2023 Janelia Values Committee Report

Introduction

On July 10, 2023, HHMI announced the six main values that guide our work (Excellence, Collaboration, Innovation, Integrity, Inclusion, and Developing Others). A few weeks before that, the Janelia Values Committee was formed, originally consisting of 12 members of the Janelia community with different roles and backgrounds. Dan Bueno (*Food & Beverage*) and Nirmala Iyer (*Electron Microscopy Shared Resource*) joined after initial meetings, addressing a concern to include more perspectives around campus. The committee's purpose is to help integrate the HHMI Values into all aspects of Janelia's science, operations, and culture (see the Mission Statement below).

The committee decided that part of that mandate is the publication of an annual report. The intention behind the report is to communicate (1) input the committee has received from the Janelia community, (2) actions taken as a result of that input, and (3) the outcome of those actions.

The report will be published each year in December. The Current State section below will cover points (1) and (3), i.e., comment on any inputs the committee has received over the past year and provide an update about previously planned actions. The report will conclude with a Planned Actions section for the coming year.

2023 Committee Members

　　　　Aubrey Weigel, *CellMap*
　　　　Chris Morkunas, *People & Culture*
　　　　Dan Bueno, *Food & Beverage*
　　　　Hazel Meda, *Communications*
　　　　Isaac Agbeshie-Noye, *Center for the Advancement of Science Leadership and Culture*
　　　　Jan Funke, *Funke Lab*
　　　　Julie Muroff, *Ombuds Program*
　　　　Katie Schretter, *Rubin Lab*
　　　　Kristy Arrington, *People & Culture*
　　　　Monti Mercer, *Community Relations*
　　　　Nirmala Iyer, *Electron Microscopy Shared Resource*
　　　　Ron Vale, *Executive Director*
　　　　Sarah Moorehead, *Executive Director's Office*
　　　　Zari Zavala-Ruiz, *Scientific Operations and Programs*

Mission Statement

The Committee is here to listen to and learn from the Janelia Community, as we work together to strengthen our culture of Excellence, Collaboration, Innovation, Integrity, Inclusion, and Developing Others.

Our Statement of Purpose:

To engage Janelians in integrating the HHMI Values into all aspects of our science, operations, and culture.

The Janelia Values Committee, which brings together a group of employees from across Janelia with different roles and perspectives, aims to enhance our community's awareness of and engagement with the Values and facilitate their sustained integration into all aspects of the Janelia community. The committee also seeks to support the participation of all Janelians in everyday practices that foster an inclusive culture strengthened by our shared Values. After receiving input from Janelians, the committee plans to identify and help catalyze and evolve actions to advance the Values in our community.

Current State

Survey and Listening Event

The Janelia Values Committee organized a Listening Event on July 27 at the Manor House to gather thoughts from the Janelia community regarding HHMI Values. Through a survey, we sought feedback on how Janelia aligns with the six values and areas for improvement. The substantial participation and responses received were carefully reviewed and discussed in smaller groups. This report provides a summary of the survey results and key insights from the discussions held during the Listening Event.

The Janelia Value Committee recognizes the importance of prioritization and will focus on initiatives that align with community needs and have the potential for significant impact. These are outlined in the Planned Actions section. There is a commitment to implement as many suggestions as feasible, ensuring that the community's input is reflected in our actions. Ongoing engagement and feedback is encouraged as we work together to bring about positive change.

Collaboration

What Janelia is doing:

1. Problem-solving collectively as a team.
2. Sharing ideas at events like Flip Fridays, 4DCP Jam Sessions, and Ron's pop-up cafe.
3. Discussing diverse topics like family and world events during lunches and social gatherings on campus.
4. Using shared spaces like Bob's and the Servery in the landscape building for gatherings.
5. Engaging with external communities in conferences and the visitor program.
6. Contributing to initiatives like the [Janelia Charity Team](#) and [ScienceXplorers](#) (community@janelia.hhmi.org).
7. Participating in HHMI-wide initiatives such as publishing/open science, revised Group Leader reviews, and Values.
8. Fostering a supportive seminar culture.
9. Hosting and sponsoring various events spanning education, science, culture, and social aspects.
10. Adhering to a collaborative model with small labs and core facilities.
11. Arranging conferences, workshops, and hackathons to unite different communities.

