

October 28, 2021

Dear RMBL Community,

In 2020, the Diversity Committee of the Board of Trustees at RMBL, working with the Community Committee on Diversity, launched an effort to address issues surrounding diversity and inclusion in the RMBL community. The committee's first charge was to assess the state of diversity and the climate for diversity and inclusion at RMBL. Accordingly, in December 2020, the committee conducted an annual, anonymous demographic and climate survey. The survey was sent to every researcher, student, employee, volunteer, and trustee who worked or resided at RMBL in 2018, 2019 or 2020.

The survey consisted of 31 questions about personal experiences at RMBL, demographic data, and harassment. All questions were optional and anonymous. The committee developed the survey in conjunction with the community diversity committee and academics with expertise in such surveys. An attorney who specializes in employment law reviewed the survey instrument.

We received 113 responses, which represented 21.6% of the pool. Thank you to everyone who participated. Among respondents, the community is composed primarily but not wholly of white people of above-average means. Most community members return for at least two years. While many people have positive and meaningful experiences in our community, not all do. Concerns exist around feelings of inclusion, with these concerns strongest among people outside of the majority group. Harassment occurred, including that of a sexual and racist nature.

Below is a full summary of survey results. These results, along with the 2021 survey, will be used to:

- Develop a set of diversity goals and objectives for board review and approval, and
- Develop a diversity and inclusion strategy with specific actions to be taken that addresses the approved goals and objectives.
- Set a baseline for comparison in future years.

Based on the results and engagement with the Community Diversity Committee, we are taking a variety of initial steps, a few of which are detailed here. To improve the climate at RMBL, staff are reviewing misconduct policies, procedures, and training. We have taken steps to diversify the Board of Trustees with regard to race, with a focus on intersectionality (as we have previously had an all-white Board). This year we provided resources on the RMBL website for PIs to include guidance on cultural safety in their safety plans. In 2022, PIs will be required to check a box on their application indicating whether they have a summer field safety plan for their lab. The intent is not to mandate summer safety plans but to encourage PIs to develop formal safety plans if they have not done so. RMBL is not able to assume responsibility for evaluating the thoroughness or efficacy of those plans. A generous donation will be leveraged to recruit Black PIs to RMBL with fellowships. Finally, we are engaging with Ute tribes to tell a more complete story of the history of Gothic; this includes an NSF-funded traveling exhibition on Ute/STEM interface at the RMBL Visitor's Center and an invitation to the director of the Ute Museum in Montrose to host a seminar on land acknowledgements, both of which are tentatively scheduled to occur in 2022.

In November we will distribute the 2021 survey and we encourage you all to participate. Tracking responses over multiple years is important for determining whether, or how, our community

demographics and our experiences are changing. If you have any questions about the survey or ideas to share, please contact Committee Chair Amy Iler at ailer@chicagobotanic.org.

Summary of Survey Results

Part 1. Demographics. What are the demographics of the survey respondents?

The majority of respondents are white, heterosexual, and are between 25-35 years old. Out of total survey respondents, 60% identify as female, which is higher compared to a National Laboratory study from 2019 in which 32.4% of employees were female (Los Alamos National Laboratory, 2019). White respondents accounted for 81% of respondents, Asian respondents for 7%, Hispanic or Latinx 6%, American Indian or Alaska Native 1%, Black or African American 1%, 1% other, and 4% preferred not to answer. Respondents self-reporting as neuro-diverse or having physical needs account for 9.9% of the respondents, 5.6% above the 2019 Los Alamos National Laboratory study. Concerning sexual orientation, 76% of respondents identify as heterosexual and 24% identify as part of the LGBTQA+ community. We continue to evaluate and research appropriate benchmarks for RMBL. For example, it is not clear that National Laboratory data is the most effective benchmark. We are also looking at data from the Ecological Society of America and the National Science Foundation. Responses for each question are included in the visual below.

