

## **MBL Diversity and Inclusion Efforts, 2020 Committee Report**

The MBL D&I committee had many goals and activities planned for 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic struck and the world came to a halt. Despite the shutdowns, travel restrictions, and new working conditions, we managed to move forward our 2020 goals by shifting to virtual events and future planning, as follows:

### **Workshops and Panel Discussions**

The MBL D&I Committee organized and participated in various workshops and panel discussions over the course of the spring and fall of 2020. The D&I Committee, in collaboration with the MBL Division of Education, held a virtual screening of the acclaimed documentary *Picture a Scientist*, which was followed by a panel discussion (Nov. 12, 2020). Our panel was composed of five MBL scientists representing a diversity of career stages and disciplines. Over 300 people registered to view the film and participate in the panel discussion, which resulted in a number of engaging discussions about equity for women in science. In addition, MBL faculty and staff managers were invited by Dr. Regina Dixon-Reeves to participate the University of Chicago Training Workshop “Diversifying Your Applicant Pool” to promote better diversity, equity and inclusion practices in the hiring process (Nov. 19, 2020). These workshops, led by Tiana Pyer-Pereira (Associate Director in the Office of the Provost), are held quarterly. We plan to increase MBL manager participation in 2021 and are working with Dr. Dixon-Reeves on MBL-specific programming in this area.

### **Whitman Visiting Research Fellowships**

The EE Just Fellowship was awarded to Dr. Indu Sharma of Hampton University. This award is given to faculty at HBCUs or MSIs, members of a traditionally under-represented minority in science, or someone dedicated to the advancement of URM in science. We have recently expanded this award to cover not just housing and lab space for the Awardee, but to include a stipend that can be used for travel, supplies, MBL child care, or other expenses related to research at the MBL, as well as room and board for a student or technician. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, Dr. Sharma deferred to 2021 and will be bringing 2 undergraduates. It is our goal to continue to grow the EE Just endowment to support numerous candidates in a given year.

### **Recruitment to MBL programs:**

The MBL participated in the 2020 SACNAS (Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science) Conference by hosting a virtual booth (Oct. 22, 2020). In collaboration with Grass Trustee and incoming Grass Lab Director Dr. Elva Diaz, we supported a scientific session titled: “It’s Not Just in Your Mind: How the Brain Coordinates With the Body in Health and Disease,” which featured 4 speakers affiliated with the MBL through the education and research programs (Drs. Cristina Román-Vendrell, Maria Alejandra González-González, Karina Alviña, and Diego Bohórquez) who also spoke about their training experiences at the MBL. A panel discussion followed. We will also participate in the virtual Society for Neuroscience booth with the Division of Education where we traditionally do a significant portion of our recruitment to the [SPINES](#) course and Fellowship opportunities.

### **Revised Application Processes for MBL Courses and Faculty Hires:**

In 2020, MBL Education revised the application process for all MBL courses, which is being deployed for the 2021 course offerings. Following the 2019 workshops on inclusive pedagogy for course co-directors, which were hosted by Dr. Regina Dixon-Reeves and Dr. Cheryl Richardson (our UChicago partners), significant changes include: assessments to include non-cognitive strengths (e.g. grit and resilience), more holistic review of applications, use of formal titles, clear instructions for recommenders. Similar changes are being applied to faculty recruitments. In addition, Diversity Statements are now being requested as part of the job application process for faculty hires, allowing candidates to self-identify their interests, experience, and successes around diversity, equity and inclusion.

### **Community Events**

Through the MBL's membership in the [Woods Hole Diversity Advisory Committee](#), we participated in and were part of organizing and participating in various Black History Month events hosted among community institutions, including a screening of the film Selma at Falmouth Academy and the Harambe Celebration. In addition, and as part of our work with the WH DAC, the MBL helped facilitate the Juneteenth Lecture (virtual) by Dr. Donique McIntosh and the Jearld Lecture ([Nigel Golden](#)) in July 2020.

### **Campus and Website improvements:**

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee initiated a discussion with the MBL Director, Dr. Nipam Patel, to join other institutions in observing [Indigenous People's Day](#) in October, rather than Columbus Day. This was well received and fully support by the MBL's senior leadership. The change was made permanent and announced to the campus community. The MBL also made a statement of support for the proposed [name change of Agassiz Street](#) in Woods Hole. This has been approved by the Town's Board of Selectmen and the street will be known as Jewell Cobb Road to honor her legacy as an MBL affiliated cell biologist and first African American female president of a major public university in the western United States.

### **Engagement with Woods Hole Community:**

The MBL continue to actively engage with the Woods Hole diversity community thru various means including the Woods Hole Diversity Initiative (Senior Leadership of Wood Hole Scientific Institutions), the Woods Hole Diversity Advisory Committee (WHDAC), and the [Woods Hole Partnership in Education Program](#) (PEP) thru mentorship and research opportunities. Current WHDAC representatives for the MBL are: Matthew Person (MBL/WHOI Library); Suzanne Thomas (Ecosystems Center) and Scott Bennett (Marine Resources Center). Dana Mock-Munoz de Luna rotated off of the WHDAC after serving faithfully with extraordinary engagement for 2.5 years.

### **2021 Efforts and Activities:**

In addition to the annual activities and events across campus (including Black, Indigenous and Hispanic History Months, Pride Month and Juneteenth, which are likely to be virtual during the first half of the year), we hope to return to a few more in-person training opportunities,

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celebrations and seminars as pandemic restrictions start to lift towards the summer. The MBL's Diversity and Inclusion Committee has been advising the Director on a project to name or rename parts of our campus to be more representative of the current and historical diversity of our prolific scientists and alumni. We will also work with the Communications Department to add more diverse faces to the placards and monitors across campus by adding photos and brief bios (similar to our posters in Lillie Lobby) of a more representative cross-section of our community (spanning ethnicity, gender identity, religious beliefs etc.). Thru this effort and many others we hope to promote a more welcoming and inclusive campus environment.