What Janelia could be doing:

1. Set up skill profiles or a virtual board for cross-divisional assistance, inspired by the Stowers Institute's project presentation model.
2. Introduce short-term projects spanning three months across divisions to encourage collaboration.
3. Develop metrics to measure collaborative efforts tailored to different groups.
4. Utilize open-source tools like CAD for shared methods and development.
5. Foster collaborations with scientists from other institutions through hackathons, journal clubs, and global south outreach.
6. Include examples of successful collaborations in orientation sessions.
7. Offer Operations staff opportunities to tour labs for better cross-departmental understanding.
8. Establish a culture of celebrating successful collaborations.
9. Implement journal and peer club reviews across the institute for collaborative learning.
10. Encourage team-building events to improve morale and trust for better collaboration.
11. Facilitate discussions for (junior) group leaders on effective collaboration management.

Developing Others

What Janelia is doing:

1. Implementing structured onboarding protocols for new employees and group leaders.
2. Using various mentoring strategies, including [Mentoring Groups](#).
3. Supporting professional growth through programs like the [Employee Education Assistance Program](#) and [HHMI Learning Platform](#).
4. Enabling skill development via clubs, courses (e.g., Coding Club, Janelia Bootcamp), and workshops led by lab heads.
5. Implementing scientific programs (e.g., [Meyerhoff Undergraduate Summer Program](#), [LCPS High School Interns](#), [Visiting Scientists Program](#)) for scientist training.
6. Engaging in Outreach Programs like [RESET](#).
7. Supporting well-being through [Wellness Programs](#).
8. Facilitating training courses at other institutions, such as [Marine Biological Laboratory](#).

What Janelia could be doing:

1. Streamline and improve communication among existing programs (e.g., workshops, mentoring) and scientific resources to enhance integration and coordination.
2. Identify areas or groups within the organization that might be lacking in mentoring support.
3. Provide training and coaching opportunities for managers to foster inclusive and respectful work environments.
4. Offer soft skills and interpersonal relationship training for non-managers.
5. Strengthen feedback mechanisms by providing training to managers and lab heads for effective feedback delivery. Enable input from lab members on mentors/lab heads and encourage group members to share insights on managers/directors.
6. Establish new outreach initiatives and opportunities for lab heads to engage with minority-serving institutions.
7. Consider a dedicated outreach coordination role to liaise with local schools and science events, supporting initiatives like Monti Mercer.

Excellence

What Janelia is doing:

1. Striving for ongoing improvement across systems, programs, and scientific pursuits.
2. Offering exceptional facilities and amenities that stand out among other institutions.
3. Implementing rigorous recruitment practices to attract high-caliber individuals.
4. Regularly hosting distinguished speakers for talks and seminars.
5. Maintaining a physical environment that reflects excellence and inspires innovation.
6. Leading advancements in microscopy, tools, and computation that impact global research.
7. Upholding high standards for scientific research as fundamental to Janelia's mission.
8. Considering excellence in performance evaluations and scientific decision-making.
9. Ensuring thorough preparation for new teams, projects, and collaborations.
10. Embracing complex challenges with diverse approaches for effective solutions.
11. Seeking extensive feedback before making hiring decisions.

What Janelia could be doing:

1. Encouraging cross-departmental interactions by facilitating meeting spaces.
2. Expanding the definition of "excellence" to include diverse roles supporting science.
3. Seeking broad internal and external feedback to improve work quality.
4. Encouraging individuals to set personal benchmarks for continuous improvement.
5. Initiating discussions to define and refine the concept of "excellence" for reviews.
6. Enhancing Janelia's social media presence for effective communication of exceptional work.
7. Clearly articulating Janelia's vision for the institution and specific research areas.
8. Engaging the broader community through public seminars or conferences.
9. Organizing sessions to familiarize Janelians with new tools and research areas.
10. Encouraging pushing boundaries and achieving notable milestones.
11. Continuously inviting distinguished speakers for talks and seminars to inspire excellence.