2020 RMBL DIVERSITY & CLIMATE SURVEY

TIME AT RMBL

16% = < 1 year
 48% = 2-5 years
 7% = 6-10 years
 40% = > 10 years

78% previously worked at another field station

93% had "some" or "a lot" of outdoor experience before coming to RMBL

EDUCATIONAL AFFILIATION

83% = from 4-year universities or colleges
 7% = liberal arts colleges
 4% = 2-year colleges
 1% = professional school
 4% = other/prefer not to answer

ROLE AT RMBL

25% = Principal Investigators
 21% = Research Assistants
 17% = Grad Students (supervisory role)
 13% = Undergraduates
 10% = Staff
 5% = Post-Docs
 2% = Volunteers
 4% = Other
 1% = Preferred not to answer

5% have a **transgender** identity, history or status

GENDER IDENTITY

60% = female
38% = male
1% = nonbinary
1% = preferred not to answer

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

76% = heterosexual
 9% = bisexual
 6% = queer
 3% = asexual
 3% = questioning
 2% = gay
 2% = preferred not to answer
 1% = lesbian

AGE

26% = 25 or under
 35% = age 26-35
 14% = age 36-45
 10% = age 46-55
 6% = age 55-65
 7% = over age 65
 3% = prefer not to answer

RACE

81% = white
 7% = Asian
 6% = Hispanic or Latinx
 4% = preferred not to answer
 1% = American Indian or Alaska Native
 1% = Black or African American
 1% = some other race, ethnicity, or origin

10% of respondents were neuro-diverse or have physical access needs

<p>64% learned about RMBL from a professor or faculty member at their home institution, or from the scientific literature</p>	<p>Why did you come to RMBL? 59% = to gain field experience/technical skills 65% = the location 42% = networking opportunities 80% = research/career opportunity 56% = the scientist community 43% = to work with a particular PI</p>
<p>How were you funded at RMBL? 25% = external fellowship support or fellowship support from home institution 50% = grants 25% = included in job description 11% = NSF REU fellowship 34% = personal/family funds 37% = RMBL grant or fellowship 15% = startup funds 8% = other/prefer not to answer</p>	<p>Do you intend to return to RMBL? 9% = No 83% = Yes 8% = prefer not to answer</p>
<p>If you don't intend to return to RMBL, why not?* 9% = did not enjoy the cultural setting 9% = family obligations 18% = no more funding 27% = other summer obligations 63% = research project was completed 54% = other *this was a small sample size of 11 responses</p>	<p>If funding/time were not an issue, how likely is it that you would want to return to RMBL?*** 33% = very likely 22% = somewhat likely 22% = neither likely nor unlikely 22% = somewhat unlikely 0% = very unlikely ***This was a small sample size of 9 responses</p>
<p>Highest degree earned by one of your parents? 24% = doctorate degree 22% = master's degree 18% = bachelor's degree 18% = high school or GED 11% = professional degree 4% = associate's degree 4% = other / prefer not to answer</p>	<p>Compared with families in the US, would you say your family income is: 5% = far below average 19% = below average 19% = average 45% = above average 7% = far above average 1% = don't know 5% = prefer not to answer</p>
<p>How much of a barrier has income been in your career as a scientist? 10% = substantial barrier 20% = moderate barrier 27% = small barrier 37% = not a barrier 6% = prefer not to answer</p>	<p>Did you or anyone in your immediate household ever qualify for free and reduced lunch at school? 75% = no 18% = yes 7% = prefer not to answer</p>

Part 2. Climate for inclusion and belonging. What is the climate at the RMBL? Which identities are most likely to have the most challenging time at RMBL or to not return?

Regarding intention to return to RMBL, 80% of women would return in in comparison to 92% of men (100% of nonbinary respondents would return, but it is important to note only one nonbinary respondent answered this question). Focusing on those who are not planning to return to RMBL, respondents could select more than one option for not returning: 20% of respondents had other summer obligations and 10% did not enjoy the cultural setting. No respondents felt that it was very unlikely they would return to RMBL if funding or time was not an issue.

Below, some responses to individual reflections are detailed.

