



RMBL Diversity and Inclusion Committee End-of-summer annual report (2020)

Summary

Interest in contributing to the committee grew since 2019, with several new community members contributing to efforts this year. Actions during 2020 were challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting the size of the in-person Gothic community, and limiting the time available for many people to contribute to the committee's actions. Nevertheless, the committee was able to build on the actions set out in the 2019 report and also work towards a number of more ambitious goals. The work of the committee was also lent further urgency in the community by the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others, and by the resulting upwelling of national engagement around racism and diversity issues.

The committee has begun a series of substantial and sustained conversations with the RMBL administration (via Kelly Sudderth) and the Board focused on aligning actions and priorities. The committee is strongly supportive of this integration, and will be working in coming months to co-define priority areas for RMBL action, as well as to contribute to institutional strategic planning efforts. These efforts are being coordinated by the three-person Board relations subcommittee.

At present, the committee's desired scope of action exceeds available human and financial resources. Further involvement by other community members, and support for fundraising, remain priorities going forward.

Committee membership, information on how to join, a list of past and future actions, and some photos of events are below.

Joining the committee

The committee is open to all interested community members who are able to make a time commitment to these issues (staff, students, RAs, PIs, etc.). Please contact diversity@rmbi.org to join. We welcome new voices.

2020 committee members (alphabetical by last name)

billy barr

Benjamin Blonder (liaison to the Board, Board relations subcommittee)

Elsa Cousins

Jimmy Lee

Amelia Litz

Connor Morozumi (Board relations subcommittee)

Jocelyn Navarro (Board relations subcommittee)

Conner Philson

Nitin Ravikanthachari

Scott Thomas



Past actions (up to August 2020)

- Anti-racism statement – We wrote a letter to the RMBL community, condemning the murder of George Floyd and highlighting the need for anti-racist action at RMBL and in the broader scientific community. This letter was endorsed and circulated by the RMBL administration, and is also publicly visible on the RMBL website.
- Contributed to climate / demographic survey – We drafted a survey instrument to assess the demographic makeup of the RMBL community, as well as the climate of the field station, with a particular focus on race issues. We are working with the RMBL Board to refine this survey and deploy it in order to contribute towards institution-wide assessment and reporting.
- Produced various events for the education program - We organized various education programs for the REU program in the summer. Events were well attended and provided an opportunity for community members to engage with scientists about their work and their career paths.
 - We started with a seminar and discussion on implicit bias in academia and strategies to avoid them.
 - We followed up with a panel discussion on life in academia. The panelists included PIs (Profs. Carol Boggs, Brian Inouye and Nora Underwood) and graduate students (Kenna Rewcastle and Nitin Ravikanthachari). The panel discussion was aimed to provide information to the students on life in academia, including applying for graduate school, effective work-life balance and productivity in academia.
 - We also paired undergraduate students with graduate student volunteers for weekly informal mentoring sessions. We had 12 graduate volunteers and 10 undergraduate students who participated in the informal mentoring sessions for a duration of 4 weeks.
 - We also hosted 2 invited talks for the REU program. We invited Prof. Mary Stoddard (Princeton University) and Dr. Micheal B C Rivera (host of Arch and Anth podcast) to present on their research and share their experiences in life in academia.
 - We hosted an Introduction to Hiking workshop to provide safety training to students who might be new to RMBL or hiking more broadly.
 - We hosted an event where community members were able to share family recipes with the RMBL community titled “Sharing of Cultures: Food Diversity.” Recipes from all parts of the world were shared. With the permission of the students, the dining hall then implemented the recipes in the menu.
- Pushed for safety plan review in research plans – We articulated a need for the research plan review process to include components related to the safety of researchers (e.g. physical, emotional, and identity-based risks). We are working with RMBL administration to increase awareness of this under-recognized issue and to provide guidance and support to the PI community on how to incorporate this into their lab’s safety plans.

