



**Improving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Woods Hole Scientific Community:**

**2024 Update**

By The Woods Hole Diversity Initiative

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## **Executive Summary**

This document is an update on actions taken by the [Woods Hole Diversity Initiative \(WHDI\)](#) to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community in Woods Hole. This work has been guided by a [report](#) written by Dr. Robert Livingston, a leading scholar of diversity and inclusion. Commonly known as The Livingston Report, the 2018 document galvanized the Woods Hole science community, shedding light on uncomfortable truths and outlining a series of actions the partner institutions might take to build a better, more inclusive community.

In 2021, the WHDI compiled its first

our science community. We also need to continue our work around inclusion, ensuring that all will be welcome and valued and able to achieve their full potential. We need to identify quantifiable measures to assess how we are doing with both goals – our diversity and our inclusiveness. One promising measurement effort has grown out of the WHDI-facilitated BRAID alliance. A team led by Onjale Scott Price, director of the WHDI's [Partnership Education Program](#) (PEP), has received National Science Foundation funding to measure the impact of diversity programs on host communities. This project is examining measures of inclusivity and support for underrepresented minorities through the lens of social science. The WHDI is excited about what we will learn through these efforts and will take the findings into consideration as we plan our next steps to address diversity, equity, and inclusion in our institutions and community.

The WHDI as a whole, and the member institutions individually, are committed to continuing the work to reduce barriers, build bridges, and shape a 21st century workforce that is as diverse as the nation in which we live and work.

## **Introduction**

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In 2004, the six Woods Hole science institutions reclusiveness.

Report also provided a five-year “rehabilitation plan” consisting of discrete strategies and measurable steps.

The WHDI recognizes that our institutions have a responsibility to bring change to our Cape Cod community locally, and to the Earth and ocean sciences community globally. This process starts with identifying problems and making changes in our own institutions. A commitment to change requires resources and hard work at all levels of our institutions.

Taking these steps is part of our commitment to reform, to improve equity and equality, and to better reflect the society that we serve as scientists, engineers, and educators. This requires sustained efforts at each of our institutions, and in the community at large.

The WHDI and our respective institutions took the Livingston Report as a call to action. Much remains to be done but notable progress has been made, with the six institutions working to implement the recommendations in ways that fit their different organization types, sizes, funding models, and modes of operation. While the WHDI commissioned the Livingston Report and endeavors to support and amplify efforts to address its recommendations, individual and grassroots efforts have been critical in advancing important institutional and community issues, and are essential to create the changes that we seek as a scientific community.

What follows is not an exhaustive list of each action and initiative, but rather, an overview of our approaches to take action on the Livingston Report, with representative and notable examples

To make our spaces relevant and reflective of society, MBL revamped some campus lobbies and hallways to highlight participants traditionally unrecognized for their contributions to science. As outlined in the 2021 report, the Lillie Auditorium was renamed the Cornelia Clapp Auditorium to underscore her role as a founder of MBL and one of the first women to earn a Ph.D. in biology. Since then, the MBL has continued to add signage, photographs, historical reminders and balanced displays throughout the Loeb Building and in the entry to the Cornelia Clapp Auditorium. These displays show the breakthrough contributions to science and education from diverse scientists such as Ernest Everett Just, Lilian Vaughan Morgan, Katsuma Dan and other unrecognized forces in science.

### Ongoing Campaigns of Recognition.

The MBL D&I Committee has continued to identify, evaluate and reinvent our shared entry and work spaces to better reflect a diverse population. One outcome will be a proposal to the MBL Director that offers suggestions for further recognition of past diverse participants to make our spaces more welcoming. Other campaigns of recognition include the following:

In 2022, the MBL implemented a Land Acknowledgement recognizing the contributions and sovereign rights of the Wampanoag Tribes. The statement was developed with Wampanoag tribal elders and was inaugurated on January 19, 2022 with an educational seminar by Dr. Nitana Greendeer (citizen of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and contributor to the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project). The Land Acknowledgement appears on the MBL website and message boards; MBL encourages its use in email signatures and that it be read before seminars and other events as a reminder of our commitment to Wampanoag culture and sovereignty. Interactions with the Wampanoag Tribes are ongoing through a partnership with the Aquinnah Wampanoag Natural Resources Department to monitor the striped bass migration and spawning on Aquinnah waters on Martha's Vineyard.

The MBL WHOI library staff have changed the content of the tours and talks given to the public and to students of Advanced Research Training Courses, undergraduate courses, and the high school program. These changes include acknowledging during tours that the library's holdings are Eurocentric, and by discussing the historical obstacles faced in science by women, people of color, LGBTQ+ and other often excluded people. This effort is visible in the library displays and carried forth by the librarians tour guides who shine the light on the many individuals from marginalized groups who made key contributions to Woods Hole science.

In 2022, the D&I committee expanded the Be Yourself @MBL campaign described in our 2021 Report by designing and installing banners in the MBL Quad celebrating diversity, with a second set of banners installed in 2023. The message is also disseminated through our campus monitors, themed clothing and other items at the MBL gift shop. The "Be Yourself @ MBL" stickers and pins are ubiquitous across campus and synonymous with the broader MBL commitment to belonging and appreciation of everyone.

