

January 2024
Committee Report
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report

SSB Diversity Committee (2023): JC Buckner, Tim Colston, Anahí Espíndola, Manpreet Kohli, Luca Pozzi, Rin Krichilsky, Jessica Ware

We are presently recruiting a new postdoc member, and are looking for replacements for JC Buckner and Luca Pozzi. Anahi Espindola is now the Diversity Director, but Tim Colston will be acting director while Anahi is on parental leave. Jessica Ware has left the committee to join the SSB Presidential line.

Meetings:

We held several meetings in first semester of 2023 with council committees to brainstorm and discuss specific ways to make DEI a strategic thread across the council activities; in the interim time between meetings we communicated via email. Several actionable items were identified during these meetings and the committees are currently considering their implementation among their activities. We met infrequently in the autumn of 2023.

Coordination:

In 2022, we created a strategic plan for the SSB DEI committee, which we will use to guide actions in the upcoming years. This was the motivation for our council meetings this semester. The strategic plan can be found in the appendix from our June 2023 report.

Website update and social media:

We will update the website as we get new members on the committee.

DEI session at 2023 SACNAS meeting

JC Buckner is working with others from the tri-societies DEI committees to organize an Evolution exhibitors booth at SACNAS' (Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science) annual Diversity in STEM conference. The conference will take place October 26-28, 2023 in Portland, Oregon. Similarly to last year, the booth will focus on communicating to students opportunities for research and careers in evolution, as well as the benefits of membership in scientific societies.

SSB DEI Symposium at Evolution 2024

We had a DEI symposium proposal accepted for the 2024 Evolution meetings in Montreal. Currently we are getting a list of potential speakers to contact and invite.

Special issue of new SSB journal:

The DEI committee met with Bryan Carstens about a proposal for a DEI themed special collection in the new SSB journal. Anahí Espíndola and Luca Pozzi are editing this special collection. We have received three submissions, and have actively been soliciting submissions

as well (expecting at least two more). We are still actively recruiting submissions and working with individual contributors to create a joint presentation of systematists from around the world.

Progress on other DEI initiatives:

The Awards Committee has been working with our committee to evaluate the demographics of who applies for and who receives society awards. For this year's Graduate student awards, for example, demographic data as well as data on neurodivergence, gender, sexual orientation were requested of the 126 applicants, which will allow us over longer sampling periods to assess whether we are meeting our goals of having winners if awards be in the same demographic proportions as those whom apply for awards.

Spending:

The DEIC did not have any outstanding expenditures from the prior year, and decided to earmark funding to support members to attend conferences to promote DEI initiatives and SSB. The committee agreed to fund Tim Colston's travel & lodging expenses associated with the 2024 Evolution from the 2023 budget.