

Letter on Anti-Racism from Members of Scripps Institution ...

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Letter on Anti-Racism from Members of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography

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"I don't know if people grasp the extent to which racism has affected and infected the entire history of this country. It is not a simple thing. We cannot wish it away. We cannot simply assume that by doing all kinds of training, [- though very important - that we will fix the problem.] Racism is deeply ingrained in the economy. In the school system. In the prison system. And, I would probably conclude by saying that what we are addressing today are issues that should have been taken up in the immediate aftermath of slavery. But they are also issues that should have been taken up with respect to the colonialization of this part of the world. The first victims of racism were Indigenous people in this country."

Dr. Angela Davis[\[1\]](#)

At Scripps Institution of
Oceanography (SIO), our mission
statement is to seek, teach, and
communicate scientific understanding

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...serving oceanographic research
institution, we seek to fuel scientific, social and political transformations necessary to cope with environmental change and degradation. We pride ourselves on working for the betterment of society, but if our research harms or neglects the society and environment in practice, then it cannot authentically benefit the society and environment it serves. The impacts of our science cannot serve a diverse local and global society if our institution maintains a culture of supremacy, complicity, and ignorance that excludes and oppresses diverse voices. Our science is deceptive, and inauthentically “sustainable”, if it extracts and exploits knowledge, power, and resources from non-white communities. The extraordinary resources and privileges held by our institution come with a tremendous moral obligation to serve our mission justly. To this end, we must attain, create, and disseminate knowledge in a way that is not only accessible, but restorative to those affected by environmental injustice.

Recent events involving the significant loss of Black life at the hands of law enforcement and nationwide protests supporting the Black Lives Matter Movement during a pandemic - that disproportionately affects minority populations^[2] - have prompted various institutions to make

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apparent expressions of solidarity as many of these institutions have not only perpetuated a racist system throughout at least the last 400 years, but currently depend on the roots of racism to function. Thus, if we are to genuinely condemn and eradicate racism, then these foundations of power and white supremacy must be directly and holistically addressed.

As members of this community, we will hold our institution accountable to their own words and stated intent to stand in support of the Black community. We recognize that, over the past several months, there have been efforts made by the SIO Administration to address racism and foster anti-racism within our community. And, while we encourage these conversations to continue and celebrate forthcoming initiatives, further efforts should be contextualized through the lens in which we acknowledge that the institution of science has been complicit in allowing racism to exist and has helped to preserve white supremacy.

The injustices that the Black community encounters today are the direct result of chattel slavery. Although the Emancipation Proclamation terminated chattel slavery, anti-Blackness within America not only left members of the Black community unsupported, but utilized

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([Appendix 1](#)). This anti-Blackness fits

into the broader context of American white supremacy, which also systematically oppressed and exploited other racial and ethnic minorities, including but not limited to Indigenous, Latinx, Asian American, and multiracial peoples. This white supremacy allowed racism to permeate and persist in every institution of the United States, including the American higher education system and the Western scientific community generally. White supremacy runs deep, stemming from the very foundations on which our field has been built, in which the pursuit of [a particular kind of] “truth” has always been given priority over the pursuit of equity and justice.

It is unknown what life-changing contributions have been stymied, overlooked, or forever lost to time, by barring non-white people, women, disabled, Queer, and poor people from substantively participating in the scientific enterprise.

Throughout history, injustices have been cloaked behind scientific progress. This is pervasive even in the natural sciences, as colonization and exploitation underlie many narratives surrounding exploration and conservation. There are numerous examples of overt and covert racism in science which have shaped the academic world in which we operate, and history [\[3\]](#) has shown that the

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from the scientific process (e.g., mining, fracking, industrial fishing, [4] geoengineering).

The [Appendices](#) [5] of this document summarize just a few examples of how white supremacy manifests itself in science, including but not limited to, the medical and scientific racism that enabled eugenics and anti-Blackness; colonial practices that still exist in extractive field research known as “parachute science” (or “colonial science”); [6] the modern conservation movement in America, which was intertwined with the genocide and removal of Indigenous populations; geological and environmental research that is often exploited by the same oil and gas companies that exacerbate the environmental problems we seek to address; and the fact that the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution disproportionately burden economically disadvantaged communities - primarily of color - both on a national and international scale. We also address the history of academic gatekeeping that prevent BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and Person of Color) students from accessing STEM and the history of academic equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) efforts at SIO. [7], [8]

