

School of Environmental and Forest Sciences University of Washington

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Annual Report

2020-2021 Academic Year

Overview

The 2020-2021 academic year was the second year of a faculty-led Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC) in the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences (SEFS). A greatly increased focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion at the national, state, university, and department levels characterized this year. At the same time, the ongoing pandemic resulted in substantial stress on SEFS community members. There were important accomplishments and there is much high priority work left to do. The most notable accomplishment of the committee during the 2020-2021 academic year was the adoption of the SEFS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan by the SEFS faculty. That plan is now available on the [SEFS website](#), and lays the groundwork for efforts going forward.

Committee Membership

This year, for the first time as part of the formalization of the committee outlined in the DEIC Plan, members beyond the two co-chairs were asked to take on formal roles on the committee. Those roles are provided in Table 1, along with the complete committee membership.

Committee Events

The committee held quarterly open meetings during the academic year. All meetings were held over Zoom. The fall meeting was held on November 19. The first portion of the meeting featured remarks from Director Dan Brown, Associate Dean Terryl Ross, and leadership of the CRIW (Confronting Racism and Internalized Whiteness) affinity group. The bulk of the meeting focused on obtaining community input on the draft diversity, equity, and inclusion plan.

The winter meeting was held on February 18. The meeting again included an update from Director Dan Brown and from DEIC member Bryce Bartl-Geller who led a SEFS [URGE Pod](#) during the year. There were several opportunities for community feedback, including review and feedback on a draft bias incident reporting tool that the DEIC helped SEFS to develop (with a briefing led by DEIC member Lauren Satterfield). The bulk of the meeting was devoted to obtaining community feedback on the DEIC's annual priorities (see below).

Finally, the spring meeting was held on May 13. DEIC member Bryce Bartl-Geller provided an update on the activities of the SEFS Urge Pod and provided an overview of the SEFS budget request for the year. Director Dan Brown also provided an update. During this meeting, the committee elicited feedback from community members on priorities for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Committee Activities

The committee accomplished several important items over the course of the academic year, covering a variety of dimensions:

- The finalized SEFS DEI Plan was adopted by the faculty during late winter quarter (<https://bit.ly/3IQ3kwy>).
- The DEIC took on its first annual priority setting effort, which led to the identification of 4 DEI Plan sections as priorities for the year: (1) Section 4.4 (Providing a Supportive Environment for Students), (2) Section 6.2 (Learning about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), (3) Section 7.2 (Incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into the Teaching Mission), and (4) Section 7.4 (Improving Relationships with Washington Tribes).
- The co-chairs worked with SEFS Communications and Marketing Manager Molly Hottle to reorganize and update the information on the SEFS website regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (<https://sefs.uw.edu/about/diversity/>). The result is a single landing page where all information on this topic can be accessed and many resources are linked.
- The DEIC worked closely with SEFS administration to develop and launch a tool for reporting concerns and grievances, along with a system describing how SEFS leadership will respond to incident reports: (<https://sefs.uw.edu/about/reporting-concerns-and-grievances/>).
- For the first time, the DEIC developed a budget for DEI-related activities. This budget

was approved and supported by SEFS leadership, with a few amendments made in recognition of other efforts already underway to support identified needs. .

- The DEIC reviewed and commented on the Promotion, Merit, and Tenure committee's plan to develop explicit approaches for evaluating and integrating DEI into the PMT process.
- The DEIC contributed to an effort designed to create a 1-credit graduate class that will increase student sense of community and familiarity with faculty.
- The DEIC contributed to review of requests for proposals (RFPs) for several funding streams designed to support student research; the RFPs were designed to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in funding decisions.
- The DEIC continued its work toward a Community Equity Initiative space; this space is scheduled to open in September 2021 when campus reopens.

Next Steps

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the DEIC will have a mix of new members as well as returning members. The DEIC will have two new faculty co-chairs (existing chairs have completed their two-year terms). One of the current co-chairs (Harvey) will remain on as a committee member and both co-chairs (Converse and Harvey) will remain engaged with helping to support the transition to new leadership. One of the incoming co-chairs will be a long-time DEIC member (Ernesto Alvarado) and the other will be a faculty member who is new to the committee. Several committee members at the undergraduate student, graduate student, and staff level have volunteered to remain on the committee, and we are currently recruiting new members to fill open positions in all three of these roles, in addition to postdoctoral associates.

