstrates a limited awareness of how prevailing historical context, cultural rules and norms, mainstream and margin dynamics, and implicit and explicit biases affect power and privilege at an individual and systemic level.
		Intersectionality*	Assesses how multiple identities intersect in complex ways that create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; thoroughly identifies and addresses areas of inequity across intersecting identities within a given system.	Demonstrates moderate recognition of how multiple identities intersect in complex ways that create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; moderate ability to identify and address areas of inequity across intersecting identities within a given system.	Demonstrates a limited recognition of how multiple identities intersect in complex ways that create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage; limited ability to identify and address areas of inequity across intersecting identities within a given system.
Engaging with tension	The ability to stay present when multiple perspectives are expressed and when discomfort or conflict occurs.	Engaging with tension	Possesses the skills necessary to engage with tension in a generative manner; can work with differences as a source of creativity; avoids the tendency to minimize differences by seeking commonalities; recognizes tension as an opportunity to learn, rethink, and build relationships.	Demonstrates basic skills necessary to engage with tension in a generative manner; avoids the tendency to minimize differences by seeking commonalities; recognizes tension as an opportunity to learn, rethink, and build relationships.	Recognizes the tendency to minimize differences by seeking commonalities; recognizes tension as an opportunity to learn, rethink, and build relationships; may not possess the skills to engage with tensions in a generative manner.

*Intersectionality: the recognition that each individual carries multiple identities and those identities intersect in complex ways that create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Intersectional approaches to social change create opportunities to address inequity and increase well-being across intersection identities and social movements.

CLO3

Source: Burke, M., Poleman, W., and Strong, A. (2018) Core Curriculum Revitalization Report. Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT.

Revised: 2/6/18



Appendix C

Focus Group Agenda

Warm up Question (5 minutes)

What brought you to this group and what venues have you learned about or become more aware about equity, diversity, and/or inclusion?

Introductory Question (10 minutes)

What is a welcoming and inclusive environment? What does it look like and feel like?

Transition Question (10 minutes)

What exists at RSENR to sustain your unique strengths and needs?

Core Questions (25 minutes)

1. How have systems of power and privilege influenced RSENR's past leadership, systemic practices, and institutional culture?
2. Attaining and maintaining a welcoming environment requires action. Where have you seen active deconstruction of sexism, racism, classism, and heteronormativity?
3. Oppression and/or inequities are systemic. What patterns of oppression or inequity do you observe at RSENR?

Follow-up Questions (5 minutes)

1. What are the best ways to communicate with you about the equity assessment process?
2. What are your best hopes and worst fears about the equity assessment process and resulting strategic plan?



Appendix D

Excerpts from RSENR Climate Survey Report with Statistical Analysis

Equity Assessment Survey

Spring 2018

Rubenstein School of the Environment and Natural Resources
NR 206 Environmental Problem Solving

Presented on April 26th, 2018

Students

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May 8th, 2018

Abstract

Within the RSENR community, there is no consistent, widely distributed, transparent and reliable measure for assessing the overall social climate in regard to equity diversity and inclusion. Ensuring that our staff, faculty, students and administrators feel safe in the RSENR community is deeply important in the understanding of the school's success. This problem was addressed through collaboration with Shoreline Consulting to refine and distribute a survey about equity, diversity and inclusion in Rubenstein. Stakeholders in this project included Rubenstein staff of all kinds, faculty, current students, future students, faculty and staff, Shoreline Consulting, and the University of Vermont as a whole. Analysis of responses from an initial survey validation process lead to revision of the original survey followed by in person piloting and further refinement based on responses from piloting. The finalized survey was distributed through email, classes and meetings. A total of 438 respondents filled out the survey in Spring 2018. Results suggest that differences in identities, particularly race, sexual orientation, and household income, have a significant impact on people's perceptions of the social climate in Rubenstein. Future directions for this project include distribution of results, and further survey revision to serve the changing needs of Rubenstein.