Racial and ethnic diversity in

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in 2016, only 0% went to underrepresented minorities (URMs) (who make up >30% of the US population).^[9] Out of the 5,138 ocean science PhDs awarded in the US from 1976 to 2016, only 58 were awarded to Black students.¹⁰ The geosciences, oceanography included, have seen no progress in racial and ethnic diversity in the past four decades.^[10] These deep-seated disparities are also reflected post-graduation by the dearth of prestigious invites, academic honors, and leadership positions received/held by BIPOC doctorates.^[11]

Scripps is no exception to these trends as our department is the least racially/ethnically diverse [in terms of graduate students and faculty] in all of UCSD.^[12] Out of SIO's entire graduate student body, only 9.1% of students identify as Chicanx/Latinx, 4.3% as Black, and <2% as American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (note that these numbers do not include international students, whose demographic information is not publicly-available).^[13] As of 2019, out of >100 ladder-rank faculty members, less than 14% of SIO's faculty population are BIPOC, with the only current Black tenure-track faculty member hired in 2019 (<1%). These numbers are simply staggering, and

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more oppressive history of racism and anti-Blackness in academia. SIO's student, staff, and faculty demographics underscore that - as is the case with most of American higher education and western science - SIO has been a predominantly white institution since its founding in 1903, and that, despite intentional efforts to improve the situation, *we must do more*.

We contend that the lack of diverse voices at SIO is not only a reflection of the field but a result of gatekeeping within our own institution.

Our graduate admissions process prioritizes metrics that are more indicators of an individual's race and class than they are of their ability to do science.^[14] These exclusionary practices lead to a normalization of "whiteness" and/or "white dominant culture"^[15] in science, creating an unwelcoming environment for BIPOC.

While access is a significant issue, a poor climate has the potential to affect the recruitment and retention of admitted BIPOC graduate students. Of the URM graduate students who matriculate at SIO, most express lower levels of satisfaction and happiness, compared to their white peers.^[16] This attests to the disconnect between the institution's promises to support diversity and the unwelcoming environment BIPOC students, staff,

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yet harmful behaviors such as microaggressions and implicit biases made manifest by faculty, staff, and students result in BIPOC members of our community withstanding other forms of *covert* prejudice on a daily basis. These slights may seem small to some, but to those on the receiving end, the stings of such prejudice can be enduring and lead to potentially macroscopic consequences,^[17] e.g., feeling unwelcome, underperforming, leaving SIO, or exiting academia altogether.

In the last decade, efforts to increase ethnic and racial diversity at SIO have garnered some momentum.^[18] Though the task to increase EDI should be collectively shared by everyone at our institution, these important efforts disproportionately fall on BIPOC students, staff, and faculty.^[19] This is particularly problematic because EDI work (such as the creation of and participation in committees, task forces, and diversity trainings) often goes unrecognized and uncompensated, leading to more labor for BIPOC scientists on top of their normal workload. Not to mention that EDI work can take a heavy emotional toll on its practitioners. Anti-racist work within our institution must be a shared goal of our community, that is reflected not only by our statements, but with our practices, actions, and the culture

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BIPOC to thrive, all students, staff, and faculty should adhere to and sustain a culture in which 1) diverse scientific perspectives are embraced and respected, 2) attitudes and behaviors resembling white supremacy are rejected,^[20] 3) and any environmental harm and exploitation through research is prohibited and/or at the very least, acknowledged and minimized. We must move forward with an understanding that anti-racism is inextricably linked to decolonization. If we are to represent an institution that benefits the society and environment *holistically*, then we must look within to move forward. In this spirit, we outline a [List of Demands](#) for our institution.

The call for an intentional deconstruction of racism and white supremacy is particularly significant in the face of rapid environmental degradation. The intersection of race, class, and climate resiliency cannot be ignored as the impacts of climate change will have disproportionate effects on marginalized and BIPOC communities.^[21] Similarly, the effects of ecosystem collapse, exacerbated by climate change, are felt most strongly among Indigenous communities or communities with limited access to capital.^[22] It is imperative that the next generation of leaders in climate science and advocacy, geosciences,

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voices from diverse backgrounds. [\[23\]](#)

Our institution will thrive with a culture that values EDI and which places a stronger emphasis on anti-racism and decolonization in/of both our science and our minds.

