

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

URGE Demographic Data for the School of the Earth, Ocean and Environment (SEOE) at the University of South Carolina

This is what was found by the SEOE Pod at the University of South Carolina on demographic data (public and internal facing) as well as stated goals for representation, and/or proposals to collect and report demographic data.

- **Analyses of our program and its history, how our organization compares to the field as a whole:**
 - [Link](#) – Institutional student demographic data
 - Faculty in the SEOE have been tasked with writing a self-study, examining ways in which the program has changed over the last decade. Data and text from the draft self-study is included below.
 - Table 2.1 from SEOE Self-Study: Racial/ethnic make-up of SEOE undergraduate degree programs

Table 2.1. Racial / ethnic make-up of the undergraduate programs.

	ENVR BS	ENVR BA	GEOL BS	GEOP BS	MSCI BS
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3.47 (1)	3.09 (1)	n.d. (0)	n.d. (0)	3.36 (1)
Asian	3.43 (4)	n.d. (0)	3.14 (1)	n.d. (0)	3.40 (1)
Black or African American	3.43 (3)	3.09 (1)	3.13 (5)	n.d. (0)	3.51 (1)
Hispanic	3.45 (2)	3.14 (4)	3.14 (1)	3.69 (1)	3.41 (14)
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3.37 (1)	n.d. (0)	n.d. (0)	3.69 (1)	n.d. (0)
Non-resident Alien	3.44(2)	n.d. (0)	n.d. (0)	3.69 (2)	n.d. (0)
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	3.46 (1)	3.07 (2)	3.16 (2)	n.d. (0)	n.d. (0)
Two or More Races	3.40 (1)	3.33 (3)	3.19 (2)	3.46 (2)	3.46 (9)
White	3.45 (101)	3.13 (51)	3.13 (58)	3.66 (10)	3.42 (255)

“In terms of racial diversity, white students (Table 2.1) dominate all of the programs. Students identified as other races (Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and multiracial) represent less than 7% of undergraduate majors. This is consistent amongst all degrees within the SEOE and symptomatic of the lack of ethnic diversity in the STEM disciplines.”

From the “Diversity in the Geosciences” AGU/AGI Heads and Chairs Presentation, approximately 11% of geoscience bachelor’s degrees are awarded to students identifying as Hispanic or Latino, 3% as Black or African American, and less than 1% as American Indian or Alaska Native, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. The SEOE as a whole is less racially/ethnically diverse than the national average.

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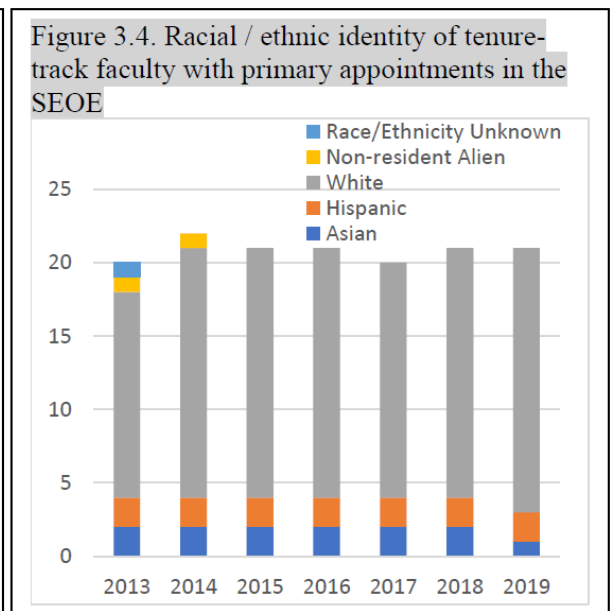
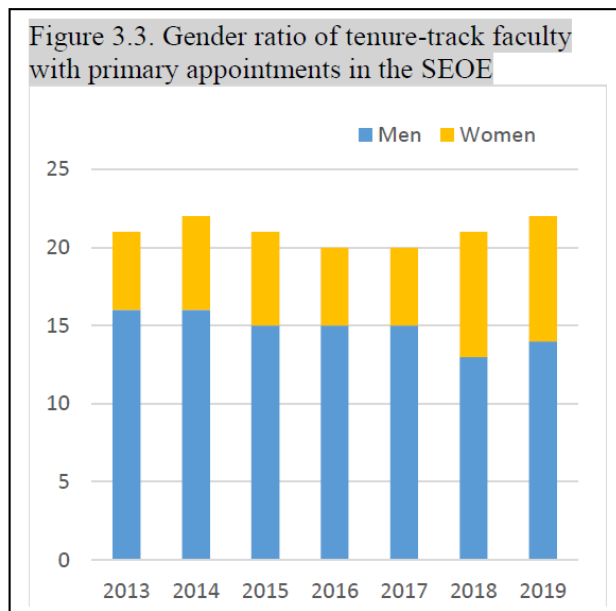
- Table 2.2 from SEOE Self-Study: Racial/ethnic make-up of the graduate programs

