



USC University of Southern California

Marine and Environmental Biology

URGE Demographic Data for USC MEB – Deliverable 3

This is what was found by USC MEB at University of Southern California on demographic data (public and internal facing) as well as stated goals for representation, and/or proposals to collect and report demographic data.

- **The link(s) to demographic data at our organization are here:**
 - https://oir.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CDS_2019-2020_FINAL.pdf
 - <https://oir.usc.edu/faculty-and-student-diversity/>
 - <https://oir.usc.edu/common-data-set/>
 - <https://about.usc.edu/facts/>
 - Data for our department (Biology), specifically marine and environmental biology, is not public “for security reasons.” Leadership involved in our URGE pod have secured the data and is in the process of producing a public version with the goal of making this information publicly available on our website.
- **How does your organization compare to others, or to the field as a whole?**
 - We compared the general enrolment demographics of our campus with that published by NSF on degrees awarded in the US <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf21308/data-tables>, and to the racial demographics of the US according to the latest census information.
 - Our [campus](#) was similar to what was reported by the [NSF](#).
 - Note that Asian students 5% of the US population, but make up nearly 20% of the student body. Conversely African Americans make up ~13% of the US population but are about 5% of the student body. White students are only ~40% whereas the US is ~60%.
- **Public goals on demographics or increasing representation:**

No public goals on increasing representation were found by us however several initiatives centered on improving the experiences of a diverse student body were identified:

 1. Fostering an inclusive climate by starting a Diversity task force to (i) meet with campus stakeholders, including student government representatives and the Academic Senate, to gather ideas on how we can continue to improve, (ii) provide suggestions to various units of the university that are engaged in issues

related to campus climate (such as the Department of Public Safety, USC Housing, etc.), (iii) periodically assess our progress, and (iv) make specific recommendations to me about additional steps we can take.

2. Listening to constituents that share their views about life at USC. Two professors have been asked to moderate a forum for such discussions
3. Create a symposium series to learn from other public figures who engage thoughtfully and purposefully with the issues of equity and diversity.
 - a. Suggested additional goals for your organization:
 - We suggest understanding how to make science culturally relevant for African Americans on a national level. Perhaps that's where we can afford to do more research to better understand why so few African Americans are enrolled and receive STEM degrees, particularly in marine and geosciences.

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

5. The Office of Institutional Research collects, analyzes and disseminates data relevant to the daily operations, and role and mission, of the University of Southern California. The data is available to university officials and to the public.
6. USC Dornsife (Biological Sciences) collects application, admissions, and graduation demographic data, however this data is not public.

7. What did you learn about other organizations (or in general) while investigating demographic data?

- a. The overarching theme was that underrepresentation of African Americans in institutions of higher learning is a national problem. It may not be a problem that is solved with brute force such as aggressive admissions campaigns. Instead, attempting to understand how the cultures (shaped by history) influences the status quo within Black communities. One of the readings stated that "a minority group legislator is likely to conclude either that earth sciences are of no value to his people or that the sciences are discriminating against them... In either case he is likely to question the disbursement of funds for acquisition of geologic knowledge."
- b. I think the public education system is a good starting point, not the universities. By then, its too late.