

Dear CLaSP Faculty,

We first want to thank each and every one of you for the work you do everyday to push our department to be on the forefront of climate and space sciences. Our department's exceptional contributions to society are a reflection of our shared commitment to championing bold, creative, and divergent scholars. Unfortunately, our ability to serve our community as the Leaders and Best is put at risk when scholars of color do not feel at home here. [The geosciences are among the least diverse fields in STEM](#), and CLaSP is no different. We recognize significant efforts in our department, including the [G.R.E.A.T workshop](#), [a dedicated diversity statement](#), a [faculty-led diversity, equity, and inclusion committee](#), and dedicated Diversity Allies. However, it is clear from societal circumstances that the current trajectory of progress is insufficient. We hope you agree we must do better.

**Goal 1: Grow CLaSP to better reflect and educate the communities it serves.**

Our current recruitment and admissions practices and policies are largely responsible for how our department looks today. These processes are ripe for critical examination and innovation.

*Faculty.* The recruitment and tenure processes for faculty who will be mentoring and teaching our students are opaque. Despite student involvement in the [recent faculty recruitment process](#), it is not clear how student feedback informed the selection. Furthermore, it is not clear who applied, who was encouraged to apply, and how the required diversity statement was factored into generating the shortlist of interviewed candidates. Going forward, we propose utilizing transparency as a fundamental check on [the inherent vulnerability of search committees](#) to construct evaluations of merit that fail to capture the contributions and potential of scholars of color. Future search and tenure committees should include students as voting members and instrumental to each step in the process. We also propose ensuring the recruitment and tenure processes require external letters that evaluate teaching and public outreach to replace two of the five total external letters.

*Graduate Students.* The [admissions requirements](#) on the CLaSP website may provide useful guidance to potential applicants and help filter through competitive applications.

However, it may also serve to [discourage future scholars who do not exactly fit the template for acceptable candidates](#), resulting in a less diverse applicant pool. We believe that this risk is high and contributes to the “leaky pipeline” for women and people of color in STEM, and that this risk far outweighs any perceived benefits. Instead, the department could develop summer courses to bridge any gaps for accepted students. Application fees should be waived, perhaps using one of the many [College of Engineering fee waiver programs](#), or by allowing these fees to be reimbursed by the department. Faculty and students should develop relationships with and target recruitment at Minority-Serving Institutions, as well as [other proven strategies](#), to build robust pathways for scholars of color at CLaSP. The department should recruit graduate students by sending faculty and students to underrepresented minority focused conferences, such as the [National Technical Association](#) and [SACNAS](#), or by encouraging students and faculty to give talks and hold recruiting events at diverse undergraduate institutions.

*Undergraduate Students.* Our ability to target the University undergraduate population is nearly limitless. Faculty and students should actively recruit women

and students of color at an appropriate campus venues. Partner with the [Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program](#) and use [science based recruitment strategies](#). Allocate funding to support undergraduate researchers



likely already balancing work and classes.

*Our Ann Arbor Community.* CLaSP should utilize [our in-house consulting resources](#) to share our groundbreaking research with students of all ages. There are lots of resources available for public engagement methods, [interactive teaching ideas](#), and [programs](#) that students and postdocs can get involved in.

**Goal 2: Make CLaSP feel like home for everybody.** Too often, there are interactions (or lack thereof) with mentors and peers in which CLaSPers are made to feel like they do not belong.

This is unacceptable, and we must reaffirm our commitment to build a more just and inclusive community.

*State our values.* President Schlissel made a statement concerning the horrific murders of [George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery](#). Dean Gallimore [wrote a letter](#) to the community outlining his reflections on these atrocities, our Nation's persistent and systemic racism, and a call to action for students. Where does CLaSP stand? We'd like to hear.

*Create and empower ombudspersons.* Too often, students and staff who feel marginalized have no meaningful recourse. CLaSP should empower both student and faculty ombudspersons to report, track, and remedy incidents of intolerance without fear of retaliation. Remedies should be meaningful, including the power to cause personnel actions against offending faculty and staff. CLaSP faculty should publicly advocate for changes in U-M dismissal policies for tenured faculty that contribute to an environment of discrimination and prejudice.

*Ensure rising scholars of color are afforded opportunities to shine.* Scholars of color have made worthy contributions to our fields both inside and outside the department, and more of them should be recognized with department accolades and funding. Department seminars should feature faculty of color. Postdoc and REU opportunities should actively recruit scholars of color. Nomination pools for department awards must be diversified.

**Goal 3: Join us in a commitment to accountability and results.** We're eager to evaluate the data and see which activities are moving the needle. All of us have a stake in building a more welcoming and representative CLaSP, and we want to be able to have candid conversations when we fall short of our goals. But for that to happen, the CLaSP community needs to both publicly set goals and agree upon performance metrics *as the future of our department and the field as a whole depends on it*. The CLaSP Diversity Allies should hold monthly meetings where anyone in the department can discuss what DEI efforts we are working on and the progress we've made. If we aren't able to build a more diverse and representative cadre of leaders in geosciences, then we will have failed the field, the Michigan community, and each other. We, the undersigned as well as the CLaSP community, look forward to engaging directly and transparently with the Department in this ongoing process.