



Sustainability Office Equity Commitments

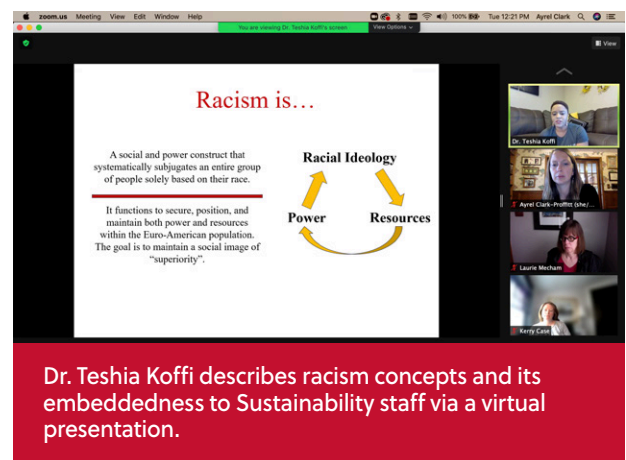
In summer 2021, the University of Utah Sustainability Office finalized its equity statement. As a follow up to its equity statement, the Sustainability Office will release annual reports about its work under each of the 4 commitments in the statement. The work done over the past year is a beginning, not an ending. An equitable society is a prerequisite for a sustainable future, and there is much to be done.

SUSTAINABILITY EQUITY STATEMENT

“The University of Utah Sustainability Office is committed to promoting social equity and justice as part of a sustainable future for all. We recognize that social equity and justice are as integral to sustainability as ecological and economic concerns. We will: center equity as a primary element of our work; act against systemic discrimination that harms people and undermines community sustainability; listen and learn from Indigenous knowledges; and create inclusive and anti-racist spaces for education, research and programming.”

Center equity as a primary element of our work

- Added equity as part of annual review process and staff goals
- Included equity as a job responsibility for student employees
- Emphasized the role of equity in the U's sustainability definition during presentations
- Focused on racism and equity in monthly strategic conversations
- Engaged in staff training provided by Office of Inclusive Excellence
- Drafted new equity statement for Sustainability Office
- Strengthened partnerships with the Feed U Pantry and Basic Needs Center
- Donated produce grown on campus to pantry instead of selling it
- Launched free campus-wide seed saving and lending library
- Recruited general education courses with equity as a main focus
- Centered equity in events through underrepresented speakers and/or equity-focused discussions/questions
- Featured mental health in Earth Week keynote address
- Launched SUSTAIN podcast to highlight environmental justice research at the U
- Included promoting equity in social media guidelines
- Developed new bike equity program



Dr. Teshia Koffi describes racism concepts and its embeddedness to Sustainability staff via a virtual presentation.

Act against systemic discrimination that harms people and undermines community sustainability

- Centered equity in climate resilience narrative to act against undervaluing the essential role of justice to a resilient future
- Supported equity and justice as undergraduate learning outcomes
- Included Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion representatives in climate work
- Learned language of anti-racism and about racism in higher education
- Adjusted hiring practices and job postings to be more inclusive
- Started reciprocal gardening project

Listen and learn from Indigenous knowledges

- Engaged with students on Indigenous knowledges for climate resilience
- Partnered with Ethnic Studies undergraduate class to envision a decolonial approach to climate planning
- Included the university's land acknowledgment at beginning of events
- Added university's land acknowledgment to GCSC website
- Started process to rename Pioneer Garden with local elder input and collaboration
- Furthered education by reading articles and books by Indigenous authors

Create inclusive and anti-racist spaces for education, research and programming

- Integrated U.N. Sustainable Development Goals to highlight that sustainability requires equity
- Adopted use of preferred pronouns
- Learned Zoom best practices to increase accessibility
- Learned ways to expand accessibility to ensure that all individuals are able to engage with our materials/events
- Described visuals during presentations to increase accessibility
- Enhanced accessibility on social media and website through alternative text descriptions
- Incorporated equity and justice messages in social media postings
- Created a special topics course about sustainability reporting (all pillars)
- Supported development of U environmental justice lab
- Created explicit statements of inclusivity within courses
- Shifted produce grown at the campus gardens to include culturally specific cuisines
- Hosted virtual events centered on accessibility of food and cooking education
- Focused GCSC seminars on equity and justice
- Updated SCIF bylaws to be more inclusive and accessible
- Released SCIF Accessibility Survey to direct program improvements
- Attended Friday Forums and other EDI-focused discussions to expand knowledge
- Read and discussed anti-racism books and articles; listened to podcasts about racism and anti-racism



In an effort to grow more inclusive produce, the gardeners at the Edible Campus Gardens planted a larger variety of peppers in the 2021 growing season.