Table 2.2. Racial / ethnic make-up of the graduate programs

Racial/ethnic 2014-2019	MEERM	MS GEOL	Ph.D. GEOL.	M.S. MSCI	Ph.D. MSCI
Non-white	5	0	2	1	1
Non-resident aliens (race unknown)	1	7	4	1	4
White	25	21	10	23	9

Across graduate programs, our graduate students are 8% non-white, 15% non-resident aliens, and 77% white. By comparison, Bernard and Cooperdock (2018) reported 85% of geoscience doctorates were awarded to white students. This makes the SEOE graduate programs as a whole slightly more diverse than the national average, but with room for improvement.

- Figures 3.3 and 3.4 from SEOE Self-Study: Gender ratio and racial/ethnic make-up of faculty with their primary appointments in the SEOE



“Over the 2014 to 2019 period, the proportion of tenure track faculty with their tenure homes in the SEOE who identify as female increased from 25% to 36% (Figure 3.3). Currently three of the nine full professors are female. In 2014-2019, 10% of the faculty with their tenure homes in SEOE identified as Hispanic and 10% identified as Asian until 2019, when this proportion dropped to 5%.” We did not find an external

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point of comparison for these numbers, but recognize the strong skew towards white and male faculty.

- **Public goals on demographics or increasing representation:**
 - The university's 2019 Strategic Plan includes efforts to recruit and retain diverse students, in which the SEOE is participating. These include recruiting through scholarship programs for minority students, regular outreach at science fairs, and information sessions. Retention is encouraged through regular events and scholarship programs, as well as strong advising relationships. Individual faculty-led efforts include the GeoScholars Program and ScienceQuest (led by Claudia Benitez-Nelson) and Girls Go for I.T. (led by Alicia Wilson and Toni Williams (College of Education)). The SEOE also coordinates with TRIO programs to support low-income and first-generation college students.
 - A Diversity Committee was formed in 2020, which was tasked with creating an SEOE Diversity Statement:
https://sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/artsandsciences/earth_ocean_and_environment/about/diversity_statement.php This statement, approved in December 2020, represents an important first step in establishing our goals as a unit. Two of those goals are listed as goals 1 and 2 below.
 - Additional goals for your organization:
 - Goal 1: Increase the diversity of the undergraduate student body
 - Goal 2: Develop resources to support students from underrepresented backgrounds to ensure they thrive during their time in the SEOE.
 - Goal 3: Develop a mechanism to collect demographic data of invited speakers, such as a voluntary e-mail (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, first generation status, socioeconomic status).
 - Goal 4: Consider how we might capture (formally or informally) reasons undergraduate students leave the major.
 - Goal 5: Consider ways to follow up with students post-graduation about their experiences in the program as well as in their employment.
 - Goal 6: Add resources to growing web collection established by Diversity Committee.
- **Policy or proposed policy for collecting demographic data at your organization:**
 - Our Goals 3-5 are connected to additional data we'd like to collect moving forward.