Scripps has led globally in understanding and protecting our planet for over a century, producing renowned leaders in oceanography and geoscience. Advocacy for groups affected by antisemitism [\[24\]](#) and sexism has been a crucial part of this legacy. But this is not enough, there is still much work to be done. We must continue to lead the field by internalizing and institutionalizing anti-racism at SIO to create and sustain a culture that students, post-docs, faculty, staff, and alumni can take pride in for generations to come. To this end, we ask that relevant members of SIO Administration provide its students, staff, and faculty with a written document by **March 20th, 2021**, specifically addressing each of our demands and outlining how and when these changes will be made such that, as an institution, we can meaningfully live up to our mission.

Demands

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grievances with the institution. These demands are largely consistent with those made by BIPOC graduate students and their allies at similar institutions, including UC Santa Barbara^[25] and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).^[26]

Following the lead of graduate students at UCSB's EEMB department,^[27] we borrow from equity leaders^[28] across disciplines^[29] when we use the term demand. We use 'demand':

To *elevate* the attitudes and values associated with contemporary liberation movements in solidarity with our BIPOC colleagues, students, staff, and mentors;

To *authentically center* the historical struggle that BIPOC experience^[30] when fighting for adequate resources against a backdrop of competing interests;

To *disrupt* the (overt/covert) oppressive impacts that academic research^[31] has on marginalized communities around the world; and

To *highlight* that recognizing the humanity and experiences of our BIPOC

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Our demands are divided across five domains:

- I. [Culture and Capacity Building](#)
- II. [Graduate Student Recruitment & Retention](#)
- III. [Undergraduate Student Recruitment & Retention](#)
- IV. [Hiring Practices for BIPOC Faculty, Post-docs & Staff](#)
- V. [Environmental Responsibility](#)

We request the following:

All members of SIO Administration provide a signed public response acknowledging this letter by

January 8th, 2021. The letter should reference each domain detailing how actions will be distributed among individual faculty members and administrators, including accountability measures for faculty who refuse to participate in this process. If consensus on a singular response is not reached by January 8th, individual members of the Administration can prepare alternative statements.

By **March 20th, 2021**, we request a publicly available action plan that details responses and timelines in addressing **each demand** to serve as accountability. We recognize the current financial limitations presented by COVID-19 budget reductions, and understand the implications of this on any proposed timeline. We ask that

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Administration addressed in the letter.

Any disregard for our requests would signal to us indifference on behalf of Scripps' Administration towards the voices of the undersigned (BIPOC students, staff, and faculty, and their allies). Conversely, a thorough and positive response to these demands would demonstrate the Administration's commitment to promoting anti-racism within our institution.

I. CULTURE & CAPACITY BUILDING

- i. **Implement mandatory anti-racism training.** SIO institutes mandatory *in-person* anti-racist, culture, and diversity training for ALL students, post-docs, faculty and staff to complete once every year, beginning Fall 2021. Learning how to become actively anti-racist is imperative to increase the of retention of BIPOC students, post-docs, faculty and staff at SIO, and are crucial to understanding how to mentor students from all backgrounds. This training could be instituted by an independent anti-racism organization, such as [Race Forward](#), and potentially

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docs, and graduate students

participating in any admissions, faculty search, or tenure committees. In order to eliminate bias in evaluations, the annual training should thus be a requirement for participation in any hiring and admissions committees.

Additionally, these trainings are crucial to understanding how to mentor students from all backgrounds, and thus should be a requirement for faculty members (who mentor graduate students) and graduate students or postdoctoral scholars (who mentor undergraduate researchers).

ii. **Commit to days of learning.**

As scientists, we know there's always more to learn. We ask that all members of the SIO community commit to "a day of learning" every quarter to engage with diverse perspectives in science and academia, as well as concepts in social justice. This day serves primarily as an opportunity to look within and self-teach, largely in an unstructured sense, since there is no substitute for conducting your own research and coming to your own conclusions on these topics.