Inclusion

What Janelia is doing:

1. Established DEI initiatives such as the DEI Director, committee, and new Center, alongside social gatherings like patio parties, fostering a sense of community.
2. Evolving programs to encompass a more diverse range of participants.
3. Active efforts in recruiting from underrepresented groups, promoting diversity in hiring, and involving Janelians in Group Leader interviews.
4. Establishment of support mechanisms like the [Janelia Ombuds Program](mailto:muroffj@janelia.hhmi.org) (muroffj@janelia.hhmi.org) and DEI [committee](#)/[center](#) (dei@janelia.hhmi.org).
5. Engaging social events like invitations to Ron's home and Patio Parties to encourage community bonding.
6. Embracing salary transparency for greater fairness.
7. Formation of Employee Affinity Groups ([EAG](#)) to support diverse perspectives.
8. Allocation of funds like [Meyerhoff](#) and HHMI funds towards DEI initiatives, including the [RESET](#) program.

What Janelia could be doing:

1. Introduction of English as a second language (ESL) classes to support non-native English speakers.
2. Increasing diversity among speakers by inviting more Black and Hispanic individuals to Janelia.
3. Development of a robust department buddy program for new hires to facilitate integration.
4. Implementation of a "Meet Someone New" table in communal areas like the Servery.
5. Encouraging diverse speakers to self-nominate for symposiums.
6. Consideration of diverse dietary needs during observances, such as offering meals during Ramadan and Matzah during Jewish observances.
7. Ensuring lab head evaluations incorporate diversity and inclusion considerations.
8. Provision of a prayer room catering to various religious practices.
9. Consideration of dietary restrictions for visitors to campus.
10. Establishing forums to share stories of inclusion/exclusion and a digital feedback board.
11. Regular updates on progress and perspectives regarding inclusion efforts to encourage transparency and accountability.
12. Acknowledging that a lack of inclusion can lead individuals to seek belonging elsewhere and striving to address these concerns proactively.

Innovation

What Janelia is doing:

1. Space for Crazy Ideas: Culture that encourages new and risky projects.
2. Funding for Risk-Taking: Janelia's funding model makes room for risk-taking while still incorporating oversight, enabling excellent research to remain relevant.
3. Organized Innovation: Access to excellent Support teams, workspaces, and infrastructure allows innovation to take place.
4. Research model: brings together diverse researchers (e.g., tool building + C&T + biology) and recruits young scientists.
5. Constant Adaptation: Janelia is constantly adapting and changing processes to improve programs, demonstrating a commitment to innovation and continuous improvement.
6. Open Science: Open Science and publishing initiatives, e.g., Open Chemistry, [Research Communication Platform](#)
7. [Project Teams](#)
8. Sharing: Seminar series that allow people to share innovations and work in progress (e.g., Thursday Seminars).
9. [Janelia Innovation Management](#) and licensing

What Janelia could be doing:

1. Empower middle managers to restructure processes and embrace agile management.
2. Cultivate a culture of learning from failure by encouraging small experiments.
3. Stimulate innovation through hackathons and open discussions on unconventional ideas.
4. Ensure all staff are informed about ongoing projects, not just successful ones.
5. Optimize resource usage by encouraging critical thinking for efficient problem-solving.
6. Formalize recognition of innovation and celebrate everyday creativity.
7. Focus on human-centered approaches alongside scientific discoveries.
8. Maintain alumni programs to perpetuate innovation and revisit old ideas.
9. Expand vivariums and invest in open science and tools for faster innovation.
10. Share ideas across departments and create pipelines for faster discovery.
11. Provide monetary rewards for inventive contributions.
12. Allocate funds for 'high-risk' projects within each lab.
13. Utilize open science tools in engineering for rapid innovation cycles.
14. Address data integration challenges through innovative solutions.
15. Create dedicated spaces for capturing and integrating ideas.

