

JEDI Committee Annual Report

June 2022

Introduction

The GWCS JEDI Committee's purpose is to support a just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive learning and working environment for all Computer Science Department faculty, staff, residents, and students regardless of age, race, ethnicity, country of origin, language, religion, spiritual practice, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, introversion/extroversion personality dimensions, and socioeconomic and mental/physical status.

In this document, we will summarize our progress towards the mission stated above with respect to three specific goals:

- 1. Regularly report the Committee's activities to the student body and to faculty**
- 2. Recommend policies, templates, timelines for implementation, measurable outcomes, and advice regarding diversity and inclusivity for Department use and implementation**
- 3. Regularly seek out and aggregate input from students and faculty focused on challenges, suggestions, and accomplishments regarding diversity and inclusivity in the Department**

Summary of Progress Towards Goals

GOAL 1: Regularly report the Committee's activities to the student body and to faculty

The committee takes great interest in transparently reporting its activities to the student body and faculty.

Town Halls

In order to facilitate an open dialogue between the committee, the student body, and faculty, the JEDI committee has committed itself to hosting CS department town halls. At a

minimum, the JEDI committee will hold two town hall meetings a year for both students and faculty, where all are invited to participate. Here, the committee will report its recent activities and also give space for the community to voice its thoughts and ideas.

The JEDI committee successfully hosted their first town hall meeting on April 21, 2022. In attendance were an estimated 30 members of the student body and faculty. During the meeting, the committee presented its formation and recent activities. At the time, the activities consisted of developing the JEDI webpage hosted on the CS Department website, providing office hour guidelines, and syllabus statements in support of JEDI-related issues. Additionally, the committee was able to hear the thoughts and ideas of the community. Members of the student body presented questions and ideas of items they would like to see implemented. These have subsequently been added to the JEDI committee action list.

JEDI Website

In order to facilitate communication of information between the committee and the community, the committee has created the JEDI webpage hosted on the CS Department website for both students and faculty. For students, the JEDI committee has compiled an exhaustive list of resources available to the GW community regarding but not limited to, bias-related incidents, discrimination, gender- and sexual- based harrasment, and reporting avenues students may access. This resource is intended to ease the process of seeking support for students who wish to do so. For faculty, the committee has listed its recommended policies for instruction at GW. This is meant to be a resource to assist instructional staff in upholding JEDI-related principles. This is also made available to students so that they may be aware of such policies. It is the committee's goal to continue updating the website as more policies are developed and recommended to the CS department.

Annual Reporting

The committee intends to publish an annual report to maintain a regular report of the committee's activities to the student body and faculty. This report will act to document and preserve the actions of the committee over the period of a year. It will be made available to all who wish to view it on the [JEDI](#) section of the CS department website.

GOAL 2: Recommend policies, templates, timelines for implementation, measurable outcomes, and advice regarding diversity and inclusivity for Department use and implementation

In our first (partial) semester of JEDI committee activities, we outlined several areas of policy recommendation we would make available to the computer science department and its stakeholders over the next year. We also formally formed a JEDI committee composed of three CS faculty members and three CS students. The details of these deliverables and outcomes are below.

What recommended policies, templates, and timelines have we identified as current or future items to explore with respect to JEDI initiatives?

- a. *Set up a JEDI committee of three student members and three faculty members (one of whom is the JEDI committee chair).*
- b. *Have a JEDI website with the recommended policies and other documents publicly available, to include:*
 1. *JEDI Charter and Bylaws.*
 2. *Student Resources including reporting channels; definitions and examples of bias, discrimination, sexual- and gender-based harrasment; chosen pronouns; and disability support services.*
 3. *Faculty Resources including recommended office hours policies and syllabus statements.*
- c. *Have a process and application forms for selecting future student JEDI members, and recruiting interested students for the JEDI student representative board.*
- d. *Amend the student evaluations with two JEDI-based questions.*
- e. *Host a town hall every semester between the JEDI committee and the CS community.*
- f. *Provide a bi-annual or annual report that includes the results of a JEDI survey.*
- g. *Provide policy suggestion on how to improve office hours to be more inclusive and useful to all students*
- h. *Recommend to faculty that a syllabus statement about JEDI related issues be included on every syllabus*
- i. *Provide a recommended blurb for faculty to include on their homepages about how interested students should approach them for research opportunities.*
- j. *Provide recommendations for groupwork policies and best practices, as well as a groupwork feedback form.*
- k. *Provide UTA/LA feedback forms that include feedback about JEDI concerns.*
- l. *Create a class-level anonymous feedback form.*