This day of learning should

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ACCESS Justice Initiative), and discussions to help foster a more well-read, broadly informed community of leaders that are equipped to engage with current and future intersectional and global environmental issues.

iii. **Provide institutional support for seminars related to the intersections of environmentalism, colonization, and race.**

Compensate these speakers with a modest honorarium as they are often BIPOC speakers whose time is at risk of being taken advantage of.

iv. **Modernize courses that satisfy the ethics requirement to address EDI issues.** Ethical science must also be just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive science. To fully address the ethical issues graduate students will face as scientists, the ethics course must include material that covers implicit bias, microaggressions, mentorship, barriers, environmental racism, and environmental justice presented by qualified individuals.

v. **Formally support faculty EDI work and the development of**

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including the development of new coursework and curricula, and acknowledge all EDI related work in the faculty evaluation process. This may involve including an evaluation of each faculty member's EDI efforts in all tenure review files or establishing a quantifiable system for tracking faculty activity on EDI initiatives.

vi. **Hire additional full-time EDI staff.** In addition to the eight EDI fellows and the EDI faculty/staff liaisons, we ask that SIO invests in supporting our BIPOC students, post-docs, and faculty by hiring at least two permanent staff members by 2025 to support the SIO Director of Diversity Initiatives (Keiara Auzenne). At least one staff member should be hired as soon as the hiring freeze is removed. These additional staff members will advance EDI efforts at SIO by helping to implement the demands in this letter.

vii. **Abandon cultural appropriation.** Terminate practices rooted in cultural appropriation such as encouraging the campus to wear "Hawaiian shirts" or plastic leis. Using the culture

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innocuous themes such as

general beach or ocean themes.

viii. **Fully support the demands made by the Black Student**

Union (BSU)^[32] **to the broader UCSD**

Administration. Advocate for the demands made in the *2020 BSU Demands Campaign*, and release a statement on the SIO website in support of the BSU demands relevant to SIO's Black students, staff, and faculty. For example, BSU demands regarding recruitment, retention, faculty, and tenure are directly supportive of demand II.iv. listed below.

ix. **Establish a relationship with scholars from the UCSD**

Ethnic Studies Department.

With the help and guidance of experts in UCSD's Ethnic Studies Department, SIO should seek to develop a seminar series that highlights Indigenous knowledge with financial compensation for presenting faculty and graduate students. Additionally, support the design and development of graduate and undergraduate courses that bridge the intersections of environmentalism, the impacts of colonization, and race.

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San Diego area, and protect existing networks in the face of COVID-related budget cuts. Protect and increase financial support for ongoing community partnerships with local K-12 schools in BIPOC neighborhoods throughout San Diego. A sizable portion of these funds might go towards networks that already exist, such as SIO-SCOPE, the Rosa Parks Tutoring Program, and the Birch Aquarium, as well as external institutions such as the Ocean Discovery Institute.

Across all programs, emphasis should be placed on forming and maintaining long-lasting relationships with students, and providing resources that will support access to graduate school at SIO.

- xi. **Acknowledge communities we benefit from in research publications, presentations, and discussions, and work towards collaborative research partnerships.** SIO makes it mandatory for researchers to publicly acknowledge when conducting research on land that is not their own, and consider potential impacts of their results on these communities. We propose Administration create a buffer

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compensated financially, intellectually, and academically. SIO should institute resources on campus and provide training and/or consultations to researchers as necessary in order to encourage a synergistic approach, encompassing community and institutional efforts.

- xii. **Initiate conversations with Indigenous and Native peoples/groups/institutions (e.g., Indigenous faculty and staff, leaders at UCSD's Intertribal Resource Center, local Kumeyaay leadership) to end the erasure of Indigenous groups and reallocate resources towards Indigenous-led endeavors.**

Members of Scripps' Administration should work with Native leaders on UCSD main campus, including students, staff, and faculty, as well as members of San Diego's Native community, to accomplish this goal. Funds should be allocated towards these conversations and related projects.

- xiii. **Acknowledge our presence on Indigenous land, work to honor NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act), and**

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members of Scripps

Administration should research what a land acknowledgement might consist of and consider publishing a land acknowledgement on its departmental website after consulting with the appropriate persons/groups. [\[34\]](#) Beyond that, the Administration should work towards addressing concerns related to NAGPRA and returning land from the Scripps Coastal Reserve to the Kumeyaay.

II. GRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

- i. **Streamline the process for applying for an application fee waiver.** Prominently feature the waiver application on the graduate application and promotional materials.
- ii. **Permanently eliminate standardized testing.** Traditional standardized tests, such as the GRE, are often biased against underrepresented minorities and historically-excluded people, and provide scant indication as to whether or not a student will excel in graduate school. [\[35\]](#) We

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~~Remove the GRE from~~

Graduate Admissions^[36] for the upcoming year, and strongly encourage retaining this stance permanently in subsequent academic years, in favor of moving toward other mechanisms of assessing knowledge and scientific potential.

iii. **Provide relocation grants and lobby the university for more than two years of university housing for BIPOC, LGBT+, and disabled students, who often face housing discrimination.**^[37]

iv. **Work to increase the population of BIPOC graduate students in each cohort at SIO to be, at minimum, commensurate with California's demographics by 2025.**

Currently, BIPOC students are severely underrepresented within the Scripps' graduate student body.^[38] In an effort to achieve this demand, we recommend the following:

a. **Institute targeted 2-5 year departmental fellowships to be awarded to BIPOC graduate students at**

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of BIPOC students in academia, the department should pursue both internal and external fundraising as necessary to develop targeted departmental fellowships for BIPOC students. Since graduate student enrollment is often constrained by funding availability, faculty will be more likely to actively recruit and retain qualified BIPOC applicants if these fellowships are made available. This demand is consistent with the following recommendation made by the External Committee in Section IV of their 2017 report: [\[39\]](#) “... we urge the Administration to continue efforts to provide first-year fellowships for all students.” Purview over these awards should be given to the graduate students that form the Diversity Admissions Committee.

h Increase non-

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that not, SIO does not

directly invest in the
BIPOC graduate
students it admits.

Instead, BIPOC
graduate students at SIO
are disproportionately
“self-funded” in the
sense that they come
with 3-5+ years of
external fellowship
funding. Meanwhile, a
greater percentage of
non-BIPOC students at
Scripps are supported
through PI grants or TA-
ships. In addition to
awarding SIO
fellowships to BIPOC
students at the time of
admission, we
encourage the
department and graduate
student advisors to
allocate non-fellowship
funds to BIPOC
students commensurate
with non-fellowship
funds allocated to non-
BIPOC students.

Admissions committees
should deliver both
admissions data and
funding sources for
incoming students,
broken down by
ethnicity and race, to the
appropriate members of

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graduate student
admissions committees
should work to provide
greater transparency
surrounding the nature
of graduate student
acceptance/denial on the
basis of funding.

v. **Increase transparency for departmental examinations.**

Clearly outline the expectations and requirements for passing departmental exams, e.g., publish evaluation rubrics in the SIO Student Handbook. Additionally, make transparent what set of circumstances would lead to a conditional “pass” or “fail” of departmental exams, and what the options and consequences are for students who receive a “conditional pass” or “do not pass”.

vi. **Release a department statement in support of COLA.** A cost of living adjustment (COLA) will help BIPOC students thrive at UCSD.

vii. **Ensure that faculty and staff consult with the Office for Students with Disabilities when appropriate.**

Incorporate information
regarding Office for Students

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that faculty can recognize and respect possible symptoms of mental, cognitive, physical, and domestic violence health issues.

Additionally, conduct an annual student survey to determine whether needs are being met.

viii. **Construct a transparent, quantitative system to actively deter faculty abuse of power.**

Design a quantitative system where graduate students can report abuses of power^[40] without fear of retaliation. The objective of such a system would be to aid in the definition and determination of “adequate cause” warranting the dismissal of tenured and non-tenured faculty, and to deter repeated abuses of power, which is not accomplished by the system that is currently in place.

ix. **Assign supplemental sensitivity trainings to faculty/researchers flagged for harassment and mistreatment.** The faculty/researchers flagged to complete this training will be determined by annual anonymous survey results from students and faculty (e.g., the annual advisor/advisee form).

This supplemental sensitivity

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ask that there be some amount of transparency surrounding this process, including the number of faculty/research members that are assigned training as well as the percentage (%) of those who complete it.

III. UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

- i. **Increase scholarship opportunities for BIPOC undergraduate students.** Earning a scholarship at the undergraduate level immensely boosts one's chances of a successful career in the sciences. Thus, we demand that SIO increase the number of scholarship opportunities available to current BIPOC undergraduate students enrolled in the three majors offered by SIO, roughly commensurate with undergraduate student enrollment.
- ii. **Fund and support outreach programming to BIPOC undergraduate students.** With the ocean being less accessible to communities of color, some BIPOC undergraduate students

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this is an option for them.

Allocating funds for program opportunities through existing organizations, such as WMIS or UCSD's OASIS Program, for current BIPOC undergraduate students would promote these opportunities and encourage more BIPOC interest in the ocean sciences.

