

June 30, 2020 DEI Working Group Call

Attendees: Alyssa Willson, Anna Sjodin, Jody Peters, Jason McLachlan

Agenda/Notes:

- Update on [IPEDS](#)
 - Update on [Survey](#) for IPEDS degree categories - Jody
 - We'll follow up on this for the next call. This is definitely a priority for the group, but we also acknowledge that there have been set backs because of COVID adjustments and transitioning summer courses to be online, as well as the impacts of the nation-wide #Black Lives Matter protests, but especially in Minnesota where John and Diana are in the heart of the protests

- DEI Bibliography - any additional materials?
 - It is now posted on [the website](#), but we can/should/will continue to add to it.
 - Diana/Jody need to work together to add citations from the Strategic Plan
 - Alyssa and Megan from the McLachlan lab are compiling a reading list for the McLachlan, Medvigy, Rocha labs at ND. As we go through that material we will add resources that we have found helpful to the DEI Bibliography.

- Book Group will meet starting the week of July 13 to go through [The Years That Matter Most: How College Makes or Breaks Us](#)
 - Jody will send out a tweet again to send an invitation for the book group, then send out the invite to everyone in case there are people who are generally available any time that works for the rest of the group on the doodle.
 - Assign the [White Caucus resources](#) before the first meeting to have people go over pg 13, Personal Qualities of an Effective Activist. Also go over the 6 qualities listed at the beginning of the call to help set up the structure that we want this group to be a learning opportunity for us to work towards these qualities. Pg 14 - barriers to working collaboratively would also be good to go through at the beginning of the group

- Anything else for the group to focus on? Anything related to the RCN NEON Forecasting Challenge?
 - McLachlan/ND Bio Department has been thinking about racial justice and diversity a lot. Is this the case at U of Idaho. No. The focus at U of Idaho are potential upcoming furloughs, early retirements, budget cuts and how to make sure students can come back in the fall because of the importance of that income.

 - McLachlan lab is taking efforts to take steps to make our research more relevant to non-white groups. But this is a case where it would be really nice to be able to talk to each other in person.

- A big barrier to diversifying STEM is that the subject matter not relevant to people of color and minorities. If you are worried about your own safety or have bigger social issues, then learning about why there are a certain number of tree species in an area is not going to be of importance to you. In this way, Ecology is a field of privilege.
 - Jason has been helping Diana with her summer REU program. It is amazing. Jason talked to one of Diana's REU student last week about grad school. When he asked what she wanted to get out of grad school, she said she wanted to do something to give back to the tribes. Wants to work for natural resources division, conservation, environmental justice. Lots of things that ecology can contribute that is relevant. It might be better for the student to get a masters degree in department of natural resources to get the experiences that she needs to get the job she wants. For grad school to be more accessible for this student, it would require moving academic ecology to where this student would feel she is getting the tools and knowledge she needs to find the type of job she is interested in.
- Alyssa has been thinking about working with undergrads. Issue with undergrad education - underrepresented groups don't have the knowledge of how to apply to grad school or what kind of grad schools exist. This is a practical place that EFI or the McLachlan lab can provide resources to help with.
 - Jody has seen in the Career Center at ND - students don't know the process even at ND. Anna had the same experience as an undergrad. She didn't have the support from her undergrad institution but was able to explore grad school options using resources from her research experiences in Chicago with the Lincoln Zoo and Museum
 - Latest Nature has a number of articles about how science is going to change. If it turns into a totally pragmatic and utilitarian view, that will be a loss. There is a need to balance between pragmatic work and theoretical work if the goal is to manage the planet and find a way to have people and the environment coexist sustainably.
- Strategic Plan - it would be good to follow up on and get this in a form that is publishable. It is a great guidance document that is evidence based and has specific goals. If we follow the steps in the plan, then it could help us with our efforts to diversity EFI as well as become a manuscript we could submit for publication.