Introduction and Context

With all of the political and social controversy around issues such as racism, sexism and equal opportunity, it's important that the Rubenstein community, within the University of Vermont, has an understanding of the atmosphere surrounding these issues. Every person that works, learns, or interacts with the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources (RSENR) should feel safe and respected. This sentiment is espoused in RSENR's Diversity Plan. The plan emphasizes that faculty and staff must be willing to change teaching approaches in order to create "a community atmosphere that celebrates diversity and respect, promotes learning, and encourages understanding, integrity, and justice" ("The Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources Diversity Plan," 2014)...

Statistical Analysis

Chi-Square tests were carried out on all questions to quantify differences between observed and expected counts across classes. Chi-Square is a non-parametric test and it is well suited for analysis of these data because they are count data. However, Chi-Square does require that each category and response be condensed so as to avoid high degrees of freedom and unreliable results. For example, we grouped responses into two options: agree/strongly agree or neutral/disagree/strongly disagree and each of the demographic categories were reduced to two options. Clearly, this approach smooths out important data for marginalized populations and exemplifies a general problem with statistical analyses of survey data of this kind. Nevertheless, telling trends emerge from the analysis.



Table 1. Differences in survey respondents' perception based on identity

Question	Race percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree [†]		Gender percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree [†]		Religion percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree		Sexual orientation percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree		Household income percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree	
	White	POC	M	F	Religious	Non	S	LGBQ	>\$75K	<\$75K
Most people in Rubenstein are devoted to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion	83.2	63.2	87.3	76.6	81.4	80.8	81.9	82.3	85.6	75.8
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about inclusion	78.2	52.6	84.1	72	74.3	75.6	78.2	65.1	82.0	70.9
I feel like my opinions and ideas are valued in the Rubenstein community	74.2	68.4	68.4	77.2	70.8	74.5	74.7	66.7	71.5	70.9
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about diversity	72.5	52.6	76.9	69	69.6	70.6	73.5	60.3	73.3	67.9
I feel emotionally safe in Rubenstein	87.4	68.4	87.3	85.4	80.5	88.1	87.7	74.6	87.4	80.6
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about gender identity	79.5	52.6	83.5	75	74.3	77.7	80.4	65.1	77.3	74.4
People with marginalized identities need to adapt to the dominant culture to be successful in Rubenstein	26.7	31.6	25.4	28.8	28.3	27	25.1	40	27.7	29.2
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about sexism	74.5	47.4	77.4	69.4	72.1	71.5	75.9	60.3	78.7	60.8



Question	Race percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree [†]		Gender percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree [†]		Religion percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree		Sexual orientation percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree		Household income percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree	
	White	POC	M	F	Religious	Non	S	LGBQ	>\$75K	<\$75K
People around me seem to be comfortable hearing different languages spoken in Rubenstein	74	47.4	77.2	69.3	75.2	69.4	71.4	71.7	75.6	68.3
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about racism	70.1	26.3	76.5	62.9	63.7	69.9	73.8	50.8	75.1	57.6
I feel comfortable sharing my opinions and ideas in Rubenstein	75.4	52.6	63.4	79.3	61.6	78.4	72.6	71.4	70.5	73.5
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about religion	52.5	42.1	57.3	49.2	45.8	55.5	51.1	50.8	55	48.8
Rubenstein Dean's Office staff effectively communicate with students	66.8	64.7	67.4	67.2	69.2	65.3	68.3	65.1	67.1	66.7
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about ableism	55.4	37.5	62.4	50.6	52.9	56	58.5	40.7	61.6	46.3
When I/we have an idea, I/ we can bring it into reality in Rubenstein	55.1	68.4	57.4	52.5	58.2	52.7	57.1	48.4	60.0	42.5
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about classism	60.9	31.6	64.7	54.9	55	58.3	58.3	49.2	69.2	44.7



