School of Oceanography Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee
Terms of Reference

Membership

The committee should have six core members serving one- to two-year terms with addition members added for term lengths based upon the current task of the committee. The core committee membership should include faculty, staff, and grad students; while undergraduate members could be considered for the task-based members.

Our current proposal for core members would be two faculty members, two staff members (one from the administrative staff, one from the research or ship staff), one graduate student, and one graduate student or post-doc. All members would serve staggered two-year terms. One of the faculty members should serve as chair of the committee.

Additional members would be added to the committee based upon the current task(s) of the committee. We think no more than 3 additional members, bringing the total to 9, should be added. At least one of the additional members must be a faculty member. The chair should also consider ensuring two grad students are on the committee. The terms of these members could be as short as a quarter or as long as a year.

Selection of members can be a combination of volunteers and director’s choice. When the official committee is announced, the director could ask for volunteers and then select from among those who express interest.

Committee’s Role in Advising the School

We feel very strongly that there is a mandate for written documentation of the committee’s recommendations submitted to both the Director and the Faculty Council. There should also be a written response from the Director and the Faculty Council to the committee reports. In addition, the chair of the committee should provide updates on the committee’s discussions during one faculty meeting per quarter. We are still unsure of the best method for sharing information with the staff.

Tasks for the Diversity Committee

We have developed a list of possible tasks for the committee to address over the next few years. When we discussed ranking the tasks, three topics/suggestions came to the forefront as important for establishing a starting point for working on any of the tasks. These are:

- Compiling statistics on the current (and recent) composition of the School including faculty, staff (including the marine operations), graduate
students, and undergraduate students. Without a baseline, progress cannot be measured.

- Compilation of graduation outcomes – where do our BS, MS, and PhD students go afterwards, where are they in 5 years? This is important for increasing the diversity of our students. If we cannot demonstrate successful outcomes (especially at the undergrad level), then it is difficult to recruit into the field.

- We think an all-hands meeting with Terryl Ross would also be useful. It would demonstrate the school’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. We do not think this should be a lecture but more of an interactive workshop. (We also wanted to ensure a high rate of participation.)

We also believe the School should have a diversity statement – although actions are more important than words. Preparation of a diversity statement should be done sooner rather than later, but this task should not involve a major commitment of time.

Among the lists of other tasks, we believe increasing the diversity and inclusion within our students at both undergrad and grad level should be the highest priority.

The School and college have not tapped into the resources on upper campus (e.g. LSAMP, OMAD) or at the branch campuses (i.e. more diverse student population) for increasing the diversity within our undergraduates. We also need to not only successfully recruit students from diverse backgrounds, but we also need to ensure their success through multiple types of support – financial, cultural, and academic mentoring. We should also be sure to provide undergraduate research opportunities within individual labs for these students.

We should also support our undergraduates in the fellowship application process for those who wish to continue towards graduate studies.

At the graduate level, additional targeted support would help greatly with recruitment. The committee can also examine other barriers to successful recruitment of graduate students. For example, Atm. Sci. has rewritten the prompt for the personal statement to allow the applicants to address overcoming personal challenges.

Other tasks include:

- Increasing the diversity of staff – ensuring that the person placing the ad uses the UW Staff Diversity Toolkit (https://www.washington.edu/diversity/staffdiv/hiring-toolkit/)
- Educating the school (especially the faculty) to increase their awareness of topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (e.g. implicit bias)
- Coordination and recognition of diversity efforts and outreach within the School. This includes both acknowledgements at an event such as Convocation, and recognition as part of the promotion/merit process.
- Increasing the diversity of faculty hires.
Note that this list is not meant to be a ranking.