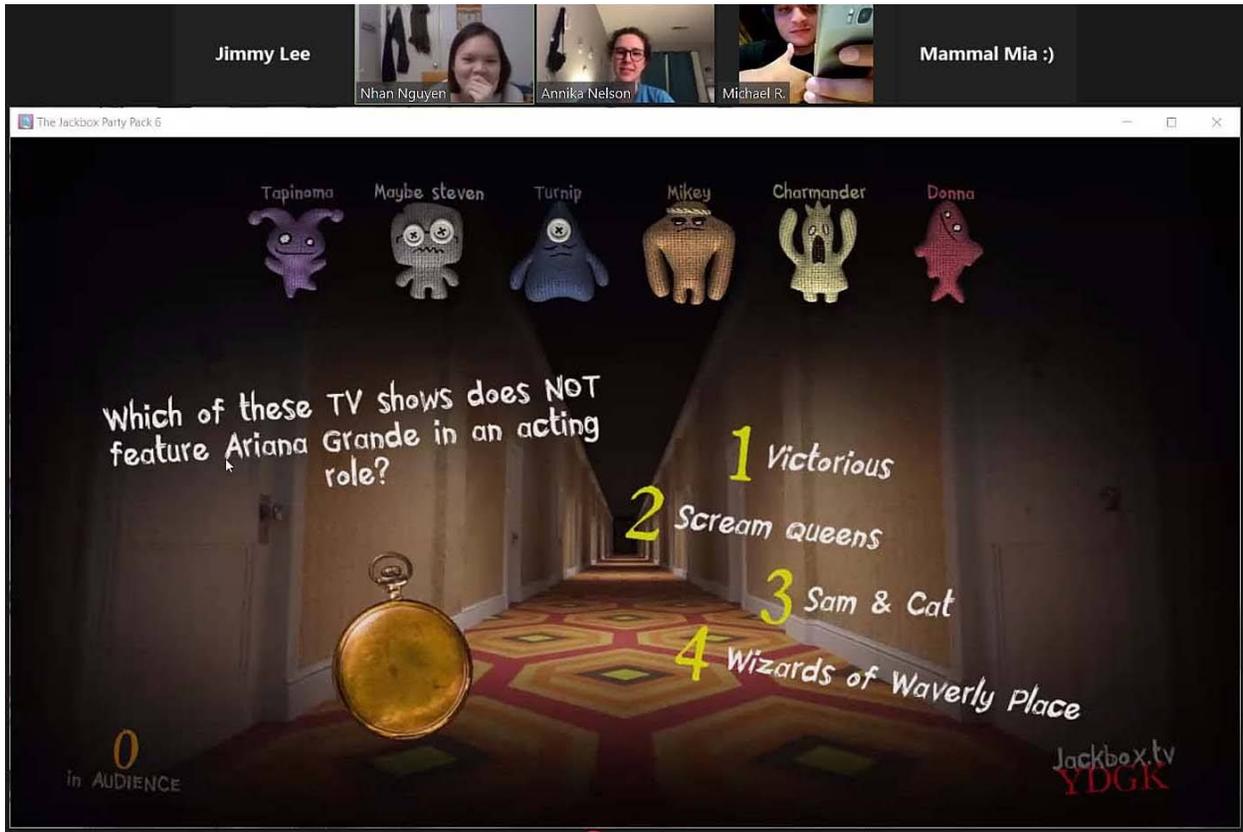
- Contributed to inclusive housing efforts – We assisted RMBL administration to further revise the housing application to center and support gender diversity and safety of gender minorities at RMBL.
- Discussed potential land acknowledgment – We explored the possibility of developing a land acknowledgment to recognize the Indigenous people who were present in the region before RMBL was created. After further research and engagement with workshops on this topic, we decided to table this issue until we could make a more substantive effort on the topic, e.g. opening dialog with Native American leadership, and re-envisioning how the lab supports and interacts with Native communities. We hope that in the future, we can establish a land acknowledgment statement of substance to honor those whose land was stolen and which land RMBL currently occupies.

Future proposed actions

- Make safety planning mandatory in research plan reviews - We would like to revise the research plan review process to ensure that safety planning is an integral part of research by all PIs at the lab.
- Revise gear closet system -The gear closet is a resource available to everyone at RMBL. The closet contains gear such as sleeping bags, tents, and clothes for hiking. We are working on creating a comprehensive list of all items available to the community and creating a better way to showcase what the gear closet has to offer. We plan to include information in the student orientation materials in future summers.
- Summer speakers - We propose continuing to invite speakers from outside the RMBL community to talk about both their science and their career paths. The opportunity for undergraduate students in the education program to hear from scientists in different careers, particularly those who have jobs outside of academia, can help promote diversity in the field.
- Case study of education program - With support from the RMBL administration, Jocelyn Navarro is carrying out a case study to identify the measures that have helped increase and retain students of diverse backgrounds at RMBL. Various people that have been influential in this process have been interviewed, and a manuscript will be published in the future.
- Update website – we plan to improve our webpage with videos and resources for incoming or prospective community members.
- Community visioning exercise – We will work with the RMBL administration to host an in-person, summer 2021 visioning exercise to explore how the lab can transform its mission and services to become a more inclusive place for groups that are currently underrepresented, especially Black and Native people.
- Participation in strategic plan – We will work with the RMBL board to formulate diversity and inclusion goals in the strategic plan, and also identify metrics and actions that can measure or contribute to these goals.
- Workshops – we will continue to educate the RMBL community on pressing issues that limit diversity in STEM and field-based science. We hope to offer an anti-racism workshop in 2021.

'Photos'

Game night



Jeopardy Night

RMBL	STEM	HUMAN RIGHTS	ACRONYMS	MISCELLANEOUS
<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>
<u>400</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>400</u>
<u>600</u>	<u>600</u>	<u>600</u>	<u>600</u>	<u>600</u>
<u>800</u>	<u>800</u>	<u>800</u>	<u>800</u>	<u>800</u>
<u>1000</u>	<u>1000</u>	<u>1000</u>	<u>1000</u>	<u>1000</u>

KOY G BIV

both teams score

From Nhan Nguyen to Everyone:
d

From Alex Tash (Crystal) to Everyone:
buzz

From Jennifer (Avery) to Everyone:
buzz

From Nhan Nguyen to Everyone:
d

From Jennifer (Avery) to Everyone:
buzz

From Paola Lopez (Crystal) to Everyone:
buzz