Climate survey results

JEDI activity in the Department of Marine Sciences at UConn

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DMS Goals for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Survey

• Characterize personal experience in DMS including feelings of acceptance/support regardless of race/gender/orientation

• Characterize perceptions of departmental openness and efforts to improve diversity (e.g. passive acceptance or active support)

• Determine if DMS supports recruitment of minorities/people of color and understand whether department has been pro-active in past efforts

• Determine if departmental procedures and contacts for addressing diversity/inclusion issues are adequate and accessible

• Offer an opportunity to make suggestions for improvement in the overall climate of DMS
Who was surveyed and How?

Qualtrics software used anonymized
33 responses from all levels within DMS

Position
- Faculty
- Staff
- Graduate Student
- Post-doctoral Scholar

Gender
- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

Racial and Ethnic Background
- African American/Black
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Chicano/Latinx/Hispanic
- White
- Other, please specify
- Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself a member of the lesbian, gay, and/or bisexual community?
- Yes
- No
- No, but I identify as an ally
- Prefer not to say
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Intention
Q2 from survey, parts a-j

• In general, responders were very supportive of the intentions behind JEDI activities (e.g. valuing diverse contributions, helping students understand these values, discussing controversial topics or social justice issues with students, and supporting students in their pursuit of social change)
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Perception

Q4 from survey, parts a-l

• The majority of responders feel they are treated fairly in terms of teaching, service, research or work assignments.

• Comments in the survey suggested they would have preferred an N/A as some of the options don’t currently apply in DMS.
Perception

Q4 from survey, parts m- v

- Most responders feel positive about the diversity and feel welcome and included in the department. They also would describe DMS as having a collegial atmosphere that is open to change.

- A small percentage report experiencing harassment.
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Values of DMS

Q5

• Strong agreement from participants in the UConn commitment to diversity, rejection of bigotry, and social tendency of the department.
DMS activities

Q1

• Over the past two years, a minority of respondents have collaborated with the local community on either teaching or research

• In addition, few had taught a course with others outside of CLAS, or conducted research with racial minority groups, or discussed racial/social justice issues within existing courses
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Support

Q3 from survey, parts a-v

• In general, participants feel positive about the atmosphere, included, valued, and that the department is open to change.

• There are some who feel strongly that their peers don’t visibly challenge incidents, and disagree with statements about the current state of diversity within DMS.

• Teaching is more unappreciated than research.
In general, participants agree that the department supports teaching and engagement with students about racism, equity, and justice. There are some who feel strongly that does little to support conversations surrounding racism in the field. Overall it seems the active support of these values could be made stronger within DMS.
Recruitment

Q3 from survey, parts a-v

• In general, participants agree that the department should hire faculty of color and seeks to do so.

• Most respondents feel the department could do a better job recruiting students from minority groups.

• Overall it seems the recruitment activities at all levels should be a focus moving forward.
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What are our strengths?

Written in by responders

• “Gender balance”;”The department has, I believe the greatest proportion of female faculty out of all STEM departments”

• “the staff and faculty are very welcoming and kind overall.”

• “People from all over the world and everyone is polite and accepting.”
Suggestions - Recruitment

Written in by responders

- "Advertise themselves to colleges that are located in areas in which the majority are students of color, and provide financial support for application if necessary"
- "Give talks to minority undergraduate groups in STEM at UCONN and other universities to place the department on their radar"
- "Increase advertisements of the campus....reaching out to public high schools just to say "we're here," is a first step, for all students. You can't expect diversity when you're fishing in such a small pond."
- "Recruit more students of color into the department. It seems that there are not many and I wonder if advertising a Project O type of day for Main Campus students might not provide an avenue to interest more students into the department. For the graduate side, by insisting that all graduate students have a sponsor from the department in order to be considered by the very nature of humans who tend to select people based on their similarities leads to a bias against people different than the makeup of the department."
- "Perhaps faculty should be incentivized to take some risks in taking students who may be academically risky. But if UConn is serious about that, it must increase its support for such purpose. DMS is in a tough position because the great majority of students are on grant support, so risk taking is not in the best interests of the PI. "
- "Collaborate with Center for Academic Programs on main campus."
- "Change how the current acceptance program is and be more involved in the Groton/New London communities"
- "Provide scholarships directed exclusively at minorities, establish programs that include high school or middle school students and specifically target students of color, work on public education about how STEM graduate school works"
Suggestions - Supportive Environment

Written in by responders

- “Advertise themselves as a welcoming place, in which currently we have 50/50 gender balance both on faculty and graduate students”

- “Support events that celebrate the success of women, faculty of color, and LGBTQIA members.”

- “Ensure we create a supportive environment for them to thrive in by including social justice topics throughout our department's activities”

- “High lighting scientists of color in the field and purposely discussing issues of diversity within STEM and marine sciences specifically. Making the efforts knowns and that is a priority to DMS is essential for people to feel like they belong.”

- “implicit bias training; hiring faculty/research staff from underrepresented groups; provide extra support (time, money) to receive training/mentorship from leaders in the field (especially BIPOC)”

- “Facilitating conversations like having a sit down discussion (virtually) to discuss racial and sexist issues... maybe make it mandatory for faculty.”
Suggestions - Supportive Environment

Written in by responders

• “It should also evaluate how racial biases may be negatively affecting students, both inside and outside the classroom, and provide resources to help students report incidents and deal with such problems.”

• “Perhaps designate a mentor among the faculty or staff, who should be the go-to person and specifically responsible for this mission and associated tasks.”

• “implicit bias training; hiring faculty/research staff from underrepresented groups; provide extra support (time, money) to receive training/mentorship from leaders in the field (especially BIPOC)”

• “A comprehensive course for graduate students on racism and other forms of discrimination would be helpful.

• “Some of the older male faculty members are kind but hold onto ideals that perpetuate traditional gender roles whether they know it or not. This can affect job assignments and trickles down to employees as loses in opportunity.”

• “Better representation and education about the contribution made by minorities to our field”