

RMBL community committee on diversity, equity, and inclusion

Report to the community - Summer 2022

Overview

The community committee saw a return to more in-person participation this year, though a few events (particularly the three DEI seminars) were hosted on zoom.

Membership of the committee was again composed primarily by graduate students, though there was also some involvement by postdoctoral researchers, faculty, and undergraduate students, and by RMBL staffers. Notably there has been little participation to date from more senior scientists associated with the lab. For the second year in a row, the undergraduate student community participated more than any other group in events and played an active role in the community. In future years we look forward to continued collaboration and support of the undergraduate community.

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@rmbll.org to join. We welcome new voices. Current roles open to new members or current committee members include:

- Graduate student Board liaison
- Event coordinators

Progress

Events, workshops, and socials

We hosted several events for the community in Gothic, and on Zoom. We celebrated Pride month in June with a Pride dance (most of the undergraduate students attended, a few graduate students). We also hosted a well-attended diversity mixer and Juneteenth celebration in June. The committee conducted a responsible conduct of research workshop on identity-based fieldwork risks and helped coordinate first aid training and DIY first aid kit making with the Education Program.

The committee organized three DEI-focused seminars over zoom. The speakers included Jeremie Frant (Chicago Botanic Garden) for Pride month, Jenn Couglan (Yale) who spoke about their research and experiences as a LGBTQ+ person in ecology/evolution, and Gregory Cajete (University of New Mexico; requested during the summer by a student in the Education Program) who presented material from his book, [Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence](#).

Collaborating with the Education Program

Many of our most successful events were well-attended by undergraduate students. The committee worked closely with the education program coordinator. The identity-based field safety workshop and the antiracism article discussion were listed RCR events to encourage participation, but several other events also saw many of the undergraduate students in attendance, including the Pride dance, Juneteenth celebration, seminar with Dr. Cajete, and the first aid training session.

Several students shared ideas for improving DEI at RMBL at our events: the importance of diverse mentors (BIPOC faculty, postdocs, staff, etc.), continuing to provide safe spaces for scientists historically marginalized in western institutions, recruiting students from HBCUs and community colleges, etc.

Gear closet

We advertised the gear closet to undergraduates during the hiking safety talk. An updated inventory of gear closet items has been completed. We plan to provide a sign-up sheet with checkout information for next summer, so that more people can use the materials and usage can be tracked. We also plan to purchase additional materials before summer 2023 using existing funds.

Land acknowledgments

RMBL Land education: Preliminary plans & ideas

Fifty Land Acknowledgment educational booklets were distributed to RMBL undergraduate and graduate students. This resource was created by Willow Lovecky, Kevin Flores, and several additional undergraduate students during and after the 2021 education program. We intended to host a community discussion re: land acknowledgments following the visit of the director of the Ute Indian Museum in Montrose, but CJ was not able to visit RMBL. We plan to host a discussion of land acknowledgments in early summer 2023. We would also like to explore funding options for BIPOC students more fully with RMBL staff. In addition to the committee's efforts, RMBL staff coordinated with History Colorado to house the temporary *Ute STEM* exhibit at the Visitors Center for summer 2022. We would like to extend the visibility of Native history and science at RMBL using permanent signage and continuing to work with History Colorado.

Safety planning

We provided safety documents (including checklists for undergraduate students and template risk management plans for PIs) to the lab for inclusion as resources for pre-fieldwork planning. We have requested that these checklists be shared to the community prior to the summer 2023 education program. We continue to advocate for mandatory risk assessment plan review for PIs as part of research plan renewal. We are working together with the lab to ensure documents and diversity topics more broadly are easily accessible on a newer website.

RMBL Strategic Plan - Diversity Goals

We worked closely with the Board committee on diversity (chair, met with Amy Iler) to ensure community needs were reflected in the RMBL strategic plan. We are making plans to work

together for summer 2023 to workshop goals and objectives, and to coordinate broader community input on needs.

Budget usage

The committee was given access to a generous budget from the RMBL administration. The majority of these funds were spent in 2022. Funds were used for:

- Create a field station introduction video to improve recruitment of students unfamiliar with fieldwork or living in a national forest.
- Purchase essential items for the gear closet, including bear canisters that are required in the surrounding wilderness areas.
- Support the participation of three external speakers.
- Support first aid training and supply first aid materials for undergraduate students.
- Cover the costs of field equipment for undergraduate students in need of financial support.
- Provide decorations and snacks for the Pride Dance and Juneteenth celebration.

The remainder of funds (approximately \$600) will be rolled over to 2023. We hope to continue allocating resources to support DEI speakers, trainings, and events in the coming year.

Future actions

Over 2023, we will:

- Seek increased participation from RMBL staff and from faculty/senior scientists on this committee
- Work with the RMBL administration to host an in-person, summer 2022 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
- Seek external funding options for supporting BIPOC students and researchers
- Improve our webpage with the 2022 report and resources for incoming or prospective community members, and post regularly to improve the climate for the broader RMBL community
- 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
- Coordinate with the RMBL Education Program to recruit from minority-serving institutions, improve resources for students, and implement field safety training(s) and DEI events
- Continue to maintain and improve the gear closet
- Organize two seminars, focused on researchers who have implemented successful DEI initiatives

Current membership (alphabetical by last name)

Kaysee Arrowsmith

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April Bermudez

Diana Bernal

Benjamin Blonder (community liaison to the Board)

Julie Byle

Paul Caradonna (advertising coordinator)

Laurent Duverglas (co-facilitator)

Elsa Godtfredsen

Amelia Litz

Valerie Martin (co-facilitator)

Jocelyn Navarro

Will Petry

Conner Philson

Nitin Ravikanthachari

Xochitl Ortiz Ross (*co-facilitator?*)

Abi Stokes

Stavi Tennanbaum

Susan Washko (Education Program liaison)

Lydia Wong (Gear Closet Coordinator)

Caitlin Wells