The mission of the Department of Geography is to promote diversity and inclusion through the recognition, celebration and commitment to difference and the inclusion of historically and currently marginalized voices, people, and experiences. The department’s mission includes working to eliminate everyday symbolic and material discrimination, and the rectification of unfair and disrespectful outcomes. This includes the recognition that systemic discrimination and exclusion are inherent to our institution’s policies, practices, traditions, and procedures, and the acknowledgement that they must also be addressed and corrected, along with individual acts of discrimination, for equity and inclusion plans to be effective. The Department of Geography aims to be both transparent and accountable in their mission to promote diversity and inclusion. We will also work to foster a climate in which respect for equity, diversity and inclusion becomes second nature in both the educational and employment endeavors and goals of the Department.

The Department of Geography acknowledges that this work is dynamic and on-going. We also acknowledge that it is challenging and can be troublesome for some, because systemic change requires the disruption of the status quo. We, in the Department of Geography, are committed to working with all students, staff and faculty to promote a safe space of learning, listening, and reflection that recognizes the challenges of doing diversity and inclusion work, and as such, demands a continuous and lasting commitment by all members of the Department. Along this vein, the Department of Geography calls upon all departmental members (students, staff, and faculty) to engage in the work of dismantling injustice and systemic barriers to the full and equal participation and success of all groups at the University of Tennessee including women, historically marginalized communities, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ, international students and faculty, and first-generation students and others.

To achieve the outcomes of this plan, our specific objectives are as follows.

1. Create and sustain a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive campus climate.
   a. Create a diverse and inclusive atmosphere in the Geography Department that is welcoming for all;
   b. Encourage positive attitudes and frequent attention to issues of diversity, inclusion, social justice and equality including through openly and regular discussion.

2. Attract and retain greater numbers of individuals from historically underrepresented populations into faculty, staff, and administrative positions.
   a. Recruit (when we have the opportunity to hire), retain, and support a diverse workforce
   b. Promote work-life balance.

3. Attract, retain, and graduate increasing numbers of undergraduate and graduate students from historically underrepresented populations and international students.
   a. Recruit, retain, and support a diverse pool of undergraduate and graduate students;
   b. Apply for internal and external awards to create more competitive, living wage stipends for graduate students as well as funding opportunities to travel/conduct research off campus;
   c. Promote the mutual learning of different students, experiences, perspectives etc.

4. Develop and strengthen partnerships with diverse communities in Tennessee and globally.
   a. Promote community outreach projects and programs within Knoxville and Tennessee;
   b. Promote international partnerships with international faculty and communities;
   c. Create opportunities that bring diverse communities together on campus.

5. Ensure that curricular requirements include significant intercultural perspectives.
   a. Include more curriculum that promotes diverse and intercultural perspectives;
   b. Seek out more opportunities for study abroad programs and community outreach programs;
   c. Encourage a diversity of dialogues regarding intercultural experiences;
   d. Support intercultural components of the university curriculum.

6. Prepare graduate students to become teachers and researchers in a diverse world.
   a. Foster boundary-crossing between departmental subdivisions (physical, human, techniques/GIS.);
   b. Increase graduate student awareness of undergraduates;
   c. Increase graduate student community outreach/study abroad.