The reflection “I felt that I belonged at RMBL” had strongly positive remarks. Respondents strongly agree or agree on average net of factors such as age, race, socioeconomic status, and neuro-diverse status. Respondents who disagree or strongly disagree are between the ages of 26 and 45, although it is far less than those in the same age category who agree or strongly agree. American Indian/Alaskan respondents all strongly agree. Those that strongly disagreed were white and Hispanic or Latinx. Respondents who are Black or African American “agree” with the statement, but again there were few Black or African American respondents. These sentiments are mirrored in the question “I felt that people like me were NOT represented at RMBL”, suggesting that respondents were taking the survey properly, as opposed to simply marking agree for every response (for example).

There was some evidence that respondents from a lower socioeconomic background were more likely to feel like there is ‘no one like me’ at RMBL (eligible for free lunch as a child, yes/no; $X^2 = 5.7, p = 0.057$).

For the reflection, “I felt respected by researchers at RMBL”, 90% agreed or strongly agreed. All respondents aged 65 or older agree or strongly agree that they felt respected. Nearly all aged 25 and under “strongly agree” or “agree” with the statement. Respondents who were Black or African American strongly agree (though with a low sample size of this racial group). Respondents who strongly disagree were aged 26-45, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic or Latinx, along with a few white respondents.

The reflection “My mentor or supervisor accounted for my background, skill level, and unique diversity in developing safety plans and guidelines” had the most self-reported N/A’s, accounting for 29%, possibly reflecting respondents in mentor rather than mentee positions.

2020 RMBL DIVERSITY & CLIMATE SURVEY

Reflecting on the following activities that are part of life at RMBL, indicate your level of comfort doing each...

COMPLETING RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

0% = very uncomfortable
2% = uncomfortable
18% = comfortable
71% = very comfortable
9% = not applicable

WORKING WITH MY MENTOR/SUPERVISOR

1% = very uncomfortable
5% = uncomfortable
17% = comfortable
55% = very comfortable
22% = not applicable

WORKING WITH MY PEERS

1% = very uncomfortable
4% = uncomfortable
18% = comfortable
75% = very comfortable
3% = not applicable

INTERACTING WITH RMBL STAFF

1% = very uncomfortable
4% = uncomfortable
30% = comfortable
65% = very comfortable
0% = not applicable

SCIENCE-RELATED COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

2% = very uncomfortable
5% = uncomfortable
23% = comfortable
64% = very comfortable
7% = not applicable

RMBL-ORGANIZED SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

2% = very uncomfortable
5% = uncomfortable
23% = comfortable
64% = very comfortable
7% = not applicable

INFORMAL SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

3% = very uncomfortable
12% = uncomfortable
27% = comfortable
53% = very comfortable
6% = not applicable

EATING IN THE DINING HALL

2% = very uncomfortable
6% = uncomfortable
26% = comfortable
55% = very comfortable
12% = not applicable

<p>LIVING IN A CABIN</p> <p>1% = very uncomfortable 6% = uncomfortable 21% = comfortable 61% = very comfortable 12% = not applicable</p>	<p>TRAVELING TO THE FIELD STATION</p> <p>0% = very uncomfortable 7% = uncomfortable 21% = comfortable 70% = very comfortable 3% = not applicable</p>
<p>EXPLORING AREA AROUND GOTHIC</p> <p>0% = very uncomfortable 2% = uncomfortable 16% = comfortable 77% = very comfortable 5% = not applicable</p>	<p>SPENDING TIME IN THE CRESTED BUTTE COMMUNITY</p> <p>1% = very uncomfortable 7% = uncomfortable 24% = comfortable 62% = very comfortable 6% = not applicable</p>
<p>Reflecting on your time at RMBL, how much do you agree with the following statements?</p>	
<p>I FELT THAT I BELONGED</p> <p>2% = strongly disagree 7% = disagree 37% = agree 55% = strongly agree % = not applicable</p>	<p>I FEEL THAT PEOPLE LIKE ME WERE NOT REPRESENTED</p> <p>54% = strongly disagree 30% = disagree 9% = agree 5% = strongly disagree 3% = not applicable</p>
<p>THERE WAS NO ONE I FELT CLOSE TO AT RMBL</p> <p>62% = strongly disagree 27% = disagree 9% = agree 2% = strongly agree 1% = not applicable</p>	<p>I FELT RESPECTED BY RESEARCHERS AT RMBL</p> <p>3% = strongly disagree 5% = disagree 42% = agree 47% = strongly agree 3% = not applicable</p>
<p>THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO GENUINELY UNDERSTOOD ME</p> <p>2% = strongly disagree 9% = disagree 35% = agree 55% = strongly agree 0% = not applicable</p>	<p>I WAS ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH MY WORK GOALS AT RMBL</p> <p>0% = strongly disagree 2% = disagree 27% = agree 71% = strongly agree 1% = not applicable</p>

