

URGE Demographic Data for the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

This is what was found by Bayside Ecologist URGE Pod at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) on demographic data as well as stated goals for representation and/or proposals to collect and report demographic data.

Summaries of Demographic Data (available within Smithsonian)

1. **Smithsonian Federal and Trust Employee** (Source: <https://www.si.edu/dashboard/people-operations#employees>)

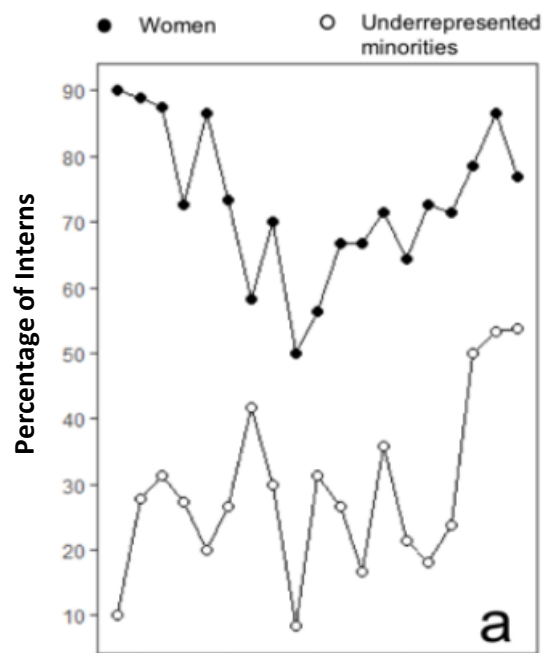
SERC's employee demographic data is not publicly available. An overview of Smithsonian demographic data is public and summarized in the above link. Based on not publicly available data, SERC is less diverse compared to other SI science units.

2. **SERC Intern Demographic Data (source: 2020 NSF REU grant)**

SERC's DEI focus has been on internships and trainees at SERC. This is, in part, due to NSF REU requirements. However, the SERC internship has prioritized DEI of trainees and gotten buy-in from the SERC community. Not only by following NSF REU requirements and continually receiving funding, but also partnering with the Chesapeake Student Recruitment, Early Advisement, and Mentoring Program (C-StREAM) to encourage students from traditionally under-represented communities in STEM fields to pursue research and/or management environmental careers. As of 2019, SERC's internship programs (NSF REU and C-StREAM) were the only SERC DEI initiatives.

NSF REU defines underrepresented minority groups as African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders. Since 2001, underrepresented minority students accounted for 36% of interns. Women have made up the majority of interns (73%). In the most recent round of interns, 52% were underrepresented minorities.

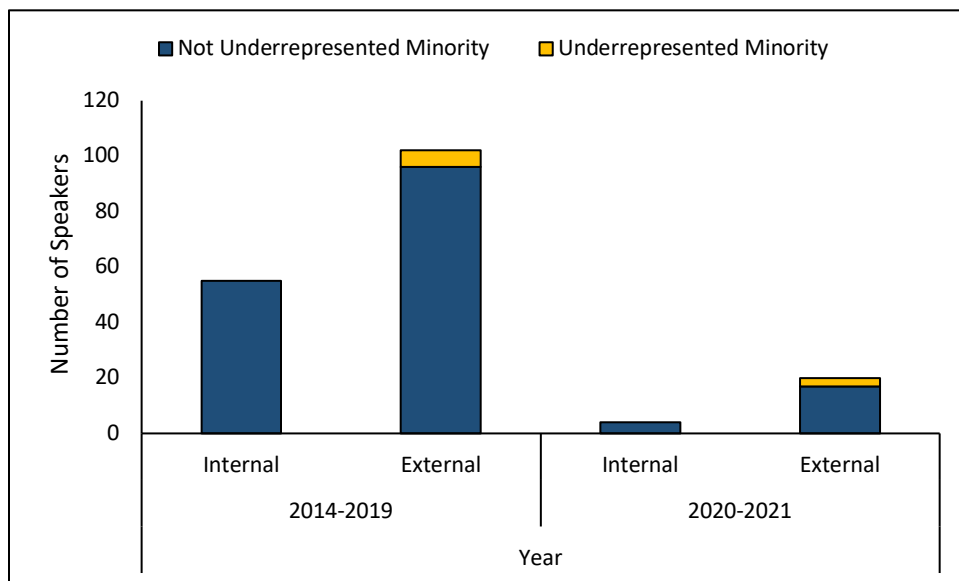
Fig 1. Interns per year NSF Program and C-Stream opportunities



3. SERC Seminar Speakers (source: SERC records)

SERC seminar has not been great at inviting speakers from underrepresented minorities. SERC does not have funding to support seminar and inviting speakers. Seminar speakers are invited and hosted by SERC labs/programs. Seminar speakers are representative of postdocs, visiting/collaborating scientists, and local scientists. However, SERC seminar moved to a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, SERC scientific staff was highly encouraged to invite more diverse speakers for the 2020-2021 seminars. Despite being highly encouraged, only 3/25 speakers were underrepresented minorities.

Fig 2. Seminar Speakers Internal and External to SERC from underrepresented groups before and after moving virtual due to pandemic (10 URG/182 NURG)



How does your organization compare to others, or to the field as a whole?

- SERC's work force is less diverse than other SI science units.
- SERC's work force is much less diverse compared to the Civilian Labor Force Goals

- Fewer reported initiatives compared to other comparable SI Units in 2019 (see report below).
 - Both initiatives focused on intern training (C-Stream and REUs)

Public goals on demographics or increasing representation:

- 2019 Smithsonian Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Report: https://www.si.edu/sites/default/files/unit/oeema/diir_fy2019.pdf
- SERC has fewer initiatives compared to other Smithsonian science units, both initiatives focus on intern training
- As of 2020, SERC has a DEI coordination committee & subcommittees
 - Subcommittees: Community Engagement, Funding and Partnerships, Recruitment, Retention, Safe and Equitable Fieldwork Practices, Staff Discussions and Training, Step and Grade Equity and Transparency

Policy or proposed policy for collecting demographic data at your organization:

DEI Exploration: can we build on NSF policies in the broader SERC community?

- Based on the data, SERC DEI efforts are mostly focused on interns and training. However, DEI efforts should not only focus on training students and interns. As part of ongoing DEI efforts, the SERC community should build on internship momentum to create policies and best practice for increasing DEI in later training and career stages (graduate students, postdocs, research staff, senior scientists, etc.). These are related to many of the goals and action items of the SERC DEI subcommittees. One way SERC can do this is by working with universities and other organizations that serve underrepresented minorities.
- Seminar speaker data shows a lack of diversity among seminar speakers. These data highlight a lack of diversity in other areas within and associated with the SERC community. Seminar speakers are often SERC postdocs, visiting scientists, and collaborators usually selected by current PIs. A lack of diversity in seminar speakers highlights a lack of diversity in other areas. To address this the SERC community might consider developing a DEI policy for seminar speakers. Since there is currently no funding available for travel and hosting speakers, SERC may continue to host some seminars virtually to increase diversity and consider pursuing funding to compensate speakers for their time. SERC could also open speaker suggestions to the broader SERC scientist community. These actions could have two benefits:
 - Increasing the visibility of more diverse scientists in the field for trainees.
 - Increasing the diversity of collaborators with SERC scientists. Seminars can provide a venue for learning more about other scientists. SERC scientists could use this platform to begin building collaborations.

What did you learn about in general while investigating demographic data?

- Diversify EEB: <https://diversifyeeb.com/>
- **Suggestions for Improving Invited Speaker Diversity to Match Trainee Diversity**