The priority-setting discussions in the spring 2020-2021 AY DEIC open meeting will inform the priorities for the DEIC committee, and will be turned into action plans and action teams in the early 2021 DEIC meetings. Specifically, the following activities will likely be the top priorities, based on input from the SEFS community and items on the calendar for 2021-2022. First, SEFS will be undergoing a faculty search / cluster hire in the area of climate adaptation, and the DEIC will provide support for best hiring practices. Second, the DEIC will continue to support activities that build a more inclusive community, including facilitating community events and spaces, with a specific focus on positioning students for success in SEFS and in their careers beyond SEFS. Third, the DEIC will continue to support strengthening relationships with WA tribes and integrating these connections into our research, scholarship, and teaching. Fourth, the DEIC will support activities that foster more inclusive and welcoming field experiences, including a workshop planned for the AY to help support faculty, graduate students, and postdocs in planning and executing field seasons where participants from a wide range of backgrounds are positioned to succeed. The above are not an exhaustive list of priorities, but are areas where momentum from 2020-2021 can be carried into the 2021-2022 AY.

Table 1. Membership of the SEFS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Member	Role
Sarah Converse (faculty)	Co-chair
Brian Harvey (faculty)	Co-chair
Ernesto Alvarado (faculty)	Member
Bryce Bartl-Geller (staff)	Treasurer
Courtney Bobsin (grad student)	Member
Amanda Davis (staff)	Member
Stacey Dixon (staff)	Recorder
Jay Johnson (emeritus faculty)	Member
Van Kane (faculty)	CoE DEIC rep
Josh Lawler (faculty)	Communications Liaison
Esaac Mazengia (undergraduate student)	Member
Greg Olsen (staff)	CoE DEIC rep
Lauren Satterfield (graduate student)	Member
Ashlee Abrantes (graduate student)	Member
Joseph Wilkins (post-doc)	Member

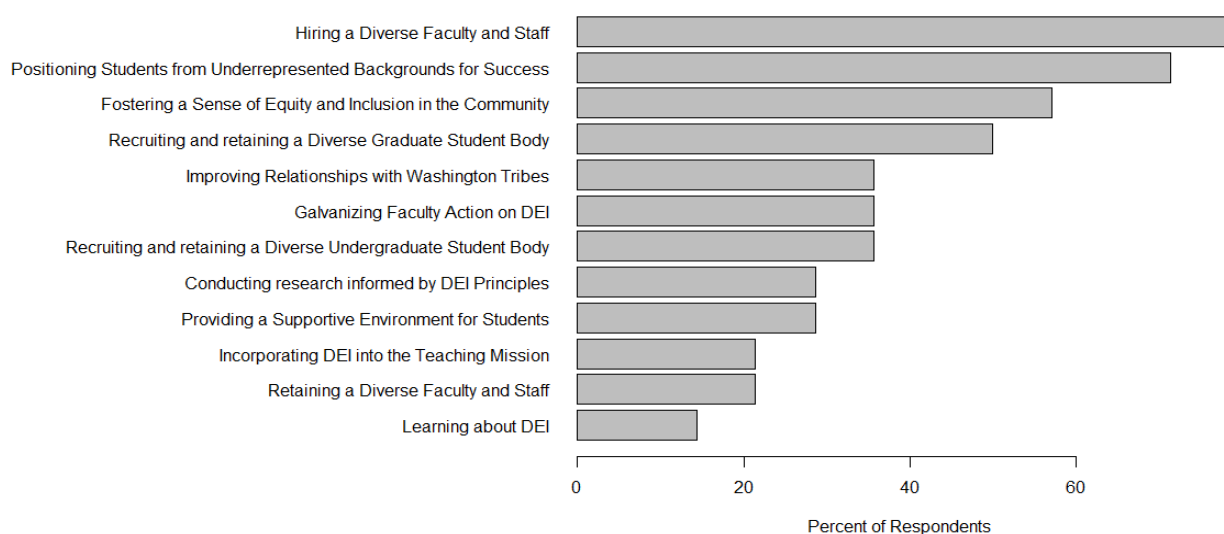


Figure 1. Feedback obtained prior to the spring Open Meeting from the SEFS community on priorities for the 2021-2022 academic year. Based on $n = 17$ responses to a survey issued by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee.