

# Sanford Lab: Statement of Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

## Introduction

The fields of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology and Marine Science have unacceptably low racial diversity, especially of Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people (Tseng et al. 2020; Johnson et al. 2016). Our lab group is united by our commitment to innovative research, teaching, and service to advance the understanding, management, and conservation of marine ecosystems. We affirm that these goals will not be reached without improving diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels (Schell et al. 2020). Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) who study ecology and marine science must overcome numerous barriers, discrimination, and racist policies throughout their careers. Examples of systemic racism in education and research include biases in standardized testing, curricula and teaching pedagogies that exclude BIPOC students, disparities in grant funding awarded to BIPOC faculty, and many others (Barber et al. 2020). With this document, we express our commitment to elevating and supporting BIPOC students within our lab group, while also working more broadly to dismantle systemic racism and to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion within our university and our academic fields.

## Principles of inclusion and anti-racism focused within our lab group

*We seek to:*

- Support the goals and needs of each individual in our lab group.
- Foster and advance the careers of BIPOC students.
- Foster creativity and innovation by reading and embracing research and approaches from diverse sources, including BIPOC scientists.
- Protect the safety of all of our lab members working in the lab and in the field.

*To act on our commitment to these principles, we will:*

- Have discussions about what support lab members need to create an environment that is inclusive, supportive, and conducive to the productivity and success of all individuals in our lab.
- Recruit, support, and mentor BIPOC undergraduate and graduate students. Specifically, we will:
  - Ensure BIPOC graduate students in our lab have the mentoring and support needed to succeed throughout their graduate careers.
  - Actively recruit BIPOC undergraduate students on campus for courses at Bodega Marine Laboratory (BML) and research opportunities in our lab.
  - Seek funding for paid research assistants and interns to ensure that research opportunities in our lab are accessible to all, including low-income students.
  - Listen to and validate the concerns of our mentees. If we can't provide the support they need, we will connect them with resources on main campus and beyond.
- Study and amplify the work of BIPOC researchers by:
  - Amplifying the voices and research of BIPOC scientists, within our lab and beyond.
  - Incorporating Indigenous methodologies in our research.
  - Citing the work of BIPOC in our papers.

- Inviting BIPOC researchers to give seminars on their research.
- Collaborating with BIPOC researchers.
- Create and follow field and safety guidelines that promote the safety of BIPOC researchers.

### **Principles of inclusion and anti-racism focused beyond our lab group**

*We seek to:*

- Identify and dismantle practices and systems within our departments/communities that are exclusionary, racist, and colonialist.
- Make our discipline more accessible to BIPOC students, researchers, and faculty.
- Continue to educate ourselves about racism in our field and beyond.

*To act on our commitment to these principles, we will:*

- Consistently identify racist policies and practices that we observe in research, teaching, and academic hiring. When we see racism, we will speak up and we will actively practice anti-racism to work towards racial equity.
- Investigate, understand, and invest in anti-racist choices for vendors for lab supplies and university contracts.
- Increase representation of BIPOC by advocating for the recruitment and hiring of BIPOC students and personnel at Bodega Marine Laboratory, within our home Department/graduate groups, and at UC Davis.
- Advocate for the recruitment, hire, recognition, and professional advancement of students, faculty, and other personnel who demonstrate a commitment to increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Work to lessen the burden of BIPOC lab and community members in our anti-racism efforts, and advocate for compensation for anti-racism efforts of BIPOC researchers.
- Expand outreach to K-12 students, including those from underrepresented communities.
- Take advantage of training opportunities regarding anti-racism and bystander intervention training.
- Hold ongoing lab meetings and discussions to educate ourselves regarding anti-racist practices to combat systemic racism.

We will discuss and update this statement at least twice per year to generate new action items based upon our learning and to create a sense of accountability for ourselves and others.

### **Signed,**

Michael Brito (Undergraduate Student),  
 Madeline Frey (Undergraduate Student),  
 Emily Longman (Ph.D. Candidate),  
 Sarah Merolla (Junior Specialist),  
 Keira Monuki (Ph.D. Student),  
 Jenna Quan (Undergraduate Student),  
 Aurora Ricart (Post-doctoral Researcher),  
 Samuel Walkes (Ph.D. Student), and  
 Eric Sanford (Professor).

## References

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