### Communicating and Implementing D&I Actions.

A monthly newsletter instituted in January 2023 informs the MBL community of our local and regional community activities, news, and resources

related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The newsletter invites op-ed pieces from MBL community members and serves as a central resource to enhance local awareness of social issues and encourage community-wide discussions that promotes combined action toward a more inclusive future.

. Starting in June 2022, MBL instituted a dedicated celebration of the Federal Juneteenth holiday with an inaugural “Juneteenth Lecture” as the kick-off to our annual Friday Evening Lecture (FEL) series. This Juneteenth FEL is now held annually on the Friday closest to the Juneteenth holiday, along with a Juneteenth picnic for MBL employees and visitors, a movie night, and raffles of gift certificates to local BIPOC businesses. The speaker for the Juneteenth lecture is hosted across institutions and often participates in broad discussion on how 1 ally

to bring participants back to the MBL for continued research and education experiences with MBL faculty.

The MBL is an enthusiastic supporter of this impactful education program. An average of two students per summer are hosted and mentored in MBL labs. We aim to increase financial support for this program through federal and philanthropic funds for MBL faculty and thereby augment the WHDI effort.

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In summary, MBL has focused on recruitment and retention by specific actions to expand the reach of our programs. As part of this effort, we've worked toward making our campus and environment more welcoming and inclusive. Our specific areas of focus in the coming years are to reach out directly to HBCUs, MSIs, other groups and scientific societies with strong diversity engagement to develop strategies to recruit new participants. We need to expand ways to bring scientists from diverse backgrounds back to MBL, through providing support and by ensuring a welcoming and relevant environment for all people.

### **NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center**

The Northeast Fisheries Science Center's (NEFSC) focus in the reporting period (2021-2024) has



The NEFSC co-led the effort to develop

including and amplifying local voices in marine conservation through collaborations. For the past 52 years, Sea Education Association, a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, has been educating the next generation of ocean scholars through interdisciplinary study abroad programs that combine classroom instruction with experiential learning aboard a sailing research vessel or in field research settings. Thus, we are positioned very well to continue offering invaluable field training in open ocean and coastal oceanography research, data visualization and communication, leadership and teamwork, and maritime studies for underrepresented groups in the geosciences and environmental studies.

Utilizing guidance from the Unlearning Racism in the Geosciences curriculum ([urgeoscience.org](http://urgeoscience.org)) and the experiences of our team, SEA's DEI Committee works to assess the needs of our organization and plan for the achievement of our belonging, accessibility, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (BAJEDI) goals. Taking a phased approach, the DEI Committee members anticipate that, over the next few years, much of our time, effort, and resources will be focused on the creation of an environment that can support and empower a more diverse community in our ocean science and conservation programming. At the same time that we are doing this work on BAJEDI competencies, our efforts to enroll more diverse students, with a focus on cohort recruitment to provide a degree of mutual support and empowerment, will continue with scholarships that reduce our tuition by half for HBCU and Tribal College students, a Coastal Communities scholarship for students from the communities and regions where we do shipboard and coastal research, and the creation of shorter, specialized programs for minority-serving institutions. We anticipate that these recruitment efforts for our undergraduate programs will expand considerably as we continue to work on and receive positive assessments of our BAJEDI competencies.

In our shorter-duration high school programs, offered throughout the summer months, we are also moving ahead with recruitment of students from underrepresented groups. For instance, in 2024 we expanded our partnerships that began in 2020 with the support of individual donors, and we now expect to be successful in recruiting more students from underrepresented communities.

Interactive Development and Inclusion Works (<https://speakingupworkshop.com/>). This combined consulting and training program will cater to SEA's specific needs and funded through the DEI Committee's annual budget.

Finally, in the recruitment of personnel, the DEI Committee continues to pursue grant support for pilot programs to help us increase diversity in our science staffing. Specifically, in a recent grant proposal, we outlined a "SEA Ocean Science Fellowship" program for the recruitment and support of three or more fellows from underrepresented groups in regions, such as small island developing states, overseas territories, and other small island and coastal communities, where SEA operates. These fellows would work together, as a cohort, in an SEA program. With such a program and other staff recruitment initiatives, SEA will build capacity in the field and create a more inclusive, welcoming environment that can properly support increased diversity in our early career scientific staff. Our long-term goal is to expand our recruitment across a variety of ocean disciplines in the regions, worldwide, where we currently operate and complement our programs that already work with local experts in the field work portions of our programming.

The DEI Committee recognizes that systemic issues related to BAJEDI must be addressed to broaden participation in ocean sciences and ocean conservation and retain a more diverse body of ocean scientists and conservation experts. We are committed to change within the organization that involves both assessment and improvement of our practices to support a more diverse student body and staff. We are confident that SEA's community, incorporating students, faculty, professional crew/teaching fellows, and staff, can achieve significant and lasting diversity and serve as a model in the areas of ocean science, ocean education, and ocean conservation.

