

## Earth Institute Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Process: Overview of Preliminary Inventory

In October 2018, with Alex Halliday's recent arrival and the current cultural momentum, the Earth Institute (EI) initiated a new process of engagement to promote diversity, equity and inclusion. This is a critically important issue for EI; the cultivation of diversity in academia, particularly in science, is instrumental to our core values as well as the future of our work. To achieve our aspirations for change, it is necessary that diversity, equity and inclusion become incorporated as central elements of EI's daily operations and standard practices, procedures, and initiatives.

As a first step in this process, the Director's Office collected an inventory of the initiatives and programming we currently have in place – across all of the Institute – to address issues of diversity, inclusion, and harassment. This preliminary assessment will help inform our activities moving forward, to support a planning process for institutional change. To collect this data, we sent out a survey with ten questions to all EI Center Directors on the current actions they are taking to promote and advance diversity and inclusion. This survey covered hiring procedures, training programs, diversity and inclusion programming initiatives, community-building, and outreach (*See Appendix for full questions*). It also asked about the continuity, outcomes and results, and identifiable barriers to diversity and inclusion programming for each specific center. With a 100% response rate, we compiled a document with all of the responses. We synthesized several themes that arose across Centers and summarized them below.

### **Overview & Themes**

The survey results revealed that EI is already engaged in a number of initiatives, programs and activities around diversity, equity and inclusion. These ranged from informal center-level initiatives, to formal programming, to general compliance with both University-wide rules and guidance and School-specific policies (for those centers housed in schools). While there are still significant gaps and areas for improvement, it was encouraging to see what EI is already doing. Some highlights are included below:

**Diversity and Inclusion Programming and Initiatives:** The amount of programming to address diversity and inclusion is directly correlated with the size of the center and the amount of funding they receive from the university and from the EI. Many of the centers have minorities in positions of leadership, and report that this informs the culture of the center itself. There tends to be more diversity-focused outreach and student programming than diversity-focused internal programming.

**Hiring Equity and Processes:** There are no formal policies in place to account for diversity in hiring, with the exception of LDEO (see section below) and those set forth by Columbia, but diversity is considered in many of the hiring processes. Center directors stated that they are paying careful attention to salary equity and many expressed a commitment to open and transparent processes. Generally, gender diversity and parity seemed more common than racial and ethnic diversity among the centers. Furthermore, there appears to be a lot of international diversity, and less of a focus on domestic underrepresentation (such as representation of Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people).

**Trainings:** Most centers are not conducting their own anti-harassment trainings, with the exception of LDEO. However, many have attended Columbia and EI-led trainings, e.g. the EI Sexual Harassment Training

in spring 2018. These trainings are not mandatory, but highly encouraged. There is a consensus that if EI were to offer more trainings, there would be interest from faculty and staff to attend.

**Community Building and Inclusion:** A large majority of respondents discussed community building activities as one of the pillars of their work environment. Some centers have annual retreats, informal team social events, and have funded regular lunches for their entire team. Almost all centers stated that they actively foster community-building and positive workplace culture. There are also mentorship and professional development programs, as well as regular events, both social and professional. Several centers have a discretionary fund for staff to use for courses, conferences, and other opportunities for professional development. Many centers encourage professional development and have informal mentorship procedures, but do not have specific allocations or plans for such activities.

**Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory (LDEO):** As the largest center, LDEO has done notably more to advance diversity, equity and inclusion on its campus. Following the NSF-funded ADVANCE program, in 2008, LDEO established an Office of Academic Affairs, led by Kuheli Dutt, which has developed and implemented a wide range of diversity, inclusion, and work environment initiatives. In particular, it made significant changes to the search processes for LDEO Officers of Research, with the goal to increase the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women and minority scientists. Other activities include an annual diversity seminar, a weekly diversity coffee hour that brings in guest speakers, and a program called “You Are Welcome Here” that targets inclusiveness towards LGBTQ+ minorities (and has led to the installment of gender-neutral restrooms). LDEO also offers postdoctoral mentorship programs.

### **Common Barriers & Challenges**

A key challenge identified was a lack of funding available to devote to diversity-specific programming. The programs that mainly receive external funding or grants don’t have as many programs, and those they do have are not as long-lasting or continuous. As a result, most EI centers have not had the capacity nor opportunity to measure growth and quantify results of their respective diversity and inclusion programming. Center size was also a sizable barrier; smaller centers with few staff understandably do not have the bandwidth to spearhead activities specific to diversity. It seemed that all the centers, particularly the smaller ones, would benefit from EI-wide programming and initiatives. Centers with dispersed hiring processes have a difficult time implementing policies in regards to diverse hiring.

**Appendix: Data Collection – Inventory of Center-led Programming**

On Oct 29, Alex Halliday emailed the full EI community about his commitment to a new process of engagement to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion at EI. He highlighted why it was strategically important to us and spoke to the need to involve all members of the community. He called for broad support in this work, which would begin with a preliminary self-assessment and data gathering exercise. Alison Miller then emailed the EI Center and Program Directors with more specific details. In that communication, she described that the first step in this process would be to put together an inventory of the policies, initiatives, and other programming currently or previously in place at Centers to address issues of diversity, inclusion, and anti-harassment. We asked the following questions:

1. What, if any, diversity, equity and/or inclusion activities have been developed in your center/unit? (e.g. hiring policies, initiatives, programming, surveys, documents, etc.). Please describe those activities.
2. Have you provided any anti-harassment training, programs, or initiatives? If yes, please describe.
3. Do you have any specific programs/activities on mentoring and staff development? If yes, please describe.
4. Do you have any formal programs designed to improve general workplace culture and foster community? If yes, please describe.
5. Does your center engage in activities with local communities to engage underrepresented minorities in STEM fields (e.g. “building the pipeline of future scientists/scholars”)? If yes, please describe.
6. What, of the above programming, is currently still in place in your center/unit?
7. For those that were undertaken in the past, and are no longer, why were the activities discontinued (e.g. lack of participation, funding expiration, etc.)?
8. Have the diversity and inclusion (and anti-harassment) initiatives that you have implemented had a positive effect? How do you know? Have you collected any data systematically on what works, what doesn't and why? If yes, how do you collect the data and which of the initiatives seems to have the best impact?
9. Are there identifiable barriers to developing and executing more programming like these? If so, please describe.
10. Can you provide any other relevant information that could relate to enhancing the culture at the Earth Institute with respect to increasing recruitment and retention of women and minorities?

We asked Directors to consider these questions with respect to their activities initiated at the center-level, for any documents related to these activities, and offered for them speak to staff or interns here to help them collect responses to these questions if they weren't readily available. We asked for responses by Friday, November 30, and received all responses by early December.