Question	Race percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree [†]		Gender percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree [†]		Religion percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree		Sexual orientation percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree		Household income percentage (%) of respondents that (strongly) agree	
	White	POC	M	F	Religious	Non	S	LGBQ	>\$75K	<\$75K
Rubenstein's Dean's Office staff are transparent in their decision-making processes	42.0	52.6	44.1	41.7	49.1	40.1	43.7	36.1	48.8	35.5
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about homophobia	67.7	26.3	75.0	58.2	58.9	67.9	69.5	52.4	73.3	54.1
Rubenstein courses encourage students to work with and across differences	72.3	38.9	73.5	69.8	74.1	67	71.4	65.1	73.8	65.2
I feel physically safe in Rubenstein	96.1	78.9	93.9	96.7	92.9	95.3	94.7	91.9	95.9	91.7

Statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$) results are in **bold**

[†] This analysis only included respondents who identified as "male" or "female."

[†] This analysis only included respondents who identified as a recognizable race. Responses such as "orange" or "American" were not included.

The Chi-Square analysis clearly indicates strong differences in perception of the social climate in Rubenstein based on differing identities. Race is has the starkest differences, with 65% of the questions showing statistically significant divergence between the way white people and people of color responded to the question. Sexual orientation and household income were second; 45% of the questions were answered differently. Of all the questions, three showed the most divergence between groups: "people in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about racism," "people in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about inclusion," and "People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about homophobia." Overall, these results suggest that identities have a significant impact on how people experience the social climate in Rubenstein and view diversity, equity and inclusion.



Conclusion

Throughout the process of creating, validating, revising, piloting, implementing and analyzing the results of this survey, many relationships were built and strengthened. The survey results suggest that overall, many people view the social climate positively, though there are significant differences between groups in how they respond. These results are important and continued rigorous analysis of the data will ensure that results are distributed with integrity and used to spark further conversation about equity, diversity and inclusion in Rubenstein. The less tangible results of the survey are the conversations that were initiated by the piloting and distribution process, and they cannot be overlooked. This survey can fulfill its purpose of supporting ongoing critical engagement and iterative learning about diversity, equity and inclusion by facilitating relationships that build connections across differences within the Rubenstein community. As the survey evolves and adapts to the needs of Rubenstein's changing social climate, equitable relationships are paramount to allowing the survey to effectively catalyze change.



Appendix E

How Identity Affects Perception of Climate as Measured by Survey Responses

Question	No Significant Difference Percentage Strongly Agree	Significant Difference Percentages Strongly Agree
Most people in Rubenstein are devoted to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion	Religion Sexual Orientation	Race Gender Income
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about inclusion	Religion	Race Gender Sexual Orientation Income
I feel like my opinions and ideas are valued in the Rubenstein community	Race Gender Religion Sexual Orientation Income	
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about diversity	Gender Religion Income	Race Sexual Orientation
I feel emotionally safe in Rubenstein	Gender Religion Income	Race Sexual Orientation
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about gender identity	Gender Religion Income	Race Sexual Orientation



Question	No Significant Difference Percentage Strongly Agree	Significant Difference Percentages Strongly Agree
People with marginalized identities need to adapt to the dominant culture to be successful in Rubenstein	Race Gender Religion Income	Sexual Orientation
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about sexism	Gender Religion	Race Sexual Orientation Income
People around me seem to be comfortable hearing different languages spoken in Rubenstein	Gender Religion Sexual Orientation Income	Race
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about racism	Religion	Race Gender Sexual Orientation Income
I feel comfortable sharing my opinions and ideas in Rubenstein	Sexual Orientation Income	Race Gender Religion
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about religion	Race Gender Religion Sexual Orientation Income	
Rubenstein Dean's Office staff effectively communicate with students	Race Gender Religion Sexual Orientation Income	

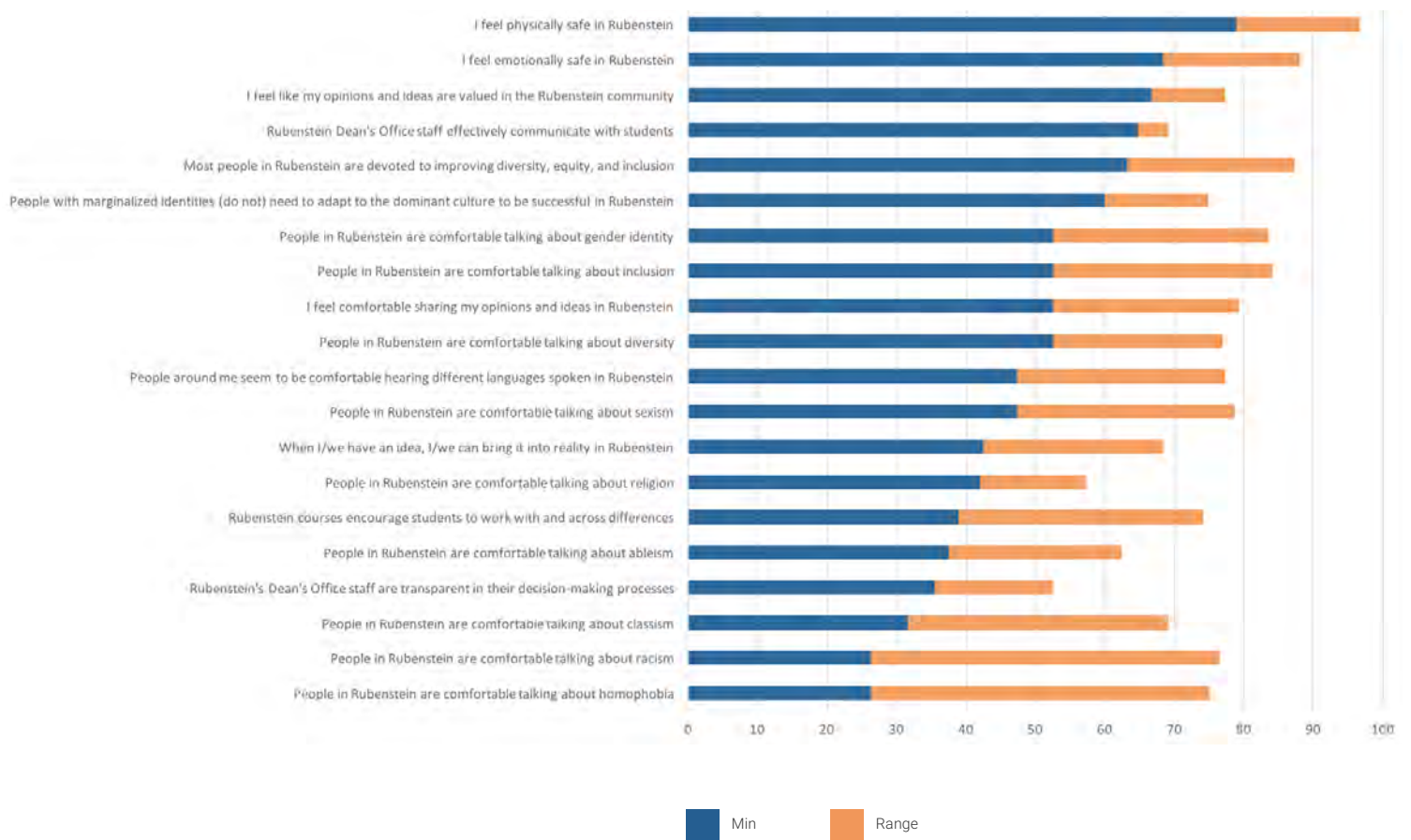


Question	No Significant Difference Percentage Strongly Agree	Significant Difference Percentages Strongly Agree
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about ableism	Race Religion	Gender Sexual Orientation Income
When I/we have an idea, I/we can bring it into reality in Rubenstein	Race Gender Religion Sexual Orientation	Income
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about classism	Gender Religion Sexual Orientation	Race Income
Rubenstein's Dean's Office staff are transparent in their decision-making processes	Race Gender Religion Sexual Orientation	Income
People in Rubenstein are comfortable talking about homophobia	Religion	Race Gender Sexual Orientation Income
Rubenstein courses encourage students to work with and across differences	Gender Religion Sexual Orientation Income	Race
I feel physically safe in Rubenstein	Gender Religion Sexual Orientation Income	Race



