SETAC North America
Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI)
Self-Assessment - 2021

Preamble

As we continue our journey towards a more inclusive society at SETAC North America, it does us well to assess our progress and identify weaknesses in this area. We all recognize that the barriers to inclusivity and equity have been long established, and there is still a lot left to do. This is true of North America, the sciences, and our fields within the environmental sciences; SETAC is no exception. At this time, it is useful to reflect on the work that has been done, while acknowledging what is left to do. We can also use each of these self-assessments to reaffirm our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion at SETAC. During the assessment process, we were pleased to see that SETAC has been working not only to remediate/rectify shortcomings in our policies and practices, but to lead in this area over several years. We have captured here some deficiencies and areas that can use improvement and made recommendations for suggested solutions. This note captures organizational accomplishments and current status and identifies gaps and future projects.

Does the society promote an inclusive culture and leadership?
Yes. Our organizational values include Diversity and Inclusion as one value and Equity as another. Governance recently reaffirmed our commitment to fostering inclusivity.

Further, we adhere to a Code of Conduct and a Code of Ethics supported by a Whistleblower Policy a Conflict of Interest Policy, and an Ethical Disclosure Policy. We expect those who participate in our program to abide by those policies as well as out Participants Policy. All policies are focused on fostering a welcoming environment.

All guidelines and standard operating procedures for SETAC programming call for consideration of our values. As we update those documents, we are clarifying individual diversity as it is defined in our values for consistency.

Further, in 2021, the Board of Directors established an ad hoc committee to 1) intentionally build a pipeline to leadership that is reflective of the diversity in the field of environmental science; 2) identify and address policies and structural barriers in SETAC that prevent full participation both in the society and in career development; 3) ensure DEI principles and practices are incorporated into every program under their purview.

Is a member of the society’s management responsible for ensuring equal rights and treatment of all employees and members, regardless of their ethnic origin, gender, age, handicap, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, social background, or political views?
Yes, the Executive Director
Does the society promote inclusive programs?  
As a society built to promote science, we work to be inclusive in our programs which include meetings, workshops, publications. We are inclusive of all scientific work by welcoming submissions of papers and abstracts which are reviewed in a blinded fashion. Recently, we instituted a requirement for an ethical-disclosure from candidates or nominees for awards or honors such as leadership positions in governance (e.g., boards and council) or within the society and its programs (e.g., publications and awards).

How does the society maintain knowledge of DEI issues? 
SETAC is a member of the Societies Consortium on Harassment in STEMM. The consortium started to review sexual harassment and quickly expanded its purview, recognizing that sexual harassment is often an extension of misogyny and racism. Staff and leaders are active in self-study and research, which we broadcast via articles in our newsletters and on our social media and we supplement with mandatory training programs.

What are the metrics for individual diversity in the society leadership and staff? 
We are a small staff, who have disparate ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, religion, political affiliation and ability. The Board, likewise, is small and represent various ethnic and racial communities, have different national origins and span the gender spectrum. We do not mandate the disclosure demographic information for our membership. We’re taking the approach that if we are deliberate in our recruitment (for members, editors, leadership), reduce barriers for participation (financial or otherwise), and create a welcoming culture, then diversity will come. As an international society, demographic categories are incredibly complex.

Does the organization have measures in place to ensure equal rights and treatment of all employees and members? 
Yes. All employees and members have access to same benefits and are subject to same policies. Shared policies include the code of conduct, code of ethics, participant policies that cover inclusive behavior as well as safe and responsible behavior. In the event that the aforementioned protective policies are breached, employees and members are able to report in a safe and confidential manner, outlined in the whistleblower policy and we work towards closure through a defined problem resolution process.