- iii. **List all available undergraduate positions and create a formal application process.** Eliminate hiring practices rooted in networks of power by listing all openings for undergraduate research assistants. Make this process transparent and accessible to all - too often BIPOC students are unaware of how to get involved with research. Additionally, undergraduate research positions are sometimes awarded solely on the basis of approaching PIs - which excludes those who are not in communities with knowledge of entry points into science. By making all undergraduate research positions paid and primarily accessible through a formal application process, the entry point into research will be clarified and implicit and structural biases against BIPOC students will be reduced.

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~~providing a pool of funding~~
commensurate with SIO
undergraduate enrollment.

For many, the access point into a career of scientific research is joining a lab as an undergraduate student, where one often starts out as an unpaid laboratory volunteer or receives credit hours in exchange for one's time. However, for many BIPOC students - who are disproportionately from lower income families - this is not feasible. We support the Administration's recent proposal to end all unpaid undergraduate positions, and emphasize that all undergraduate student researchers must be paid for their labor to create an equitable playing field in which everyone has the opportunity to join the scientific community. This may be accomplished by instituting additional programs and scholarships through UCSD Academic Enrichment Programs and/or allocating external funds.

IV. IMPROVE HIRING PRACTICES FOR BIPOC FACULTY, POST-DOCS & STAFF

- i. **Prioritize EDI efforts in new hire applications.** ~~Commit to~~

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as the *first* filter, instead of the last consideration, similar to the hiring methods employed by UC Berkeley.^[41] Leadership and lab culture generally starts at the top. Thus, efforts to implement EDI initiatives should be considered an integral component to a PI's work. Everyone involved in the hiring process should receive training on how to evaluate EDI statements. Applications where the candidate has not been previously committed to EDI initiatives or thoughtfully outlined how they will promote diversity and inclusion at SIO should be withdrawn from consideration. This should be a joint decision (equal voting share) with a committee composed of graduate students, as faculty hires hugely impact graduate student professional development and the overall culture at SIO with regard to EDI.

ii. **List all available post-doc positions and institute a formal application process.**

To eliminate hiring practices rooted in networks of power, make the process for hiring post-docs transparent and equitable by posting all job openings and ensuring a formal

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through networking at

conferences, which cuts off a huge swath of potential candidates.

iii. **Support relocation grants for post-docs.** The institution should provide these funds when necessary.

iv. **Work to increase the population of BIPOC faculty at SIO to be, at minimum, commensurate with California's demographics by 2030.** SIO acknowledges that the current practices for hiring faculty are neither fair nor transparent but instead rooted in networks of power. Developing an intentional broader outreach plan to existing pipelines must be set into motion to make the hiring process more equitable.

v. **Heed student input on future faculty hires.** Since new faculty hires directly impact graduate students and the overall culture at SIO, allow students to read applications for new faculty positions and have a vote in both selecting interview candidates and those that are ultimately hired at SIO. Currently, student hiring committees spend countless hours soliciting, generating, and providing feedback. While we

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disregarded in that decision making.

- vi. **Ensure that incoming BIPOC faculty and staff are well-positioned for success through a detailed plan for cluster hiring and equitable allocation of department resources.** Commit to more diverse cluster hires of faculty and staff to reduce feelings of isolation and avoid tokenization of individuals from underrepresented groups. This effort may benefit from shifting away from sectional hiring and towards institutional hiring. In addition, SIO should identify and eliminate bias in the allocation of startup funds, lab space, prioritization of lab construction, etc. to new hires.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

“If we don't save the planet, then none of our social justice struggles will matter.”

*Dr.
Angela
Davis* [\[42\]](#)

- i. **Acknowledge environmental harm, extraction, and exploitation of materials and resources done in conducting**

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faculty to assess the environmental and social harm produced by research (including, but not limited to, the use of fossil fuels) or any materials necessary for said research. Faculty, post-docs, and students should include statements in publications and presentations acknowledging and justifying those methods over less harmful alternatives. Embrace any opportunity to avoid further environmental and social harm when possible.

- ii. **Establish sustainable practices within SIO.** Allocate a pool of funding to hire either one full-time sustainability staff member or several graduate and undergraduate students as sustainability ambassadors. Staff or ambassadors will work to codify and maintain pre-existing campus sustainability operations (including, but not limited to, SIO composting), as well as implement new infrastructure such as zero-waste practices, energy-use monitoring, and water-saving controls.
- iii. **Encourage divestment from fossil fuels and require transparency about research funding from the fossil fuel**

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FOSSIL FUEL divestment

plans from fossil fuels and invest in the UC Social Equity Fund. Additionally, require SIO faculty to disclose all fossil fuel industry funding, similar to how biomedical sciences researchers disclose their pharmaceutical industry support.

