

Annual Committee Report Template (May 2020-November 2021)

Due Nov 1st, 2021

1. **Date of report:**
20 October 2021
2. **Name of Committee:**
Diversity
3. **Name and site affiliation of the Committee Chair (or co-chairs or Executive Board):**
Nameer Baker (KBS), Cora Baird (VCR)
4. **List of current members:**

Members:

Ana Aguilar-Islas (NGA)
Lihini Aluwihare (CCE)
David Bell (AND)
Alan Berkowitz (BES)
Jennifer Bowen (PIE)
Renée F. Brown (MCM)
Clara Chiasson (HBR)
Elizabeth Cook (CAP)
Kim Eichhorst (SEV)
Sarah Evans (KBS)
Gretchen Gerrish (NTL)
Laura Gough (ARC)
Clarisse Hart (HFR)
Chris Hintz (GCE)
Gretchen Hofmann (SBC)
Cora Johnston (VCR)
Susannah Lerman (CAP)
Joel Llopiz (NES)
Vanessa Lougheed (BLE)
Sarah Messenger (ARC-alt)
Teresa Mourad (NONE)
Michael Nelson (AND)
Linda Pardo (HBR)
Cristy Portales-Reyes (CDR)
Oscar Schofield (PAL)
Elena Sparrow (BNZ)
Quincy Stewart (CAP)
Jonathan Thompson (HFR)
Maria Uriarte (LUQ)
Rebecca Vega-Thurber (MCR)

Enrique Vivoni (JRN)
Kally Worm (CDR)
Lydia Zeglin (KNZ)

5. How membership is determined (identified by sites, voluntary, appointed by the Executive Board, etc)

Membership is 'representative', with reps identified by sites. Additional members of sites may join on a volunteer basis.

6. Meeting frequency:

Monthly, rotating between full committee meetings and working group sessions

7. Major activities or accomplishments for the year:

Our work since May 2020 has focused on developing a community of practice around DEI in the LTER network. We have focused on finding struggles and opportunities shared across sites and have worked to help sites learn from each other's efforts. Within the committee, representatives highlighted priority DEI efforts, especially those that are better addressed at the network level, rather than by individual sites. Working groups emerged from those priorities (see details in the next section). Beyond specific meetings and initiatives, much of our first year and a half has focused on supporting sites as we navigate the reinvigoration of our DEI efforts, including committee formation, plan drafting, and providing professional development to improve inclusion.

The Diversity Committee provided iterative feedback during the LNO's development of a demographic survey for the new community hub. That survey should eventually provide a basis for evaluating improvements in diversity and inclusion across our sites. Our committee also facilitated a discussion of DEI efforts with the Lead-PI Group, which provided a productive opportunity for PIs to hear about progress and processes at other sites. We also met with the Decadal Review panel and established the role of the LTER DEI committee within the network as an organ for the collection and dissemination of best practices for inclusivity and for community building across a collection of geographically-disparate and relatively isolated field stations .

Perhaps our most successful initiative so far has been the development of a Community Building seminar series, lead by LTER grad and post-doc Cristy Portales. Our group recognized that the network can support LTER scientists by providing a broader community in which scientists with underrepresented identities can find community, mentors, and other support. The seminar series featured a science talk by a URM LTER scientist, followed by space for continuing conversations and community building - explicitly held as a space for those who identify as underrepresented, not as a learning space for allies.

In November 2021, we will host our first invited expert speaker to help educate our committee members on an issue shared across sites.

8. Currently active subcommittees or working groups:

We established a formal network-wide DEI committee with representatives from each site in March 2020. In May 2020, we developed specific working groups within the committee as a means for committee members to target their efforts towards issues for which having access to the wider LTER network would provide an advantage. These groups continued offline throughout 2020, but in spring 2021 we made the decision to directly support working groups by devoting bimonthly DEI committee meetings towards working group strategy sessions. Currently working groups include:

Community Building - Diversity of researchers across the network exceeds the diversity found at each of our sites. This group works on leveraging the presence of diverse researchers across the LTER network to provide a community for students and scientists from historically excluded groups (HEGs). Members are recruited to present their research virtually, then attendees connect in discussion sessions around shared identities or DEI issues within STEM.

Resources - This group collects DEI-specific resources (articles, webinars, podcasts, and verified trainings) from within and outside the LTER network, and curates them for inclusion on the LNO website and in monthly Network newsletters. Many of these resources are targeted towards allyship, as effective allyship hinges upon self-education. The group also collects the products of DEI committee workshopping sessions to develop best practices across the network.

Field Safety - This group publicizes the need for field safety resources at individual LTER sites, and collects Field Safety-specific resources and provides them to the Resources WG.

Fundraising - This group identifies funding opportunities for enhancing DEI in STEM that fit the strengths of the LTER network, and develops proposals for such calls. The group is currently targeting the Research and Mentoring for Postbaccalaureates in Biological Sciences [call](#) with a proposal centered around leveraging the network to develop a cohort for graduate students from HEGs that can be provided with targeted mentoring and professional development.

9. Priorities for the coming year:

Now that we have developed an understanding of some of the shared progress and struggles across sites, we will prioritize bringing in experts to help sites overcome obstacles and improve outcomes on DEI efforts. We are starting with workshops on building engagement in DEI work and the technicalities of codes of conduct and reporting. We have also spent much of the last year gathering ideas and resources from sites and will be working to curate those resources. Our goal is to develop both accessible resources sets and connections to exemplary sites

that can be leveraged as sites take up new efforts. We will also prioritize the sustainability of the Community Building seminar series.

10. Any recent or upcoming changes in leadership, purpose, or process:

We developed a co-chair structure for administering the committee, which has been a success and which we will recommend going forward. We also developed a steering committee, which provides a slightly larger leadership group that meets quarterly to discuss ways in which the co-chairs and committee can best meet the needs identified by the full committee.

11. Do you see specific opportunities for improving network coordination (or coordination with other networks) that are of interest to your committee?

a. If so, are there specific ways that the network leadership (PIs, LNO) could support your committee to realize those opportunities?

- Good assessments and maintaining anonymity at sites with currently low researcher diversity is a shared challenge across sites. Having assistance from LNO with a cross-site survey centrally administered with the option for a site-specific section would provide critical support. Having the expertise or third party person to analyze the results and provide anonymized reports would help sites respond to findings while protecting identities of their researchers. The Community Hub demographic survey is a step in the right direction, though we'd like to see climate assessment included soon.
- Community Building seminars have been among our most successful efforts. To make them sustainable, LNO logistical support for operating the seminars would allow the subcommittee to focus on sustaining good content development and supportive practices within each session.