Integrity

What Janelia is doing:

1. Promoting open communication through various avenues like pop-up cafes, roundtables, Town Halls, accessible policies, and surveys.
2. Demonstrating commitment to treating service providers with the same integrity as HHMI employees.
3. Encouraging a culture of accountability and transparency with a "see something, say something" mentality.
4. Showcasing integrity through outreach programs, community relations, wellness initiatives, and mental health resources, fostering a sense of trust.
5. Offering integrity-focused programming through the Janelia Ombuds Program (muroffj@janelia.hhmi.org).

What Janelia could be doing:

1. Developing programs that encourage interdepartmental relationships and educate employees about integrity in a diverse workplace.
2. Implementing more methods to show appreciation for individuals' contributions.
3. Creating avenues for anonymous feedback reviewed by leadership to enhance listening and responsiveness.
4. Offering scientific integrity courses and involving the PhD and postdoc association in decision-making discussions.
5. Ensuring fair and transparent practices in hiring, compensation, and budgeting/spending.
6. Improving transparency in hiring, salary, and promotion decisions.
7. Enhancing sustainability and animal welfare initiatives to align with integrity values.
8. Establishing a bottom-up communication system like "Ron's Open Office hours" for employees to share thoughts directly.
9. Encouraging employees to adopt integrity as a personal value.
10. Facilitating reproducible research by providing resources for data storage, software archives, and reproducible environments, acknowledging the importance of these often-overlooked aspects of research.

Interpretation of Survey Results

1. **Inclusion**: The value of inclusion emerged prominently from the survey responses, indicating challenges in fostering interaction and a sense of belonging among individuals with similar interests. Concerns were raised about cliques within the organization, hindering inclusivity and creating a closed-off atmosphere for some groups. Addressing these issues is vital to nurture a positive workplace culture, psychological safety, and a more inclusive environment. Recommendations encompass various strategies, including transparent career paths, increased networking events, digital feedback platforms, and active engagement in team-building activities. Additionally, suggestions emphasized the importance of recognizing diversity, accommodating diverse backgrounds, and ongoing training in inclusive language, with a call for more resources to support underserved communities.

2. **Developing Others:** The focus on developing others at Janelia received significant attention, underscoring the importance of fostering individual growth and professional advancement. Respondents highlighted the influential role of managers in both inclusion and overall development, emphasizing the need for clearer structures to address communication issues due to power imbalances and diverse conflict resolution approaches. Recommendations included providing resources and training to cultivate inclusive behaviors, ensuring development opportunities for all teams, and addressing concerns related to remote work. Additional suggestions encompassed reinstating developmental programs, offering continuous coaching for supervisors, expanding outreach and high school opportunities, and creating a more welcoming environment for new members. Further proposals involved mentorship programs, temporary team assignments, workshops for skill development, and fostering an open, less hierarchical environment to encourage learning and experimentation.

3. **Collaboration**: Enhancing collaboration between teams and colleagues was identified as a key factor in improving efficiency and achieving goals more effectively. Respondents emphasized the importance of open communication and cross-functional interactions to foster a collaborative culture. Creating opportunities for shared projects, encouraging knowledge exchange, and breaking down silos were seen as ways to strengthen collaboration. By promoting a collaborative environment, Janelia can tap into the diverse expertise of its staff and create a more integrated and supportive research community.

4. **Integrity**: The significance of integrity within the organization was underscored, acknowledged as pivotal for enhancing morale, productivity, and fostering trust among teams. The emphasis on holding everyone accountable and maintaining fairness, transparency, and consistent policy application was highlighted as fundamental to upholding integrity. Recommendations included promoting greater transparency in budget allocation, establishing robust reporting mechanisms for accountability, and

nurturing an environment where integrity is a personal value. Encouraging a culture of trust, responsibility, and transparency, alongside acknowledging diversity in service providers, emerged as focal points. Additionally, discussions around upholding ethical integrity in studies involving AI and animals were brought forth for consideration within the broader context of maintaining integrity.

