

## **Report from the MBL Diversity and Inclusion Committee (Nov. 2018-Dec. 2019):**

We provide here a report documenting the activities of the MBL Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) committee over the last 12 months. While we still have a lot of work to do, we are pleased to report significant progress in this first year under the current committee membership, listed at: <https://www.mbl.edu/diversity/committee/>. The committee, which broadly represents MBL research, education and staff, began meeting regularly in late November 2018. Since then, we have met every 3-6 weeks to discuss MBL priorities, needs and planned events around improving diversity and inclusion in our community. Below, we summarize progress made during 2019:

### **MBL Workshops and Training:**

The D&I Committee hosted three workshops this year on the MBL campus, which were widely and voluntarily attended. The first was a Society for Neuroscience (SFN) virtual conference: “Mitigating Implicit Bias: Tools for the Neuroscientist” on Jan. 23-24, 2019. Topics included: implicit bias in academia; creating opportunities for everyone; judgment biases; diversifying the pipeline and negotiation. The response was overwhelmingly positive, as 30-40 year-round MBL scientists and staff members attended over the 2-day conference.

The second workshop was a half-day training session on implicit bias and inclusive environments on March 12, 2019, which was organized and led by our University of Chicago partners Dr. Regina Dixon-Reeves (Assistant Vice Provost for Diversity & Inclusion) and Dr. Cheryl Richardson (Associate Director for Inclusive Teaching). There were 50+ attendees representing most departments across the MBL campus, as well as several other individuals from NOAA and PEP (Partnership in Education Program). The response here was also very positive with most people expressing a deep interest in participating in additional, longer workshops.

A third workshop was a half-day training session on “Valuing Diversity: Making Room for Difference and Dealing with Conflict” on November 21, 2019, which was also led by Dr. Regina Dixon-Reeves and Dr. Cheryl Richardson (UChicago). There were 45+ attendees from across the MBL and the wider community. Importantly, this event also had a strong showing from our community partners and diversity leadership at other scientific institutions in Woods Hole including NOAA, PEP, and WHOI. Topics included the value of diversity in teams and collaborations, as well as strategies for listening and responding to diverse perspectives. The post-workshop survey responses were very positive with 95% of respondents saying that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the workshop experience. Community building and recruitment/hiring practices were listed amongst the top responses for future workshop topics.

### **MBL Education Department:**

The Education Department has taken several major steps to examine diversity and inclusivity in the Advanced Research Training Courses. These include the following efforts:

- a. Climate Survey: working with an independent contractor, NORC, we are in the process of conducting a climate survey deployed to all course faculty and students from the last three years. This project is being conducted in collaboration with Jackson Laboratory and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. The survey will help inform next steps, ensuring that the MBL experience is inclusive.

b. Course website changes: MBL modified its educational program web pages to highlight the availability of financial aid, emphasizing “need-blind admissions” and removing financing questions from course applications. These changes seek to encourage all qualified students to apply by removing potentially daunting funding concerns prior to admission.

c. Faculty training: We are working closely with Course Directors to both emphasize our mission and develop recruiting strategies to target potential URM students in the appropriate scientific fields. We have partnered with diversity and inclusion leaders at UChicago, Dr. Regina Dixon-Reeves, Vice Provost, and Dr. Cheryl Richardson, Associate Director for Inclusive Teaching, to provide day-long training sessions for MBL Course Directors. The first workshop was held in Boston May 2019 and a second one in LA in October 2019. The agenda involved three topics: 1) Recruiting for Excellence and Diversity, 2) Mentoring Diverse Mentees, and 3) Inclusive Pedagogy. The workshop evaluation confirmed the relevance of the content and indicated that the Course Directors were eager to engage with and make progress in both diversity and inclusion in their courses. Workshop participants indicated that they would carry forward the ideas presented by revising their application review processes, updating course formats to receive real-time feedback from students and ramping up their outreach at minority conferences.

d. Meetings and Conferences: In 2019, members of the Education Department and D&I committee attended three annual meetings, Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), SFN, and ABRCMS, to promote our summer courses and raise the visibility of the MBL.

e. Strategic Partnerships: We are committed to further diversifying the institutions from which we draw students. In particular, we are interested in creating strategic partnerships with schools and programs that serve URMs. For example, we recently began a new relationship with the Diversity Postdoctoral Fellows Program at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and hosted an event that featured a former course director and MBL alumni as panel members discussing the value of MBL training courses. Other activities are planned for 2020 and beyond.

f. MBL Scholarship Awards: The MBL provides scholarships that cover 100% of student expenses for all students from underrepresented groups. These awards come from a variety of education-specific course endowments, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute grant, a grant from the Helmsley Trust, is included in our budget request.

