

June, 2022
Committee Report
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report

SSB Diversity Committee (2021/2022): JC Buckner, Tim Colston, Alonso Delgado, Anahí Espíndola, Manpreet Kohli, Luca Pozzi, Jessica Ware

Meetings:

We held 3 meetings so far in 2022, 1 of which had a half hour closed meeting and a half hour open meeting to which all SSB members were invited (the other 2 were closed meetings); in the interim time between meetings we communicated via a slack account, and email. Additionally, we met as a committee 5 times with the representatives of ASN and SSE to discuss the DEI booth at Evolution, the DEI symposium, and the McKinley report distribution options, and Jessica Ware once with McKinley Associates for a post-culture-survey interview.

Website update and social media:

The committee worked with the SSB communications director to upload the McKinley survey summary as an infographic designed by SSB DEIC member Janet Buckner to the DEI section of the website; we are working on generating content for this site.

NSF LEAPS proposal:

The DEI committee discussed ideas for a LEAPS proposal. Jessica Ware has been working with members of the ASN and SSE on a proposal which would fund leadership training for council and committee members; this proposal is being submitted with Suzanne Alonzo (ASN) as submitting lead PI and with Jessica Ware (SSB), Cathy Rushworth (SSE), Nancy Chen (ASN), Tracy Heath (ASN/SSB), and Benjamin Blackman (ASN/SSE) as co-PIs.

DEI session at 2022 Evolution meetings

We have a co-organized tri-society symposium and workshop planned for the 2022 meeting, including a clothing/gear swap:

1. Symposium abstract: Field work is a critical part of many biologists' lives. It serves an entry point to a career in science, and it provides vital data for dissertations and funded projects. However, field work also presents physical, psychological, and emotional safety hazards for many, especially scientists from historically excluded groups. In the first ever tri-society Diversity Symposium, we discuss experiences in the field, colonialism and field work, and tools for creating safer, more inclusive, and positive field experiences for all.
2. Workshop abstract: Fieldwork is an important and often necessary component of many scientific disciplines, yet research suggests that it presents a high-risk setting for incidents of sexual/gender-based harassment and assault. The Building a Better Fieldwork Future (BBFF) Program involves a 90-minute workshop developed by a team of field researchers at UC Santa Cruz. It identifies the unique risks posed by fieldwork and offers a suite of evidence-based tools for field researchers, instructors, and students to prevent, intervene in, and respond to sexual harassment and

assault. Through a series of practical intervention scenarios, this workshop guides participants on how to be an active and engaged bystander, how to report incidents, and how to plan field settings to minimize risk. Armed with these tools, participants can play a role in ensuring that field settings are safer, more equitable, and more welcoming for the next generation of field scientists.

3. Gear swap abstract: Announcing the first inaugural tri-society field clothing and gear swap! This year, as part of the first biennial tri-society diversity symposium (focusing on field safety), we're offering a clothing and gear swap for field biologists. *Bring something you no longer use or wear that's in good to excellent condition to share, take something you could wear or make use of!* We aim to especially support our junior colleagues who are just getting started in their field careers. Donations will be accepted at the DEI Booth prior to the symposium, or in the back of the room during the symposium. We will also be raffling away FREE GIFT CARDS from outdoor clothing companies. Students and postdocs can pick up a free raffle ticket at the DEI Booth - drawings will happen at the end of the symposium! Open to all meeting attendees; registration not required.

We contributed funds for the Evolution meeting's 2022 LGBTQAI2S+ collaborative events and assisted with planning.

Future Meeting Events

SSB is leading an effort to host a tri-society exhibitor booth at SACNAS (Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science) annual Diversity in STEM conference (October 27-29, 2022). The booth has been reserved for this year's meeting and the hope is to have a recurring presence there annually. In addition to swag, SSB plans to have infographics explaining the study of systematic biology, potential careers in the field, information about membership and its benefits, student awards available through the society, travel scholarships for attending the annual Evolution meeting (including how to apply for the UDE program) and for attending the SSB standalone meeting. We are also planning a student prize to be awarded during the SACNAS conference for the best poster in evolutionary biology, and possibly a few additional travel awards to students with great research that could be presented at the 2023 Evolution meeting.

Special issue of new SSB journal:

The DEI committee met with Bryan Cranstens about a proposal for a DEI themed special issue of the new SSB journal. Anahi Espindola and Luca Pozzi are editing this special issue. We have a call out for submissions, and have actively been soliciting submissions as well.

