

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Committee
Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Cornell University

Strategic Plan

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Note this is a working document which we expect to modify.

Vision

The Cornell EAS DEIAR Committee has a vision of creating and maintaining a diverse, engaged and welcoming scientific community in the department with which to foster scientific innovation.

Values

To that end we are committed to the following values:

- Community building requires leadership in diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism
- Excellence can only be achieved with everyone present, valued, and engaged.

Key performance Indicators (KPI)

The Committee recognizes achieving a department that upholds our values will be a constant, long process requiring assessment:

- Evaluate progress in increasing diversity at all levels (undergraduate, graduate, research and academic staff, and faculty) using appropriate metrics
 - College level or department level metrics should show the same diversity or better as wider US population (for traditionally marginalized communities targeted here, we use the Graduate School definition: <https://gradschool.cornell.edu/diversity-inclusion/funding-and-resources/graduate-school-fellowships-in-support-of-diversity/>)
 - We recognize that some metrics cannot be used for our small department, and that some communities are systematically undersampled in the wider US population. With these caveats we will try to evaluate, however, the diversity in the department.
- Evaluate progress in equity, inclusion and anti-racism in the department
 - Surveys should show improved climate within the department
 - Climate surveys without diversity content can be conducted within the department
 - College level or national field surveys will be used to assess progress
 - Service and leadership positions within the department should show increased diversity at all levels (undergraduate, graduate, staff and faculty)
 - Attendance at department events should be improved

Short-term goals with our partners – 2021-2022 academic year:

- Modify the web page to improve visibility
- Schedule community building events in the department Winter and Spring 2022
- Offer peer mentoring and network-building opportunities
- Improved undergraduate and graduate diversity recruitment and admission
- Hold an undergraduate open house

- Provide a professional development diversity course Spring 2022 for all groups: Navigating the Future: focusing on Diversity, Equity, and Anti-racism, encouraging undergraduates, graduate students, staff and faculty to attend and work towards
- Develop climate survey for our department that meets College/University requirements and conduct baseline survey integrating with ongoing College/University surveys
- Work on enhancing postdoctoral scholars mentoring in EAS
- Continue efforts to build diversity, equity and inclusion efforts by having faculty participate in a ‘My Voice My Story’ session moderated by the Graduate School, with other parts of the department following.

Long-term goals with our partners – Five-year plan:

- Identify specific goals for improving engagement in diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism efforts within EAS for students, staff and faculty
- Ensure that individuals from under-represented and traditionally marginalized groups are at least at the same proportions in the department as they are in the general US population: Do better than the pool statistics
- Evaluate five-year effectiveness overall: diversity, inclusion, participation within department, and effectiveness of new student recruitment and admission using surveys and moderated community meetings
- Hold a session at a professional conference (AGU) with NSF funding for national initiative
- Continue from URGE success to place Cornell EAS visibly and prominently
- Develop an Earth Day open house
- Follow up with students after graduation
- Improve undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral fellow and faculty recruitment and retention through lead or participating in large-scale grants and providing a leadership role in new projects

Status and Fall 2021 efforts

The objectives of the Committee are to present a positive face to the broader university and public population through visibility and engagement, and work towards more diversity in our population, as well as a more equitable, inclusive and anti-racist environment.

- Web page revision through the Web Page Task Group
- Engagement within the department through the Engagement Task Group
- Partnering with other groups in the department such as the grassroots IDEEAS and URGE pod, undergraduate Pangea group and the graduate SGO group and report their ongoing activities
- Improve diverse Graduate recruitment, retention and engagement (through Director of Graduate Studies work by Matt Pritchard and Natalie Mahowald)

Projects

Engagement task group:

- Encourage everyone in the department to engage in our efforts
- Use the idea of telling our own stories to each other to build trust and understanding
- Engage with our professional organizations to both learn from their initiatives and teach them what we have learned

- Support other organizations efforts within the department (IDEEAS, SGO, ESSA, CCAMS)
- Peer Mentoring for undergraduate, graduate, academic and research staff, and faculty sessions (monthly)

Web page task group:

- Goals: Advertise what is happening in EAS DEIAR efforts to both external and internal Cornell audiences
- New draft web page will be posted shortly (already developed temporary placeholder, and linked directly from the main web page).
- Build a better web page with our partner diversity-focused groups
- Improve the use of social media from the department for diversity issues
- Work with our professional organizations to advertise and link to our efforts
- Use the broad societal critical relevance and impacts of Earth and atmospheric sciences to engage with a more diverse population.