#### **MBL Whitman Fellowship Programs:**

The Whitman Center Fellowship Program has just implemented a new E.E. Just Fellowship in the 2020 application cycle. This fellowship, which will be awarded in January 2020, is directed at traditionally under-represented minorities in science as well as faculty in minority serving institutions (MSIs) and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). It offers additional support, including funding to bring students or assistants and a stipend for travel and supplies.

#### **Recruitment for MBL Programs:**

To enhance our recruitment efforts, for both Education and Whitman Programs (including Grass Fellowship), MBL has increased participation in national scientific conferences. Representatives of the MBL Education department and D&I committee were present at the MBL booths to hand out materials and answer questions at:

- Society for Neuroscience Meeting in Chicago, IL (Oct. 18-23, 2019)
- SACNAS 2019 in Honolulu, Hawaii (Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 2019)
- American Society for Cell Biology in Washington, DC (Dec. 5-9, 2019)

In 2020, we plan to expand these recruitment efforts to include other scientific societies (e.g. Society for Developmental Biology), as well as recruitment of open positions on society websites (e.g. SACNAS). We are also updating our database of faculty contacts at MSIs and HBCUs to further enhance our recruitment strategies.

### **Community Events and Projects:**

The D&I committee also initiated and sponsored a number of community events and initiatives. Besides the training workshops listed above, we also celebrated Pride Month in June by hosting an afternoon Tea Dance at the MBL Club (June 23, 2019) and designing new T-shirts and other gear with the MBL Diversity tag line “Be Yourself at MBL,” now available at the MBL gift shop. We also launched several projects to recognize the many contributions of our diverse scientific community, including women and people of color. In “Selfies with Scientists,” older summer campers (ages 10-12) conduct short interviews with MBL scientists and take photos of them working in the lab, and the finished products are now on display at the MBL Club. In collaboration with MBL Communications and WHOI Graphics Department, we also designed 4 posters of historical and current MBL scientists that feature their seminal accomplishments in science and education. The first two posters on Roger Arliner Young and Cornelia Clapp are now displayed in Lillie lobby, and have also been transported to other MBL events such as donor events. And on August 1, 2019 the MBL D&I committee co-sponsored a conversation and reading of Melina Mangal’s book about E.E. Just: “The Vast Wonder of the World”. These projects are expected to continue and expand in 2020.

### **Campus and Website Improvements:**

One significant campus improvement this year was converting all single-user restrooms to gender neutral restrooms with corresponding signage. The D&I committee has also worked with the MBL Communications office to improve the web page on Diversity at the MBL. Updates included: posting a new mission statement and charge; providing campus maps for single-user restrooms and accessible parking; listing more diversity-related events on the MBL campus. This is an ongoing effort.

### **Enhanced engagement with Woods Hole community:**

Two representatives from the MBL D&I committee, Dana Mock-Muñoz de Luna and Matthew Person, have attended monthly meetings of the Woods Hole Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC). The DAC advises the Woods Hole Diversity Initiative on how to make the village a more diverse, inclusive community. The DAC mainly provides a forum for participants to share updates on various local and institutional activities (student picnics, workshops and lectures, etc.) over the course of the year. The DAC is updating its website with a shared calendar of events and contact information for local resources. Importantly, the WHDAC leads the PEP program to bring URMs to the various scientific institutions in Woods Hole for research opportunities, and organizes annual events for the community around Black History Month and Juneteenth, as well as regular lectures and workshops.

**Summary and Future Plans:**

In summary, the MBL Diversity and Inclusion Committee has been very active over the last year, encouraged by the strong support of MBL leadership. We have made significant progress within our community, but more remains to be done. In the next 6-12 months, we plan to engage in the following activities:

- There is a significant need to increase diversity amongst the MBL faculty and staff. A focus in 2020 will be on putting into action best recruitment and hiring practices to meet this need.
- Additional D&I workshops in collaboration with Dr. Regina Dixon-Reeves from UChicago
  - o We are planning another workshop for spring 2020 (Feb/March) on the topic of best recruiting and hiring practices. This workshop will be focused on leadership training with current MBL hiring managers and supervisors.
- Enhanced outreach and recruitment for MBL courses and research programs
  - o Continue recruitment at SFN, SACNAS and ASCB.
  - o Additional outreach is being planned for other national and local meetings, e.g. SDB.
  - o There is a continuing need to increase diversity within the Whitman Visiting Research program, and discussions are ongoing. New EE Just Fellowships for summer 2020 begin to address this need.
- Campus climate survey: we are beginning to discuss when and how to implement a survey, modeled on the one conducted in 2016 at the University of Chicago.
- Planned campus/community activities, e.g.:
  - o Follow up discussion to the Agassiz lecture in summer/fall 2020
  - o International potluck
  - o Further engagement with the broader Woods Hole Community through WHDAC and the Woods Hole Diversity Initiative.