- m. Create recommended policy for faculty on how to handle deadlines and exceptions.
- n. Have an anonymous form about feedback for the JEDI committee.
- o. Consolidate how internships and other opportunities for students can be more effectively communicated.
- p. Provide recommendations for a successful collegiate environment.
- q. Formalize the LA/UTA application process in the CS department with a point person who can manage the feedback.
- r. Provide recommendations for UTA/LA training procedures.
- s. Provide six thirty-minute modules, to be deployed by instructors in various classes, that educate students on JEDI-related topics specific to the CS department.

What progress has been made towards this goal in this reporting season?

Items (*a*) through (*h*) above (in italics) have been completed; all the public artifacts are available on the JEDI website. We have internally prioritized the remaining items (*g* through *q*) to be drafted and/or refined in the upcoming fall semester and beyond.

We have also held applications for the Fall 2023 student JEDI members and approved three students for the 2022-2023 school year to serve on the JEDI committee. In addition, other interested students (from the application process) were invited to join the JEDI Student Representative Board.

The JEDI website we've created is available here:
<https://www.cs.seas.gwu.edu/justice-equity-diversity-and-inclusion-jedi-committee>

GOAL 3: Regularly seek out and aggregate input from students and faculty focused on challenges, suggestions, and accomplishments regarding diversity and inclusivity in the Department

Student Surveys and Feedback

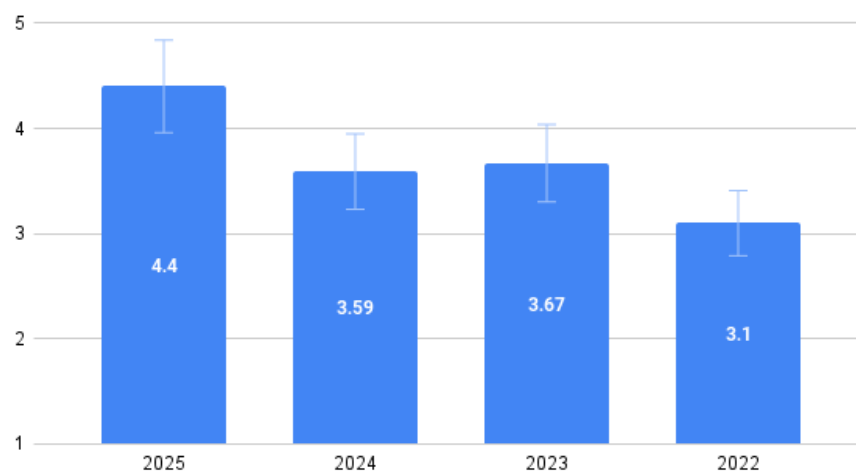
On Feb 28th, a document named "Student Proposal: Diversity and Inclusion in the Computer Science Department" was shared with the faculty. It is the results of a survey completed by 63 undergraduate students given by student leaders, which is roughly 25% of the total population in 2022.

We choose aspects of that report that will enable a yearly reassessment of the inclusivity of the department.

Question: Please rate the inclusivity of this department based on your experience.

Students were provided with the following options: [1, 5] where 1 is labeled as “Poor” and 5 is labeled as “Excellent”. They were also asked to self-report gender identity, race/ethnic group, disability status, and class (2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, other).

Average Inclusivity Rating By Class



Respondents included 20, 22, 6, and 10 individuals from the years 2025, 2024, 2023, and 2022, respectively. These results will enable us to monitor not just differences in perception by year, but also changes in student perception. Future surveys will include a question if the respondent provided feedback on a previous survey.

Later, at the end of the Spring 2022 semester, the JEDI committee arranged to have two inclusivity questions added to the formal student evaluations sent to all classes.