Appendix F

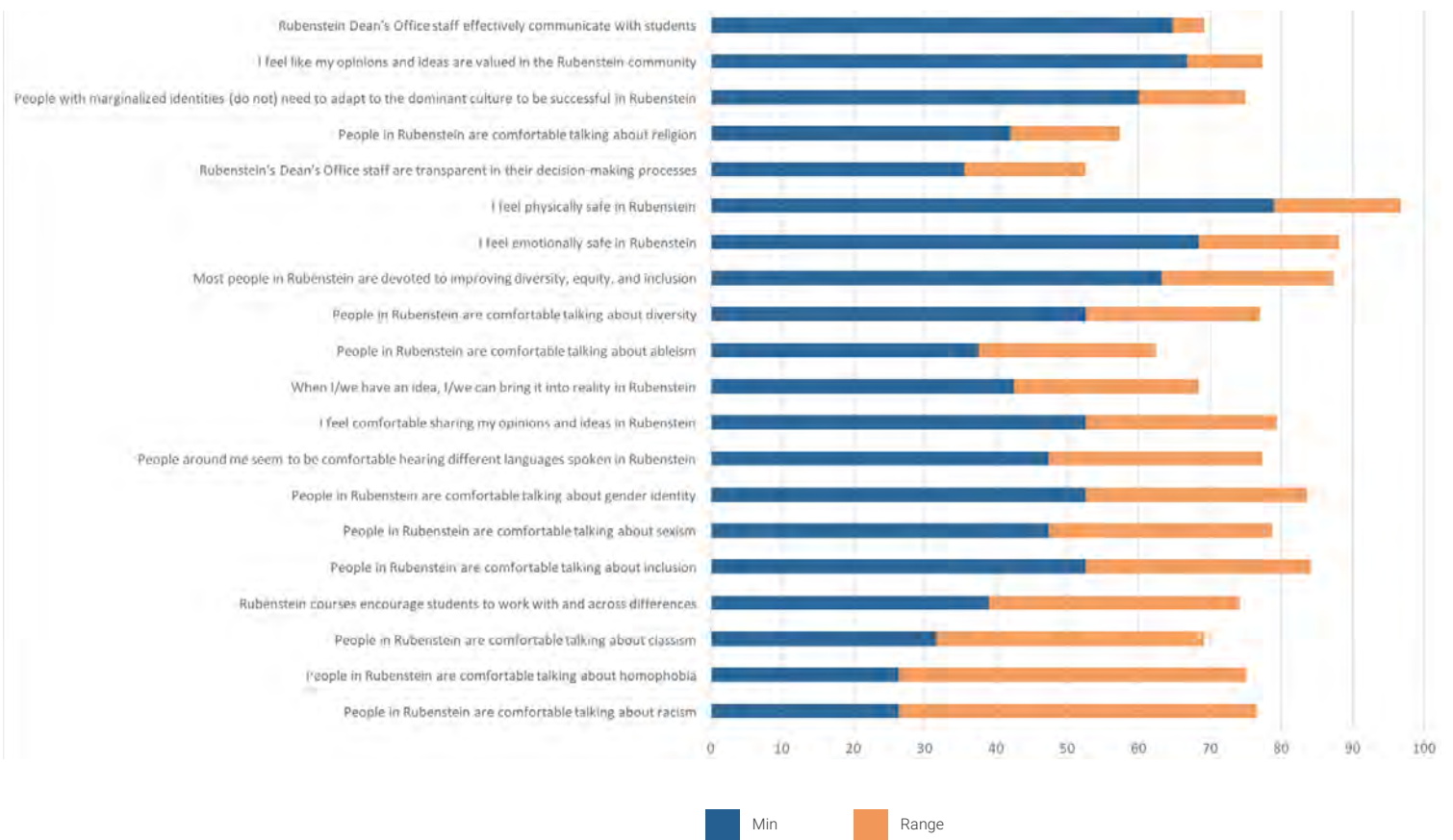
Climate Survey Ranked by Level of Agreement





Appendix G

Climate Survey Ranked by Range of Responses





Appendix H

Communication From Dean Mathews

Dear Students, Staff and Faculty,

I have listened and heard the concerns expressed last week about diversity, equity and inclusivity in our School. It is clearer than ever that students are deeply hurt by the racial bias incidents on campus and to some, the lack of a welcoming community in the School. I am deeply concerned.

