

Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC)*

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This working list of ideas for improving DEI in SSAR was assembled by the DEIC co-chairs and includes suggestions borrowed from ASIH's and SICB's equivalent committees. A forthcoming meeting with the full DEIC will discuss this list and our future plans, so this should be considered a *draft* document. Although generally focused on groups underrepresented in our Society (hereafter, underrepresented groups), most of these ideas will benefit the full membership and, importantly, societal retention efforts. It is not the intention of DEIC to implement all of these plans immediately (although some do require timely attention), nor shall it be the sole responsibility of DEIC to steward these ideas toward implementation. Instead, DEIC plans to work with SSAR leadership and the relevant committees to investigate and develop these ideas further and assess the feasibility and timing of their implementation.

Mission Statement (TBD)

General goal: identify and implement strategies that recruit, support, sustain, and engage a diverse membership

Definitions (TBD)

- Underrepresented Groups
- Diversity
- Equity
- Inclusion

Commitment to Fundamental Change

1. Conduct membership diversity survey: establish baseline for future comparisons (resurvey at 3-yr intervals); include membership category, gender identity, race/ethnicity, age, disability status (mental health, hearing, visual, mobility, etc.); use data to inform needs of underrepresented groups; include as part of membership application/renewal [must be optional and may require IRB]
2. Conduct leadership diversity survey: as above for members of all SSAR leadership roles and committees; include historical data (prior 10 yr); compare with general membership data
3. Goal: align membership diversity with national diversity measures for Biologists; leadership diversity should match membership diversity; both measures should increase over time
 - a. Member of Nominations Committee designated as a liaison to DEIC to ensure DEI is intentional element of nominee consideration and final slate of candidates
 - b. Encourage nominations for and by members with commitment to DEI
 - c. Student Participation Committee (Chair) solicits nominations from students

- d. Include diversity statements with candidate descriptions on election ballots: candidates provide record of past and future plans for supporting DEI in SSAR, if elected; alternatively, ask members (especially students) what information they want from candidates before voting; use survey results to revise candidate descriptions
4. Ask members who identify with minoritized groups what they want from SSAR; include with membership survey or add anonymous form to SSAR website and assign monitor to check monthly
5. Provide cultural competency training beyond typical diversity training received at most institutions
 - a. SSAR leadership: training focused on implementing institutional changes vs. reducing individualized bias and prejudice
 - b. PIs/PI trainees: provide resources for building diverse labs and effectively mentoring students from underrepresented groups
 - c. Establish virtual workshops or discussion groups covering DEI issues (monthly to every other month)
6. Demand higher standards from editorial boards: mandate double-blind peer reviews; return unprofessional peer reviews, which disproportionately harm underrepresented groups (see: <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.8247>)
7. Assess SSAR constitution and bylaws for universal accessibility and opportunities to improve transparency and DEI; make increasing DEI a formal initiative/goal of SSAR

Support for Attendance and Engagement at SSAR Meetings

1. Establish meeting travel awards for individuals in underrepresented groups (see Cashner Awards in ASIH) or award fixed proportion of student travel awards to same; couple with intentional recruitment efforts: students (high school, undergraduate, graduates), postdocs, and early-career professionals
2. Establish networking opportunities (peer mentors) for each stage: undergrad paired with grad, MS paired with PhD students, PhD students paired with postdocs or professionals, junior faculty/professional paired with senior faculty/professionals; interact at meetings and throughout the year; sustain by recruiting new peers from previous cohort who were peer mentored themselves (see: <https://smallpondscience.com/tag/eeb-mentor-match/> and <https://www.cientificolatino.com/> for templates)
3. Allow two oral presentations if second talk is about DEI/pedagogy/outreach (should not have to choose between these and science talks); regular sessions at meetings could be organized around these topics
4. Organize symposia focused on underrepresented groups (e.g., LatinX Herp Conservation; include members and non-members): invite participants and pay for one-year membership and meeting registration; pair with peer mentors
5. Include DEI criterion for evaluating symposium proposals
 - a. Applicants must demonstrate how proposal will broaden participation of underrepresented groups in herpetology, for example: topics explicitly related to broadening participation (e.g., DEI, outreach, science communication, mentorship,

- pedagogy); invite speakers who represent various axes of diversity; offer supplemental symposium activities such as workshops that incorporate DEI-related topics; offer free registration for underrepresented students whose research interests and/or professional goals align with the symposium topic; plan local outreach events coinciding with meeting (or just before or after)
- b. Prioritize proposals with clear plans for broadening participation and/or require at least one funded symposia meet this goal
6. Create social gatherings for DEI at meetings: for underrepresented groups and allies
 7. President should strongly consider underrepresented individuals and/or pre-tenure faculty/early career professionals to present SSAR Travelogue
 8. Create new plenary talk on topics in DEI/pedagogy/outreach; schedule to reduce conflicts with other events, such as first morning of meeting
 9. Ensure meetings are accessible
 - a. MMPC must consider accessibility for all meeting events when selecting venue
 - b. Allow registrants to select accommodations needed to participate in meeting events
 - c. Offer subsidized childcare at meetings so parents with young children can participate
 - d. Recognizing that a substantial proportion of our meeting attendees are visually impaired and/or hard of hearing, create accessibility standards for posters and oral presentations: mandatory microphone use (or provide speech-to-text services as needed), minimum font and image sizes, accessible color palettes, etc.

Professional Development & Recruitment

1. Support new herpetology faculty: create cloud folder with lectures, labs, field experiences, project ideas, quizzes, exams, lab practicals, etc. that recently hired faculty can use to develop their own courses
2. Ensure grant applicants and award nominees include underrepresented individuals
 - a. Review past awardees to establish record of support to underrepresented individuals
 - b. Include DEIC representative (Presidential appointed) to ensure grant and award procedures, ensure calls for applicants/nominees support DEI (e.g., marginalized individuals are less likely to apply when words like “exceptional” are used), and generally advocate for qualified individuals from underrepresented groups
3. Support publications by authors in underrepresented groups: allow to publish first paper in SSAR journals (pending standard peer review) without page charges; allow papers from these authors to be OA after 1–3 yr [may require negotiation with BioOne]
4. Solicit biographies of herpetologists from underrepresented groups (not necessarily SSAR members) and publish in *Herpetological Review*; could coordinate efforts with with #ThisIsSSAR initiative
5. Encourage and support member outreach: focus on schools with a large proportion of students from minoritized and/or underprivileged groups; provide resources and training to facilitate outreach and connect with students whose backgrounds differ from their own; create competitive outreach grants to support this effort

6. Create list of diverse herpetologists: can be used by others for departmental seminars, participation in symposia, nominees for SSAR offices/committees, awards, etc. (see model by #DiversifyEEB: <https://dynamicceology.wordpress.com/2016/03/01/diversifyeeb-introducing-a-new-resource-for-ecology-and-evolutionary-biology/>)
7. Engage with SACNAS attendees
 - a. Send SSAR representatives to SACNAS meeting to recruit those with interests in herpetology; assist in applying for SSAR meeting travel awards or allocate separate funds (see **Support for Attendance and Engagement at SSAR Meetings** above)
 - b. Create ongoing mentorship program with students attending SACNAS; alternatively include these students in current peer-mentorship plans