Other activities within EAS

Improved Graduate student recruitment and retention efforts (DGSs: Matt Pritchard, Toby Ault and Natalie Mahowald)

- Cohort building, professional development “course” EAS6920 for graduate students (and others) offered every semester
- What we have done (2019-2021)
 - Equitable admissions:
 - Removed general GRE requirement (2021)
 - implemented rubric to use in holistic admissions based on attending workshop and learning best-practices (2020-2021)
 - added required personal statement to grad application (2022)
 - Events to recruit diverse applicants:
 - emailed McNair, National Name Exchange students interested in EAS fields
 - EAS Webpage lists faculty recruiting each year and ad in Eos (start in 2020)
 - Participated in Cornell STEM graduate recruitment day (online) (2020-2021)
 - successfully applied and was accepted in 2020 as AGU Bridge Partner with access to ~150 diverse applicants
 - Starting in 2022 a 3 year NSF GeoPaths funded summer internship called CorGGLE to recruit under-represented non-geoscience undergraduate students to graduate geoscience programs. Partnering with 4 MSIs plus a rural university
 - Retention:
 - Added temporary committees for all incoming students to give multiple points of contact besides advisor (2018)
 - Added required 4th member to PhD committees and 3rd member for MS committees to provide additional mentors for students (2021 for both AS and GS)
 - Encouraged all first-year students to develop a Shared Expectations Agreement (onboarding document) jointly with their advisor (2020-2021)
 - Encouraged all students to complete an Individual Development Plan each year of graduate school to self-assess their skills and career goals (2020-2021)
 - Expanded EAS 6920 workshops to full year with input on topics to discuss from students including peer mentoring

- With IDEEAS and URGE updated and expanded handbooks for Safe, Equitable and Accessible conference travel and fieldwork
- Merged AS and GS handbooks and expanded sections on resources for students and mentoring

Improved faculty recruitment, retention and community building

- Both the COE and CALS are highlighting increased diversity (e.g. recent CALS cohort hire in diversity) and recent hires have been more diverse, although further work is required
- An Intergroup dialog project session was held with faculty Dec 8 and 9, and further work will occur to ensure better communication and community within the faculty, which then could be built upon for better faculty/student or faculty/staff interactions.

Partner update: IDEEAS (<https://ideeas.eas.cornell.edu>) is a grassroots non-hierarchical organization promoting diversity equity and inclusion in EAS that began in September 2019. This group has held over 40 meetings over the past 2 years with an average of ~10 people per meeting, as well as organizing ice-breaker and kick-off events. This group was highlighted in a recent CALS article on EDI: <https://cals.cornell.edu/news/2021/10/cals-students-build-new-inclusive-paths> and received the 2021 Social Justice award from Graduate School Office of Inclusion and Student Engagement: <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2021/06/twenty-receive-awards-recognizing-inclusive-excellence>. More on IDEEAS here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zILJd9KREi54FBEs4_Srx2Pa2kdaO1zI78gTCiMSjLE/edit

Partner update: URGE Pod: During the 2020-2021 academic year, Unlearning Racism in the Geosciences began a program, which had a Cornell EAS pod, and produced evaluation of the Cornell EAS department as well as recommendations, some of which have already been implemented. More here: on the national/international program, and the output from our pod is also available here: <https://urgeoscience.org/>. Some of this work will be continued in the DEI course being offered in the Spring of 2022.