The SETAC North America employee handbook has clear guidelines regarding ethics, harassment, violence in the workplace. It has provisions to ensure equity in benefits (financial, health care). Parental leave is offered for birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child with an employee equally, regardless of parental gender. We recognize some government holidays and in doing so make sure to include some that have positive DEI implications (Juneteenth). We offer accommodations for disabilities. We also offer religious accommodations if an employee’s religious beliefs or practices conflict with their work schedule or policies. As of the third quarter of 2021, salaries are based on a national salary survey and there are no indications of a gender pay gap.
Is the organization's management committed to ensure a work environment free of physical, sexual, mental, and verbal abuse, threats or other form of mistreatment?
Yes. At present, all employees are remote. We apply the standards of our code of conduct to online meetings and written communications. When we meet in-person, we set clear expectations for behavior and provide a straightforward reporting process to protect both employees and members. We employ a restorative justice process for problem resolution and take all complaints seriously.

Does the organization have measures in place to prevent any kind of employee or member mistreatment?
We have a code of conduct and zero tolerance policy for bullying and harassment, which we enforce.

Does the organization provide employees and members an opportunity to give feedback and complaints to management and governance?
Yes, We have a whistleblower policy and a defined problem resolution process. Additionally, the Board regularly surveys employees on workplace climate and culture. These surveys are confidential to the extent they can be with such a small team. The Board provides feedback to the Executive Director, who is responsible for fostering a safe and welcoming work environment.

Do employees get training in DEI issues?
For years, employee training was irregular, but we hired a professional human resource company in 2021 with more formal training requirements. The Board has also prioritized inclusion training for member volunteers and employees will be required to attend those sessions, as well.

Does the organizations offer accommodations?
Yes, we accommodate employees and members with physical or mental disabilities and special needs (e.g., dietary restrictions). Accommodations vary based on situation and have included scheduling changes, providing sign language interpreters, providing language interpreters, and closed captioning. We provide guidance on inclusive best practice to our members, authors, and meeting attendees. These practices include using pronouns, enabling audio captioning for their presentations, including alt text on images, considering color schemes for figures and tables, and moderator tips for encouraging diverse audience participation. We are exploring ways to better enable our website to be move beyond basic ADA compliance.

How does the organization actively guard against bias in programs?
We apply a DEI lens to all programs, policies and projects at SETAC. Examples of ways we guard against bias include:

- We blind employment applications, wherein the identity of the applicant is unknown at review.
- We use a double-blind peer review process for articles submitted to our journals, wherein the reviewer does not know the identity of the author, and vice versa.
- We blind session and abstracts proposals at review, wherein the reviewer does not know the identity of the person submitting the session proposal or abstract.
- We regularly review and update criteria and judging rubrics used for employment, awards, and grants.
We use matrices when identifying leadership for governance. Currently that is done for the board, editorial boards, and some committees but will be applied more consistently moving forward.

We were inconsistent with blinding grant applications in 2021 but we intend to remedy that in 2022.

We recently instituted an Ethical Disclosure Policy, to augment our Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct and guard against including anyone in leadership if there are ethical concerns.

**How does the organization actively exercise inclusivity?**

We apply a DEI lens to all programs, policies and projects at SETAC. One of SETAC’s three founding principles tripartite (academic, business and government sectors) representation, ensuring that different perspectives are awarded the same weight when reviewing our programs and policies. In 2018, we extended that to be multi-stakeholder engagement to the broadest parameters of DEI. Examples of how we exercise inclusivity include:

- We actively seek a diversity of speakers for our meeting programs.
- We have an open call for leadership positions (board, program committee members), and for recognitions and awards and allow for self-nomination.
- We offer grants and reduced registration fees for those with financial need including scientists in middle- or lower-economy countries, early career members, and students to remove barriers for participation.
- We have recently established “affinity groups,” providing tools and resources to members who wish to engage with others with common characteristics and shared passions and pursuits.

**Did you identify areas for improvement?**

Yes, we identified several areas that needed improvement. We remedied some completely and in the process of remedying others. We plan to:

- Create and mandate inclusion training for staff and leadership (board and committee chairs) and a later date make available to the membership.
- Continue to reduce financial barriers for participation (membership, meeting attendance, and training course fees). While we had several reduced membership fee categories and many grants for meeting attendance grants targeting demographics that might include those with financial hardship, we plan to revise our program to focus more on financial needs to be more comprehensive and focused and thus reduce the barriers exactly where needed and increase the impact of the program.