### **U.S. Geological Survey Woods Hole Coastal and Marine Science Center**

Over the past two years, the WHCMSC advanced several of the recommendations in the 2018 Livingston Report, with a focus on the following:

and

#### Local Efforts

WHCMSC staff have been making connections with local and out-of-state schools for over 30 years. Locally, WHCMSC staff work with multiple K-12 schools through after school activities, presentations about local science, and working with students advising and judging science fair projects. Locally, these engagements are done in concert with the Woods Hole Science and Technology Education Partnership (WHSTEP) and the more recently established Falmouth

Public Schools-Woods Hole (FPS-WH) Partnership. The USGS also has a booth at the well-attended annual Science Stroll in Woods Hole to

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At the college level, the

Between summer student project mentors, PSWs, DAC representatives, and other Center staff engaged in DEIA activities and support, we have created a more cohesive network of individuals who have experience in advancing Livingston Report recommendations. Within this pool of people, (1) we have contributed to the planning and execution of local special emphasis activities (Black History Month, Native American History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Juneteenth) and (2) increased attendance at the annual [Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science](#) (SACNAS) conference to represent the WHCMSC and bring back ideas to our Center. SACNAS provides a venue for professional scientists to give back through mentoring, engagement, and networking with undergraduate and graduate students as they embark on career paths in STEM. SACNAS plays a crucial role in fostering an

\*Broad and active Employee Resource Groups that provide a sense of belonging and community to employees and improve retention of diverse workforce.

A new MSI dashboard (a catalog of MSIs that includes contact information and specifies whether USGS has a formal or informal relationship with the school to be searched by name or location)

Cluster hiring in the USGS Northeast Region in response to a DCO to implement hiring practices that can improve diversity. The effort has two components: one based on outreach, advertisement, and training in MSIs; and the second, based on improving the hiring process and the creation of cohorts to enhance retention.

Gender inclusivity training conducted at the regional level during multiple workshops to improve awareness, reduce discrimination and harassment, and foster cultural competence.

### Opportunities for steps forward

As a bureau within the U.S. Department of the Interior, USGS follows federal policy, guidelines, procedures, and leverages opportunities to extend our influence and impact beyond the bureau.

WHCMSC: Employees from the Center are part of USGS national and regional DEIA committees, councils, and supporting groups, which provide environments to effect change at all levels of the bureau. The speed at which local change can be achieved

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alternative conflict resolution methods in the workplace including an ombuds function and a mental health resource through an institutional Chaplain/Counselor who provides weekly 1:1 support to individuals as well as weekly meditation and grief support groups. This year, we are rolling out two new initiatives to which we'd like to pay special focus: The WHOI Indigenous Knowledge Program and WHOI Ambassadors.

WHOI Indigenous Knowledge Program (IKP): In collaboration with a donor, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution has launched a new pilot program that will accelerate educational opportunities for individuals engaging with Indigenous Knowledge in ocean sciences. The program includes initiatives from K-12 all the way through to the postdoc level. In particular, the project will fund: 2 postdoctoral positions (open to STEM and Social Scientists), training for postdoc advisors on cultural sensitivity, recruitment funds that will launch an ocean sciences social at SACNAS, as well as visits to AISES, a postbaccalaureate scholarship for a college graduate seeking additional experience in their chosen field, a Blue Economy Internship position at WHOI for students from UMASS-Dartmouth or Cape Cod Community College, and an extension to our work with the Mashpee Wampanoag Preserving Our Homelands Camp. We are delighted to launch this work and continue to build mutually beneficial partnerships.

WHOI Ambassadors: The WHOI ambassadors program is an initiative aimed at broadening our recruitment efforts and creating a more equitable environment for all individuals interested in pursuing careers in marine science. This program funds individuals at all levels at WHOI to visit institutions across the country to engage in targeted recruitment. Through this program we leverage individual connections that already exist among members of the WHOI community and various institutions across the country to develop authentic and engaging recruitment experiences. Recruitment visits begin fall 2024.

Looking ahead, as we continue to expand our efforts through initiatives like the WHOI Indigenous Knowledge Program and the WHOI Ambassadors program, we are excited to foster deeper connections, broaden opportunities, and cultivate a more inclusive environment for all. Together with the DI, we look forward to the transformative impact of our collective efforts.

### **Woodwell Climate Research Center**

In the period 2022-2024, support of diverse student and early career groups continued to be a focus for the Center through the Polaris and PEP programs.

Funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) since 2008, the Polaris Project has earned global recognition for its leadership in training future leaders in Arctic research, education, and outreach. During a field expedition to the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta, Alaska, undergraduate URM students conducted cutting-edge investigations. ~





The Center offers several community-building activities designed to engage and connect our staff to new experiences and to each other. These include a bi-monthly 'Climate Café' where employees volunteer to present on a specific expertise or interest area/experience, weekly yoga, and breakout groups for all staff meetings where they gather in small groups to discuss organizational values.

Externally, two Center

We thank the many people and groups at all six institutions who have carried this work forward over the years, as well as members of our broader community, for providing input, encouragement, and accountability. We also thank the members of the Woods Hole Diversity Advisory Committee for their leadership and initiative in creating new opportunities and programs that advance WHDI goals.