

## **LTER Diversity Committee – Annual Report – 2017-2018**

Draft 1 - 4.29.18

- Name of the committee
  - LTER Diversity Committee
- Name and affiliation of the Committee Chairs
  - Alan R. Berkowitz, BES and Cary Institute
  - Clarisse Hart, HFR and Harvard Forest
- Identity of current members
  - Dan Childers - CAP
  - Osvaldo Sala - JRN
  - Elena Sparrow - BNZ
  - Marty Downs - NCO
  - Cristy Portales - CDR
  - Elizabeth Cook - CAP
  - Steward Pickett - BES
  - Julie Doll - KBS
  - Linda Pardo - HBR
  - Michael Nelson – AND
  - Charles Scaife – BES, CWT
  - Mark Anthony – HBR
  - Teresa Mourad – at large
  - Wren Walker-Robbins – at large
  - Daniel Nidzgorski – at large
  - Jorge Ramos – at large
- How membership is determined (identified by sites, voluntary, appointed by the Executive Board, etc)
  - Members volunteer for the Committee. Our goal is to have as many sites represented as possible, and for the membership to reflect the full diversity of our community in many dimensions.
- Meeting frequency
  - The Committee met in May, July and September 2017 (with a small informal meeting at the ESA meeting in August 2017), along with intensive email exchanges leading up to and following a meeting by the Chair with NSF LTER program officers in November 2017.
  - The Committee met in April 2018.
  - The Committee plans to meet on a monthly basis between now and the ASM in late September 2018.
  - We will establish a regular meeting time at our Committee meeting during the ASM.
- Major activities or accomplishments for the year
  - Gathering information from each site about diversity-related resources, including staff, diversity plans and other policies, and initiatives.
    - We created a google sheet - LTER Site Diversity Resources - 2018 that includes information about diversity-related resources and activities from early surveys, plus

columns for current. Members are helping update the information for their own and other assigned sites.

- Diversity plans are posted in a committee folder and linked from the NCO website for BES, CAP, VCR, and GCE, with statements included in recent proposals from KBS and JRN that will be posted soon.
- Supporting diversity related activities of the LNCO and Executive Committee.
  - Provide diversity-related resources for NCO website
  - Provide input for the NCO Diversity Plan
  - Review and support NCO's efforts to survey Working Group participants before and after participation for a combination of demographics and outcomes
  - A committee of the Science Council (Mike Goeff Frank Davis, Kari O'Connell) is working on a Network policy with regards to Title IX.
- Supporting and learning from activities at sites, including promoting the development and implementation of Site Diversity Plans, diversity trainings, etc.
  - We gathered very useful input from the NSF LTER Program Officers about how to craft useful diversity sections for renewal proposals. These should emphasize our commitment to diversity and the activities we plan to undertake, rather than propose quantitative metrics or goals. However, the more concrete and specific the plans, the stronger they are likely to review.
  - HBR is doing training (by HBRF) of people working in the field with respect to Title IX, which can serve as a model and platform for addressing other issues beyond sexual harassment.
- Documenting diversity of LTER site participants
  - The Committee is considering ways to help sites document the diversity of their participants. Options include 1) tapping into existing NSF efforts to collect demographic or participant data (associated with Annual Reports), or 2) an annual or periodic survey conducted by the site using the NCO working group participant survey's demographic items as a starting point.
- Planning cross-site student recruitment and engagement activities.
  - The Diversity Committee and the Higher Education Working Group of the Education Committee have been considering a number of models for opportunities for diverse students to engage in LTER science. These ideas were discussed with the NSF LTER Program Officers in November 2017 for their input, and we were encouraged to pursue our ideas for shared resources to support mentors and mentees in REU and similar LTER-based programs, and various models for cross-site student engagement.
  - We are exploring ways to provide an LTER presence at SACNAS and similar meetings.
- Assessment, documentation and research activities
  - Members of the LTER Diversity Committee (Berkowitz, Mourad) are participating in the Undergraduate Field Experiences Research Network (UFERN), and RCN-UBE headed by Kari O'Connell (Andrews LTER). This includes planning a session at the first UFERN Network Meeting that will focus on questions about who does and does not choose to participate in field programs and why. The idea of conducting cross-site research about outcomes of LTER education and engagement programs for undergraduates is of interest to the committee, with some caution about needing care in comparing different sites.
- Fostering inclusive and supportive LTER communities

- The committee has discussed a number of possible activities in pursuit of a mission driven by cultural competence and support rather than just recruitment and documenting diversity. This will be an important focus of effort in the future.
  - Identifying potential funding opportunities for work in this arena
    - The Committee shared information and experiences with various sources of funding for diversity-related activities. This included the INCLUDES and AGEF programs over the past year.
  - All Scientist Meeting preparation (see Planned Activities section below)
- Subcommittees or working groups
  - The following are potential working groups that are currently under discussion.
    - Fostering a culture of inclusion and support.
    - Documenting our diversity
    - Recruitment and engagement of diverse students and/or young scientists.
- Planned activities for the coming year
  - Build and sustain a social network and infrastructure to support LTER diversity
    - Continue to grow membership in the Committee and arrange for the regular rotation of committee chairs
    - Hold regular committee meetings (monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly to be determined)
    - Complete database of staff contacts, resources and initiatives at each site
  - We will be continuing the activities described above in our three main areas: recruitment and engagement, fostering a culture of inclusion and support, and documenting our diversity.
  - ASM
    - Diversity Committee will meet, with any interested LTER community members encouraged to attend.
    - We are working with the Higher Education working group of the Education Committee to explore ways to bring diverse LTER undergraduates to the meeting.
    - A pre-meeting survey of the LTER community for concerns and suggestions concerning diversity is under consideration.
    - Proposals for the following ASM sessions are in preparation:
      1. Fostering a community discussion of diversity, inclusion and mentoring. Cristy Portales, Clarisse Hart and Charles Scaife
      2. Best practices in recruiting diverse students and young scientists.
      3. Town Hall session to share ideas and concerns about diversity.
      4. Unconscious bias training. There was great enthusiasm for offering some kind of unconscious bias training, as a session at the ASM and/or resources for sites.
  - The following uses of Committee funds are being considered:
    - Supporting LTER REUs – especially students from traditionally underrepresented groups– at the ASM.
    - Sending an LTER site rep from a site nearest to SACNAS, AISES annual meetings (leveraging support from their own site) with an exhibit table to represent student opportunities in all of LTER.
    - Bringing a facilitator to ASM to provide a session of unconscious bias training, town hall, or other kind of inclusion session (related specifically to ecology/field stations, if possible)
    - Support for a distributed undergraduate seminar.
  - Other activities under consideration

- In our conversation with the NSF LTER Program Officers, we discussed the possibility of having the Diversity Committee provide input to NSF re: diversity components of proposals and mid-term reviews.
- Upcoming changes in leadership, purpose, or process
  - After operating with just one co-Chair for most of the year, Clarisse Hart resumed as co-chair in April 2018.
  - We anticipate discussion of Committee leadership, including plans for regular rotation of co-chairs, at the ASM.
  - We also anticipate discussion of sub-committees at the ASM, along with plans for specific initiatives supported by the core funding from the NCO and, where possible, leveraged grants.