<p>MY MENTOR OR SUPERVISOR ACCOUNTED FOR MY BACKGROUND, SKILL LEVEL AND UNIQUE DIVERSITY IN DEVELOPING SAFETY PLANS AND GUIDELINES</p> <p>3% = strongly disagree 7% = disagree 28% = agree 31% = strongly agree 31% = not applicable</p>	<p>OBTAINING FUNDING FOR MY RESEARCH WAS NOT A PROBLEM</p> <p>8% = strongly disagree 28% = disagree 26% = agree 20% = strongly agree 18% = not applicable</p>
<p>I FELT SUPPORTED BY MY PEERS</p> <p>1% = strongly disagree 4% = disagree 30% = agree 64% = strongly agree 4% = not applicable</p>	<p>I FELT SUPPORTED BY RMBL STAFF</p> <p>2% = strongly disagree 4% = disagree 30% = agree 64% = strongly agree 0% = not applicable</p>
<p>I FELT SUPPORTED BY MY MENTOR/SUPERVISOR</p> <p>3% = strongly disagree 5% = disagree 23% = agree 44% = strongly agree 26% = not applicable</p>	<p>I FELT MY STUDENTS/EMPLOYEES WERE WELL SUPPORTED BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY/STAFF</p> <p>1% = strongly disagree 4% = disagree 31% = agree 43% = strongly disagree 21% = not applicable</p>
<p>I WAS AWARE OF THE PROPERTY CHANNELS FOR REPORTING HARRASSMENT OF ANY NATURE</p> <p>6% = strongly disagree 15% = disagree 37% = agree 40% = strongly agree 2% = not applicable</p>	<p>I WAS ABLE TO BE MY AUTHENTIC SELF AT RMBL</p> <p>3% = strongly disagree 13% = disagree 27% = agree 57% = strongly agree 0% = not applicable</p>
<p>I WOULD RECOMMEND ANOTHER PERSON LIKE ME TO COME TO RMBL</p> <p>1% = strongly disagree 3% = disagree 21% = agree 75% = strongly agree 0% = not applicable</p>	<p>"I enjoyed learning from and studying with a group of people from all over the country (and international!). I found it a very special opportunity to learn from scientists who have been working for a long time in their field and are well known."</p>

Part 3. Harassment. Is harassment common, and which identities experience it more?

A total of 28 respondents reported experiencing harassment of some kind (~ 24.8 %), with a total of 128 reports of harassment. A total of 52 respondents filled out this section of the survey. It is important to note that a single incident could be reported several times, or each of these reports could be separate incidents. The most common types of harassment included microaggressions, sexist remarks, and inappropriate jokes.

Ten respondents reported racist remarks (19.2%), and four (7.7%) felt they were treated differently or put down because of their race/ethnicity. None of the harassment types were significantly more likely to be experienced based on race (white vs. non-white; X^2 tests, $p > 0.72$). There was no evidence that respondents were more likely to have a negative experience based on socioeconomic status (X^2 tests on free lunch status, family income, and parents' degree, $p > 0.32$). No one felt they were treated differently or put down because of their LGBTQIA identity or a disability. There were reports of inappropriate touching, continuing to be pursued romantically after turning someone down, and fearing for the physical safety of one's body.

2020 RMBL DIVERSITY & CLIMATE SURVEY

Which of the following have you experienced or witnessed while at RMBL or in a RMBL-related context?

