

June 2023  
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

**Meetings:**

We held several meetings in 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.

**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.

**Website update and social media:**

We met with the SSB Communications director Jeremy Brown on April 19th. We discussed having a feature of underrepresented members of the SSB community for either the website or newsletter, and we offered to provide that list. We recommended highlighting opportunities for funding and research positions in the newsletter, as well as continuing to promote DEIC initiatives both there and on the website. We also discussed making the website multilingual to reach membership beyond the US and English speaking countries, and to promote the SSB as a global society. In addition to the standing against racism tab in 'about' on the website we recommended there be a tab on inclusivity related to gender and sexuality, in particular writing a statement about trans rights.

**NSF LEAPS proposal:**

The DEI committee discussed ideas for a LEAPS proposal. Jessica Ware worked with members of the ASN and SSE on a proposal which would fund leadership training for council and committee members; this proposal was 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. This was not funded, and it will be resubmitted; Jessica was unavailable to serve as co-PI and Tim Colston was invited as a co-PI but then there was a decision from the lead PI Suzanne Alonzo (ASN) to have the remainder of the team continue rather than invite an additional co-PI. SSB will be represented by Tracy Heath (who will represent SSB along with ASN). There was also some discussion about potentially implementing such a program internally at SSB and using SSB funds, to be able to eventually run a pilot on which to build for a future submission.

### **DEI session at 2023 SACNAS meeting**

Last year, JC Buckner, Tim Colston and members of the Tri-Societies had an Evolution DEI booth at the SACNAS meeting in Puerto Rico. It was considered to be very successful.

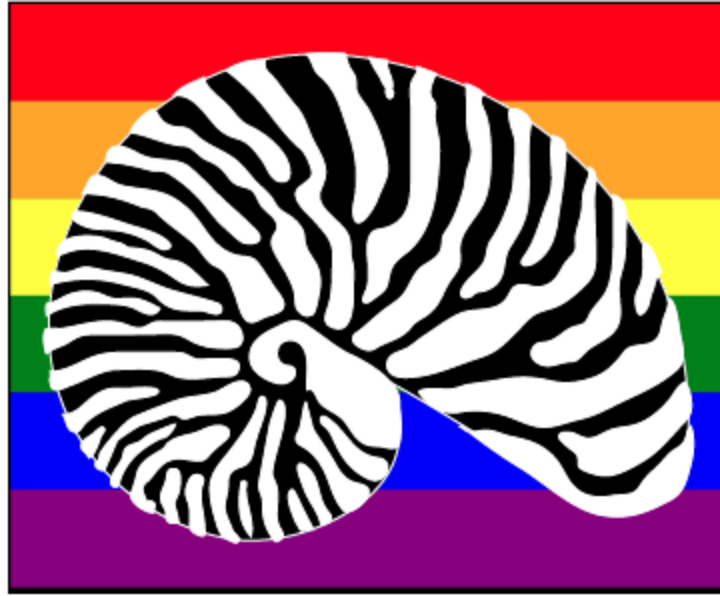
JC Buckner is working with others from the tri-societies DEI committees to organize an Evolution exhibitors booth at SACNAS' (Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science) annual Diversity in STEM conference. The conference will take place October 26-28, 2023 in Portland, 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.

### **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. Publication is expected for the end of 2023.

### **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.



## Society for Systematic Biology's Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee

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### Strategic Plan 2022-2025

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#### **The SSB DEIC**

Our committee works to promote diversity among those who study systematics, within the SSB and within the broader evolutionary biology community.

#### **Our mission**

The SSB Diversity Committee will promote diversity, equity, and inclusiveness to enhance the study of all fields in systematics, and to foster the career of early career systematists.

#### **Our core values**

The SSB diversity committee's goal is to celebrate and foster the inclusion of all social, racial, cultural, sexual, gender, dis/ability, and economic groups in the society by promoting the advancement of the study of systematics for all interested parties at all career stages.

1. The DEIC should advocate for diversity, equity, inclusivity among and for all members of SSB
2. Evolutionary Biology has a problematic past and inequities exist throughout our field which need to be addressed
3. The SSB should strive to have a membership that reflects human diversity, prioritizing advocating for historically marginalized members globally

## **Our Vision Statement**

- Systematically promoting diversity among biodiversity scientists.
- Systematically promoting diversity, equity and inclusion among biodiversity scientists.
- To embrace and promote diversity, equity and inclusion for everyone within systematic biology
- Make SSB a welcoming society where all members can succeed
- Using DEI committee to make Evol Biol the most diverse and equitable discipline
- Transforming Evol Biol through DEI committee activities
- Making evolutionary Biology diverse equitable and inclusive

## **Defining Our Desired Future**

By 2030, we would like DEI to be a strategic thread that ties together all SSB committees and work.

1. We would like the SSB DEIC to be more involved in all committees for the society, with active participation by members from all committees on DEI work.
2. We would like to see SSB membership to have grown internationally with more members identifying as members of the LGBTQAI2S+, minoritized and dis/ability communities.
3. We would like to have the SSB DEIC to have good working relationships with other societies DEICs, evolutionary, ecological and organismal.
4. We would like a higher percentage of membership being engaged in volunteerism for SSB DEIC work
5. We expect by 2030 that surveys of members reflect the shared values of the DEIC and they feel this topic is of high value
6. We expect there to be no tolerance for hateful commentary by members regarding DEIC work well before 2030. We expect that by 2030 the code of conduct will be well enforced, and part of what shapes member behavior both at meetings and outside of the Evolution meetings.

## **SSB DEIC 2022-2025 Plan**

To achieve this 2030 future, we will prioritize certain work, eliminate other activities and create new initiatives.

**Goal 1:** After 36 months each committee in SSB will have a DEI thread of work.

**By doing:** We will meet with each committee to craft their DEI thread, and will update this yearly. We will help them design their plan of work for them to implement, but not complete the work for them.

**Steps:**

1. Make a list of committees (Executive committee, Awards committee, Nominations committee, Legacy committee)
2. Arrange meetings with all committees and the DEIC by December 31, 2022
3. Work with each committee on a DEIC charge
4. Work with each committee on DEIC actions that can be integrated into their activities

**Goal 2:** After 36 months we will have off-cycle annual activities separate from the annual meeting.

**By doing:** We will create content about diversity in systematics to be used for off-cycle events.

**Steps:**

1. We will run webinars quarterly about topics related to DEI and Systematics.
2. We will arrange local tours of systematics groups that will increase member and non-member engagement.
3. We will do virtual and in person K-12 outreach related to Systematics and DEI work.

**Goal 3:** After 36 months we will have a visible and regular presence at SSB stand-alone meetings

**By doing:**

1. Having a regular workshop for capacity building for students and early career professionals
2. Having public facing events at stand-alone meetings to engage people with diverse evolutionary biology content reflecting a diversity of scientists and content.
3. Recruiting new members in local areas by liaising with local universities, especially HBCUs MSIs when in the USA.

**Steps:**

1. For the Mexico meeting, reach out to Susana to see what their plan is
2. Get the stand alone meeting schedule for the next several years
3. Plan events for these stand alone meetings in advance
4. Support childcare grants, and equity initiatives for attendees

**Goal 4:** After 36 months we will support the establishment of a mentorship system, beyond that being created by council to include postdocs and tenure track faculty

**By doing:** We will have a multi-level mentoring program that would work to help people stay in their careers

**Steps:** work with council to identify funding possibilities to design such a program