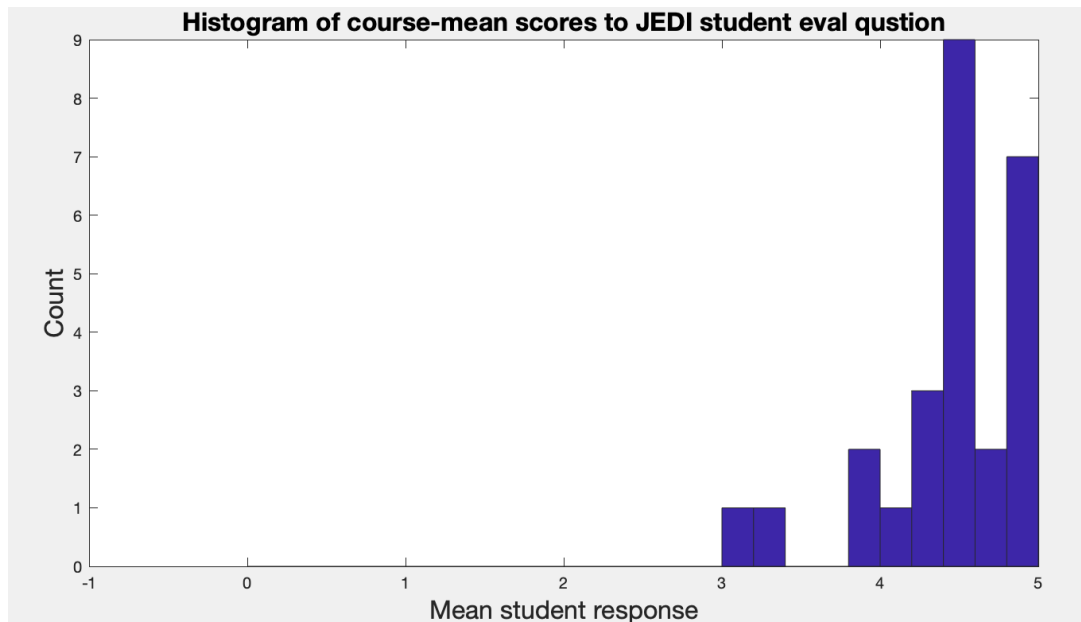
The first asked student to to rate the statement:

“Course upheld values of justice/equity/diversity/inclusion”

on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

This question was added to the student evaluation for 26 courses this semester, including most courses in the undergraduate CS core curriculum. Graduate sections were included only for courses cross-listed between the undergraduate and graduate program. For each class, we

found the mean student response score, and the histogram below shows the distribution of those scores.



The Department Chair follows up on all student concerns that are brought up in course reviews; and low scores on this question for one semester will be addressed through that course.

Students were also given the ability to comment in response to the prompt: “How can this course be improved to better support the values of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in content material and class interactions?” Representative responses to this question fall into a few clusters.

Confusion about the question, or belief that the question was asking about inclusion of JEDI in the course learning outcomes:

- n/a ? i dont know what this question would mean in terms of a python course.
- I think the class did fine. Especially since this is just computer based so not much that can be done for DEI, unless in the problems.
- No clue, why is this question part of this survey and not others?
- This is a computer programming class. Hopefully, the class doesn't deviate from the consistent values of the words and numbers, and symbols used in the python language. I don't think this question applies to this class.
- It was fun.
- More projects, less tracing.

- This class neither promoted nor shunned the values of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in content material and class interactions. It made no effort to address such issues.

Positive reactions that specifically supported the professors efforts:

- Professor treated all students with equity. Provided many resources for support and syllabus policies that helped students who were struggling the most. Professor absolutely did his best to make sure no one is left behind.
- This course upheld the values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion!
- For me, it was super impactful to have a female professor for a subject like CS that is so male-dominated!! It overall was a very inclusive class space, so I don't really have suggestions for improvements!!
- I think the [professor]'s use of the anonymous feedback form as well as [their] willingness to listen to his students when they were falling behind was incredibly inclusive and helped me feel like I wasn't alone when I myself was falling behind. I felt like he truly cared about us and our mental wellbeing while in his class.

Negative comments:

- Do not talk down to students and TAS, especially female students and TAs.
- Clear rubrics so grades aren't based on bias
- The professor did not follow the policies when approaching a student about academic issues. The professor also did not approach students who have mental health disorders appropriately when issues arose.

The frequency of responses that fell into the first cluster suggests that additional clarity is necessary to highlight that the question is asking about the justice, equity and inclusion in the way the class was taught, rather than about whether these principles were part of the learning objectives of the course. A deeper analysis of the responses that focussed on how the course was presented is ongoing.

Faculty Feedback

Though faculty have not been surveyed, they voted unanimously to create the JEDI committee.