- iv. **Release a statement calling on the UC Regents in support of UCSD Green New Deal (GND) initiatives.** This statement should address the need for the Chief Investment Officer to provide full transparency on fossil fuel related investments, divest from all funds exposed to fossil fuels and companies related to the exploration, extraction, transportation, and refining of fossil fuels, and to refrain from reinvestment in the future. This statement should also call on the Regents to develop policy on oversight of funding from the Fossil Fuel industry, similar to the policy developed on Tobacco.

- v. **Release a statement supporting other initiatives of UCSD Green New Deal.** Support the UCSD GND campaign for a competitive call for proposals from banks to provide commercial banking services at UCSD with

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in the decision making process.

Additionally, demonstrate support for the 5 Principles of Emissions Reduction and 35 Concrete Actions towards decarbonization, teaching, research, health, and preparedness presented by the Task Force on the Climate Crisis.

Appendices

I. Examples of Racism Throughout the History of Science

Throughout history, injustices have been cloaked behind scientific progress. This is pervasive even in the natural sciences, as colonization and exploitation underlie the narratives of conservation and exploration. The field of natural sciences has many of its roots in colonial England at the height of Settler Colonialism and the dawn of Exploitation Colonialism. The Royal Society, a legacy of that era (est. 1660), was originally composed exclusively of white English *noblemen*. Examples of the Society members include famous thinkers such as Francis Bacon and Charles Boyle, both of whom helped establish experimental norms and

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scientific body of knowledge we read about and benefit from, most of this knowledge is borne from a very specific lived experience and view on the world, in which women, non-white people, or poor people have little power, input, or autonomy.

White supremacy was the driving force during the Age of Imperialism, often under the helpful guise of “Science”. It led to European colonization of “exotic” lands, which were oftentimes already inhabited, providing European naturalists a scientific opportunity for exploration.

During these expeditions, describing the natural world and naming new species was accompanied by usurping land and extracting resources with little to no consideration given to those who already occupied that land. Although this form of colonialism by expanding one empire has been largely discontinued, it has left deep scars across colonized regions of the world (i.e., disenfranchised territories and developing countries), and its effects continue to manifest today.^[43]

Present and former colonies are still healing economically, politically, and socially from the adverse effects of colonialism.

Moreover, the imperialistic nature of field research is represented today by the demographics of natural scientists in recent history and the practice of what is known as “parachute science”.

^[44] ...

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and indigenous communities to gain accolades or financial support without giving back to or supporting the local/Indigenous communities that it benefited from. [\[45\]](#), [\[46\]](#) One study found that at that time, 60-70% of researchers from “developed” countries did not acknowledge contributors from “developing” research locales as co-authors on their publications. [\[47\]](#)

In the context of anti-Blackness, scientific racism was the myth of Black inferiority that justified oppression, slavery and use of black bodies in science. Eugenicists and white supremacists litter the history of Western medicine with research that spread the myth of the superiority of the white race. In the 17th century, Jonathon Blumebach’s published a taxonomic system of racial classification in which “Caucasians” were white people made in God's image whereas “Ethiopian”, “Mongolian”, “Malayan,” and “red” races were degenerative forms. [\[48\]](#) In the mid 1800s, plantation doctor James Marion Sims routinely experimented on enslaved mothers and their children without anesthetic. [\[49\]](#) He perpetuated the myth that health disparities between Black and white mothers, such as susceptibility to newborn tetanus, were due to laziness and lack of intellectual capabilities of Black mothers while ignoring the poor living conditions of

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Examples include the infamous

Tuskegee Experiment (1932-1972), [\[50\]](#) where African-American men affected by syphilis were (without their informed consent) included as test subjects who received placebo treatments under the guise of free Federal healthcare; and the case of Henrietta Lacks, [\[51\]](#) a Black woman whose cells were removed without her permission after being diagnosed with cervical cancer and receiving failed cancer treatments (1951). These stolen cells, now known as HeLa cells, are still widely used in the biomedical industry.