<p>Made microaggressions – frequent verbal comments or behaviors that communicate insults</p> <p>51%</p>	<p>Made comments of sexual nature or tone about your body, appearance or clothing, or discussed your sexual activity, without your consent?</p> <p>24%</p>
<p>Made remarks about your sexual orientation that you consider to be inappropriate</p> <p>8%</p>	<p>Made you fear for the physical safety of your body</p> <p>8%</p>
<p>Made remarks that you consider to be racist</p> <p>20%</p>	<p>Made remarks that you consider to be sexist</p> <p>51%</p>
<p>Repeatedly asked you on a date, messaged, or contacted you after you said “no” or asked the person to stop</p> <p>9%</p>	<p>Told jokes or stories that you consider to be inappropriate</p> <p>51%</p>
<p>Touched you without your permission in a way that made you uncomfortable</p> <p>4%</p>	<p>Treated you differently or put you down because of a disability you have</p> <p>0%</p>
<p>Treated you differently or put you down because of your LGBTQIA identity</p> <p>0%</p>	<p>Treated you differently or put you down because of your race or ethnicity</p> <p>9%</p>
<p>Treated you differently or put you down because of your sex or gender</p> <p>20%</p>	

Excerpts: Which was your least favorite part of being at RMBL?

"Attending informal activities"

"Traveling to the field station"

"Interacting with racists on and off RMBL. Seeing that there is very little diversity in science community that are not undergraduate students"

"Strangers in town making unwanted comments"

"Spending time in the Crested Butte Community"

"Working with my peers"

"At the time, working with my mentor"

"I felt that there was a lot of sexual pressure somewhat encouraged by the community.....I did not feel safe"

"Social activities"

"It took a long time to feel like I was part of the community – understandable given how long some of my fellow researchers have worked at RMBL but still tough in the first couple of years."

"I find that some social activities are very cliq-sh"

"The prevailing feeling of whiteness in the community, of there being certain dominant ways of engaging with land and each other"

"Social activities and how sometimes RMBL feels like a middle school in terms of cliques."

Excerpts: What was your favorite part of being at RMBL?

"Being around so many biology nerds!"

"Research and making friends"

"Exploring the area around Gothic"

"Attending science talks and exploring the area"

"Hiking with friends and spending time doing field work"

"A combo: doing field research while working in a team of peers and students"

"The location"

"The small and close community aspect of being among field biologists"

"Informal social activities"

"Working with my peers"

"Interacting with the science community, exploring/enjoying surrounding area"

"Research"

"Fieldwork"

"Hard to say – the supportive community"

"Informal gatherings, living in a cabin, and time in Crested Butte"

Cautions around interpretation

This survey had a relatively low response rate (~20%), meaning that there could be significant biases in the interpretation of results. For example, if people who had more negative experiences were more likely to respond, then estimates of the rate of negative experiences would be upwardly biased; or conversely for positive experiences. However, we note that in many cases the existence of non-zero rates of negative experiences (which can be detected by this survey) are still problematic and a focus of future work. Additionally, low total number of responses from certain groups (e.g., Native American or Black members of the community) strongly reduce confidence in our point estimates of experiences cross-tabulated by demographic variables. Statistical analyses used here may therefore not satisfy distributional or sample size assumptions, and significance claims should be treated as preliminary.

Although the survey was anonymous, our community is small and there is a risk that some responses may be sufficient to de-anonymize respondents. Because of concerns around identification of respondents through cross-tabulation approaches, we have provided in this public document primarily summary statistics aggregated across all years and all groups. Anonymized raw data have been made available only to a subset of the Committee and to a professional third-party data analyst.

This report was written by Kelly Sudderth, Benjamin Blonder, Jen Darnell, Amy Iler, and Charlotte Wang, with help from a data analyst (a recent graduate from the Quantitative Sociology MS program at Columbia University).

For questions or comments on this report or the work of the Board's ad hoc Diversity Committee, please contact Amy Iler at ailer@chicagobotanic.org.

To report misconduct or harassment at RMBL, please contact Brett Biebuyck, RMBL's Title IX Coordinator, at brett@rmbll.org or any member of the RMBL staff or board of trustees.

Distributed to the RMBL community on October 28, 2021 and posted to the RMBL website.