5. **Excellence**: Striving for excellence was recognized as a core responsibility at Janelia, emphasizing the need to set benchmarks and regular checkpoints to measure progress across all values. Recognizing the significance of maintaining high standards and continuously refining processes, respondents highlighted that fostering a culture of excellence is pivotal for the organization. They underscored that by committing to excellence, Janelia can propel innovation and maintain its leadership in scientific research and discovery. Additionally, excellence was described as an ongoing journey of improvement, stressing the importance of acknowledging excellence at various stages beyond formal evaluations. Recommendations included fostering kindness, embracing change, and ensuring that all values contribute to achieving excellence. Suggestions also emphasized the need for expanded communication channels and regular progress updates to sustain the culture of excellence.

6. **Innovation**: While innovation was mentioned in the survey responses, it received less focus compared to other values. Respondents emphasized the importance of measuring and fostering a culture of creative problem-solving within Janelia. While the institution is renowned for innovative research, some respondents suggested formalizing measures to assess and encourage innovation more effectively. Recommendations included nurturing risk-taking, providing resources for experimentation, and celebrating novel ideas to bolster the value of innovation within the institution. Additionally, comments emphasized the need for sharing survey summaries and establishing metrics to gauge success and progress, stressing the importance of cultivating a culture that encourages risk-taking, experimentation, and celebrates innovative ideas.

Planned Actions

Following comprehensive feedback from the Janelia community, the Values Committee is initiating targeted actions through five dedicated subcommittees. These actions aim to address critical themes identified during the survey and Listening Event, aligning with the community's aspirations and needs.

1. **Inclusion, Belonging, and Welcoming Group**: This subcommittee is focused on fostering a more inclusive environment. Planned actions include implementing enhanced orientation programs for new employees, introducing a buddy system for seamless integration, and organizing social events such as lunches to facilitate connections among colleagues from diverse backgrounds. Members: *Kristy Arrington, Nirmala Iyer,*

Sarah Moorehead, Chris Morkunas, and Julie Muroff.

2. **Developing Others Group**: With a primary focus on nurturing individual growth and professional development, this subcommittee is committed to examining, coordinating, and communicating resources for feedback mechanisms, coaching, mentoring, and comprehensive training opportunities across teams. Members: *Isaac Agbeshie-Noye, Kristy Arrington, Julie Muroff, Katie Schretter, Aubrey Weigel, and Zari Zavala-Ruiz*.

3. **Recognition Group**: Recognizing the invaluable contributions of our employees and service providers is vital. This subcommittee is dedicated to implementing robust recognition programs to acknowledge outstanding achievements and contributions within the Janelia community. Members: *Kristy Arrington, Dan Bueno, Sarah Moorehead, Chris Morkunas, and Aubrey Weigel*.

4. **Communications Group**: The aim of this subcommittee is to bolster connections and community engagement with the HHMI Values. Planned actions involve initiatives that support transparent communication channels, ensuring that the values resonate and guide our daily endeavors effectively. Members: *Jan Funke, Hazel Meda, Sarah Moorehead, Ron Vale, and Aubrey Weigel*.

5. **Janelia Day Group**: Scheduled for Tuesday, June 18, 2024, this event will serve as a pivotal platform for an Open House of Science and operations. Featuring talks by distinguished Janelia alumni, it will culminate in a late-afternoon social/Intersections event open to families, fostering a sense of community beyond the workplace. Members: *Dan Bueno, Jan Funke, Sarah Moorehead, Katie Schretter, and Ron Vale*.

For further details regarding these subcommittees and their initiatives, please refer to [Hughes Hub](). To express interest in participation or seek additional information, connecting with any of the subcommittees or committee members is encouraged. The active involvement and contributions from the Janelia community remain essential in cultivating a thriving community at Janelia.