Geological research is often used to advance the exploitation of natural resources by oil and gas companies. [\[52\]](#) The creation of national parks idealized the heroic preservation of “pristine wilderness” devoid of “human habitation”, disregarding a long history of Indigenous use and cultivation. [\[53\]](#) Following the state-sanctioned genocide of the Ahwahnechee people in Yosemite Valley during the Mariposa War, and after years of exploiting the remaining Southern Sierra Miwok as a tourist attraction, Yosemite National Park continued slowly and strategically removing the Indigenous population throughout the mid 1900s. [\[54\]](#) Even the formative years of oceanography depended heavily on colonization and

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oppression, [\[55\]](#), [\[56\]](#) and like many advances in science, the modern era of oceanography was spurred on by the military industrial complex of World War II. [\[57\]](#) To date, there is little acknowledgement of Indigenous knowledge of oceanography or marine environments.

While climate change disproportionately burdens communities of color on a global scale, [\[58\]](#) the history of redlining, gentrification, and other racist policies and practices exacerbate environmental racism through climate change nationally. [\[59\]](#) In the U.S., People of Color develop health-related issues due to a disproportionately high exposure to pollutants, as fossil-fueled plants and refineries are intentionally placed in Black and Latinx neighborhoods. [\[60\]](#), [\[61\]](#) Additionally, Black communities are displaced and relocated to regions that are more vulnerable and lack the sufficient and effective infrastructure to protect against extreme weather events intensified by climate change, such as hurricanes and flooding. [\[62\]](#), [\[63\]](#), [\[64\]](#)

These disparities are evident even within our local communities within San Diego county. Barrio Logan is a historically BIPOC community within San Diego that was established in the 1920's when people moved to this area in pursuit of

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homes and effectively splitting the neighborhood with the Coronado bridge while also increasing traffic and air pollution.^[65] The community was then rezoned from residential to mixed allowing businesses, such as junk yards and warehouses, that are known to release carcinogenic chemicals to establish in this BIPOC neighborhood as opposed to others. In addition, shipbuilding industries continued to grow contributing to the pollution of San Diego Bay and the closure of public access. Barrio Logan is one of the top 5% communities most impacted by pollution in California and is the top community in San Diego County affected by diesel pollution.^[66] Continued contamination has led to members of this BIPOC community susceptible to a cancer risk in the 80th to 90th percentile nationally.^[67]

II. Academic Gatekeeping and Educational Inequality

The way intelligence has been measured, and the way we currently quantify students' potential to excel as scientists during admissions processes, utilizes racially-biased metrics of success.^[68] Standardized tests such as the SAT and GRE act as financial barriers to students who cannot afford to take the tests or spend money on expensive tutors and test prep

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background that it is their inherent

ability to excel as a scientist. [\[69\]](#) Yet GRE scores are still used to determine admission to SIO admissions. [\[70\]](#)

Resumes are often padded with unpaid internships that can only be taken by students who do not need to support themselves and their families financially. Admissions decisions are frequently made without transparency, behind closed doors, allowing for the bias of individuals in charge of these decisions to infiltrate what should be a fair and equal process. In some cases, legacy admissions and personal connections are prioritized by admissions committees, preventing a holistic review of other applicants. [\[71\]](#)

This exclusive pipeline is largely impenetrable to students who are the first in their family or community to apply to graduate school, or for those who do not have someone to guide them around the coded language/processes of academia.

III. History of EDI Work at SIO

In the last decade, significant efforts have been made to increase diversity at SIO. An external review of the SIO graduate program was conducted in 2017 and identified recommendations to improve

departmental culture [\[72\]](#) In particular

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practices, and effective means to report conflicts, harassment, and discrimination. After this review, members of the SIO student body came together to write and support a letter^[73] on hiring and diversity, which called on the department to hire faculty more representative of this country in terms of gender, ethnicity, and other facets of diversity. In 2016, SIO hired Keiara Auzenne as the institution's first Director of Diversity Initiatives, a role dedicated to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work across our community. Since then, the SIO EDI Team has implemented various initiatives aimed at recruiting, retaining, and cultivating diverse talent. These initiatives are varied in nature, supporting students, staff, and faculty. This includes, but is not limited to, the Scripps LEARNS and Scripps LEADS initiatives, the ACCESS Justice Initiative, Deep Connections Initiative, Chat with a Scripps Scientist, and the various community circles and affinity group meetups.^[74] This work from the SIO EDI Team has been integral in fostering a welcoming and supportive environment for BIPOC students, staff, and faculty in the last four years. Recently, students have rallied around EDI initiatives to create gender-neutral dive lockers, remove the GRE from SIO graduate admissions practices, and endow fellowships for increased diversity in diving. While there is a

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