Although the Rubenstein School has a long history of striving for authentic community and has embraced inclusivity and diversity, we have a long way to go. An authentic community is one where difference is respected and celebrated, rather than buried or avoided. This type of engagement requires a climate that is safe, where multiple perspectives are welcomed and differences are embraced. It is my hope and intention to create a welcoming and empowered climate in the School, one where every person feels valued, heard and included.

To that end, I am initiating several immediate actions as a first step in addressing our students' concerns.

1. Review and revision of the format and learning outcomes for the D1 first-year course, Race, Culture and Natural Resources (NR6), starting in Fall 2018.
2. Ensure appropriate professional development and training for faculty engaged in NR6.
3. Implement the recommendations of the Equity Assessment that is currently underway by Dr. Shadiin Garcia and intended for completion in June 2018.
4. Formally designate a team to lead diversity and inclusion efforts that will include Associate Dean Allan Strong, Assistant Marie Veal-Fagnant, and representation from undergraduate and graduate students.
5. Include a new metric of "demonstrated evidence of efforts to advance diverse perspectives and inclusion" in scholarship, instruction or engagement for all faculty. (NOTE: Annual performance reviews for faculty and staff already include a similar requirement.)
6. Reiterate the expectation that all Rubenstein School faculty and staff participate in the school-wide diversity and inclusion professional development series.
7. Initiate a review, by the RSENR Faculty Standards Committee, of promotion and tenure metrics to consider the inclusion of a criterion that addresses engagement in diversity, equity and inclusivity efforts.



The faculty and staff of the Rubenstein School recognize that environmental and natural resource problems are thoroughly intertwined with issues of equity and social justice. Consequently, we reaffirm our commitment to our 1996 [diversity plan mission statement](#):

The environmental and natural resource disciplines and professions have been conspicuously underrepresented by both individuals and perspectives that reflect all peoples of the nation and the world. We recognize that enhancing diversity in our School, University, and professions entails much more than simply recruiting people of color. As we strive to create an inclusive, equitable, and truly pluralistic perspective for natural resources, we must be willing to change what we teach and how we teach, incorporating diverse ideas and values into our curriculum.

I will end by expressing my appreciation to those students who courageously stepped forward to express themselves through the NoNames for Justice activism. Your voices are powerful. For the students who have not been involved, we will continue to offer opportunities for learning and solidarity over the rest of the spring semester. The Rubenstein School values and recognizes diversity in all of its forms. I, along with the School's leadership team, look forward to continuing the conversations and working together to co-create our community to ensure that it is one where we all flourish and thrive.

In Solidarity, Compassion and Relationship,

Nancy Mathews
DEAN



Appendix I

Core Class Competency Analysis and Identification of High-Load Courses

COURSE	CREDITS COVERAGE PER CREDIT	CORE COMPETENCIES COVERED	CORE KNOWLEDGE AREAS COVERED
NR 1+2	4 + 3 = 7 28 / 7 = 4	12 exposure 1 emphasis	11 exposure 2 emphasis 2 capstone
NR 9	4 23 / 4 = 5.75	12 exposure	7 exposure 2 emphasis 2 capstone
NR 6	2 16 / 2 = 8	8 exposure 4 emphasis	4 exposure
NR 103	3 14 / 3 = 4.67	5 emphasis 1 capstone	7 emphasis 1 capstone
NR 104	3 15 / 3 = 5	2 exposure 7 emphasis	1 exposure 5 emphasis
NR 205	3 17 / 3 = 5.67	4 emphasis 6 capstone	4 emphasis 3 capstone
NR 206	4 21 / 4 = 5.25	3 emphasis 10 capstone	2 emphasis 6 capstone
NR 207	1 14 / 1 = 14	11 capstone	3 capstone



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