McKinley Associates Tri-Society member survey and interview summary infographic:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in SSB 2021 Climate Survey Results Summary

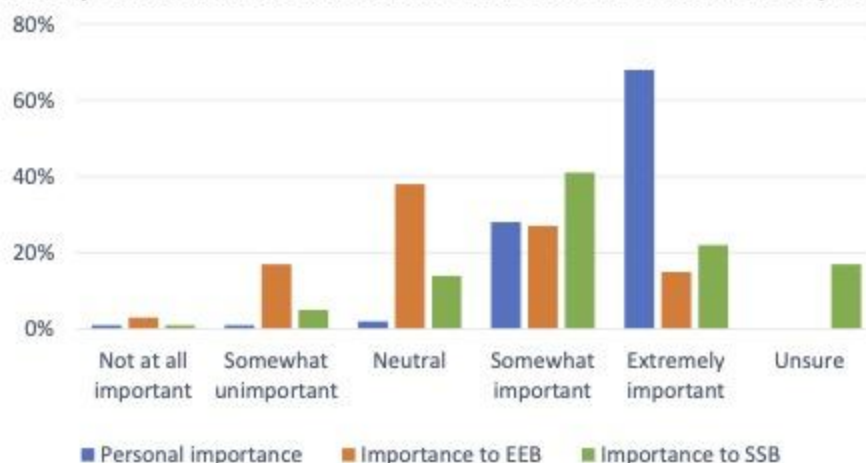


Society of
Systematic Biologists

Who were the respondents?

177 respondents from SSB:
74% are based at US institutions
86% identified as white
76% identified as heterosexual
15% reported having a disability
15% were from a disadvantaged background

Did respondents feel SSB and the field of EEB value DEI as much as they do? *



Barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Biggest barriers or challenges faced by historically excluded groups that at least 2/3 of all respondents (SSB, SSE & ASN)* ranked as 4 or 5, where 5 was a significant barrier or challenge.



Lack of Representation (78%)



Lack of Financial Support (70%)



Lack Sense of Belonging (73%)



Systemic Bias (69%)



Lack of Mentorship (72%)

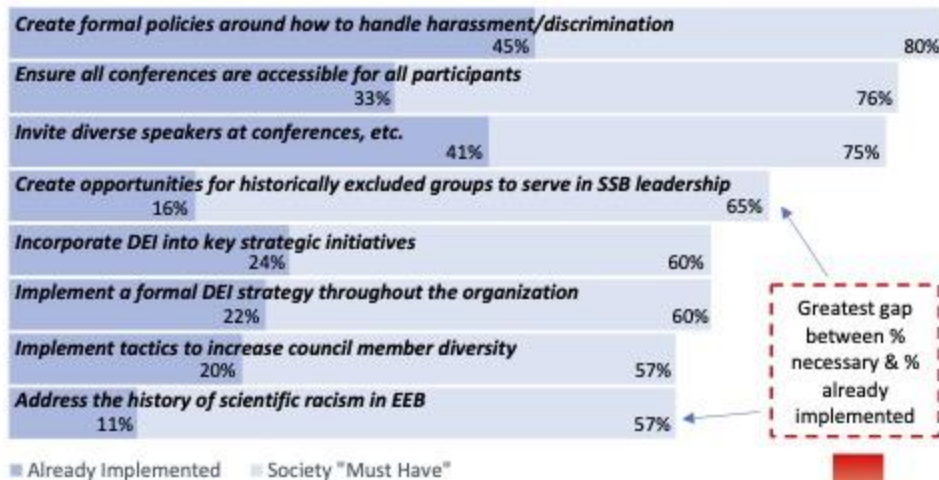


Lack of Inclusion in Leadership (68%)

* Not all respondents answered all questions, so sample sizes vary by question.

How can SSB best serve its members?

The percentage of respondents that identified the following strategies as necessary to address DEI among members and the percentage of respondents that believe SSB has already implemented them (top 8 shown):



How does SSB continue to advance DEI in the society?

Select recommendations from McKinley Advisors for the field broadly, and SSB specifically, with examples of planned, ongoing, or completed initiatives.

Communicating DEI Initiatives & Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual DEI Report - Defining 4-year DEI action plan
Diversify Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intentional recruitment of council candidates - Increased transparency for leadership nominations and elections
Provide Professional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop training opportunities for members (e.g., workshops)
Improve meeting Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate what "inaccessible" means for our members - Provide resources, services, and support to reduce barriers to accessibility
Expand Funding Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a number of free memberships (for underrepresented and/or global south biologists; students) - Bulletin is free of charge to publish in

Other actions:

Address the history of scientific racism in EEB – SSB DEIC is putting together a special issue in the Bulletin of the Society of Systematic Biologists that cover this and other DEI topics.