

NIMBioS Diversity Plan

December 2009

Objective: This Plan is intended to be in compliance with the overall goals of the University of Tennessee (UT) as stated in its Diversity Action Plan (Diversity and the University of Tennessee: A Framework for Action, 2005-2010). This document states "the pursuit of knowledge and understanding is enriched by an environment in which people of diverse backgrounds learn together and from each other, and participate in free and genuine exchanges of views."

The NIMBioS Diversity Plan provides an outline for policies at NIMBioS to ensure compliance with the overall diversity goals of the UT. In particular, the UT Action Plan outlines four fundamental perspectives:

- The University is committed to respecting diversity in all its forms: different ideas and perspectives, age, ability, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, political persuasions, and the socioeconomic and geographic composition of its faculty, staff and students.
- Cultural differences are to be approached with an attitude of learning from others in order to enrich our own experiences, thus making progress toward creating a genuinely civil society in which all peoples are welcomed and honored.
- When our ideals fall short in daily practice, we will redouble our efforts to achieve a university community that reflects the pluralism of our society and of the world at large.
- As a free marketplace of ideas, the University believes that spirited discussion of diversity in all its manifold aspects and an acknowledgment of the complexity of the issues will lead to positive change.

A goal of NIMBioS is to enhance the cadre of researchers capable of interdisciplinary efforts across mathematics and biology. As part of this goal, NIMBioS is committed to promoting diversity in all its activities. Diversity is considered in all its aspects, social and scientific, including gender, ethnicity, scientific field, career stage, geography and type of home institution. The diversity goals are to be clearly stated in application guidelines for organizers of potential activities to be supported by NIMBioS, and these goals will be taken into consideration in determining which activities will be supported. NIMBioS will advertise clearly its intent to have broad diversity in participants in all activities. These diversity goals support the diversity goals of the University.

As particular methods to ensure consideration of diversity in evaluation of applications to NIMBioS for support, we have formed a Committee to Promote Diversity (CPD), whose members are on the NIMBioS Board of Advisors (BOA). Applications for workshops and working groups are required to report the diversity features of their planned activities, including what information they have about the diversity of proposed participants. If the Board of Advisors and the CPD views an application as favorable from a scientific viewpoint, but considers there to be appropriate opportunities to enhance the diversity of the requested activity which should be carried out before the activity is

supported, then the applicants will be notified and requested to modify the proposed activity in order to make the suggested changes. The CPD and BOA will be asked to make suggestions for additional participants whose presence would enhance diversity. The NIMBioS Associate Director for Scientific Activities, as part of their role in correspondence with all applicants requesting support for working groups and workshops, will correspond with the activity organizers on these matters. The responses from organizers of proposed activities with regard to diversity considerations will be evaluated by the NIMBioS Associate Director for Education, Outreach and Diversity. If there are remaining concerns about the validity of the response, the CPD will be consulted to make further recommendations about either additional changes or rejection of the application. Final authority to accept or reject an application for support lies in the NIMBioS Leadership Team, based upon the advice of the CPD and BOA.

For all supported activities, the NIMBioS Associate Director for Education and Outreach and the NIMBioS Associate Director for Diversity Enhancement will evaluate the confirmed participants with regard to diversity. Selection of participants for activities for which there are applications open to the full community (including Investigative Workshops, Conferences and Tutorials) will be made in conjunction with the organizers and particular attention will be paid to diversity in both the group of participants selected by the organizers and the group of participants selected from the open call to the community. As appropriate to enhance diversity, the organizers of these activities may be required to invite additional participants or even replace proposed participants with individuals who have comparable scientific credentials but broaden diversity of the group in other ways. Additional consideration with regard to diversity will be given to the organizers of activities, and any invited speakers/panelists at NIMBioS, with requested changes to these made to organizers based upon suggestions from the CPD and the NIMBioS Leadership Team. Consideration of individual applications for NIMBioS support (e.g. Postdoctoral Fellows, Sabbatical Fellows, Short-term visitors, REU and other summer programs) will incorporate the same diversity evaluation.

A goal of NIMBioS is to enhance the cadre of researchers capable of interdisciplinary efforts across mathematics and biology. To promote diversity in the education of such a cadre of individuals, NIMBioS will develop cooperative partnership arrangements with minority serving institutions. These partnerships have as goals enhancing the diversity of participants in NIMBioS activities and encouraging these institutions to develop their own educational efforts at the interface of mathematics and biology. Additionally, NIMBioS will encourage the faculty and researchers at these institutions to become organizers of activities at NIMBioS and will work with the administration within these institutions, as appropriate, to provide support for their faculty to take on leadership roles in NIMBioS activities. The Leadership Team and CPD will evaluate the components of this Diversity Plan at the mid-point of the NIMBioS funding cycle and report to the BOA regarding whether any modifications are suggested.