

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

URGE Demographic Data for the Marine Science Pod at The University of Southern Mississippi

This is what was found by the Marine Science Pod at the University of Southern Mississippi 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:**

- ☞ [Link: USM's Office of Institutional Research](#) collects, archives, and maintains institutional data for the purpose of analyzing, distributing and presenting summary information; however, this data is only freely accessible to USM faculty and staff. Other parties either internal or external to the University can request data, in some cases for a fee (more information here: <https://www.usm.edu/institutional-research/datarequest.pdf> and here <https://www.usm.edu/institutional-research/request-information.php>).

- ☞ [Link \(https://usm.edu/ocean-science-engineering/dmsseminars_2008_2020.pdf\)](https://usm.edu/ocean-science-engineering/dmsseminars_2008_2020.pdf) - The prior link records our Division/Department seminar speakers since 2008. The current schedule is available here (<https://www.usm.edu/ocean-science-engineering/seminar-series.php>). No analysis on the demographics of these speakers has been done. This is difficult to do retrospectively and without self-reporting of the speaker's demographic. Gender parity has been an explicit goal for the seminar committee for the past several years and this has been achieved. Our recommendation for our seminar committee is to specifically target speakers from underrepresented groups moving forward.

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

- The data compiled in the appended table are from USM Institutional Research (IR) & Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), NSF, the Consortium for Ocean Leadership, as well as national census data. Within the constraints of data availability, some basic statements can be made:
 - 1) SOSE as a whole is more white and male than USM, Mississippi, or the nation as a whole;
 - 2) The disparity towards the white, male demographic is most pronounced among the SOSE faculty;
 - 3) Among our COA & MAR graduate student body, we come close to gender parity;
 - 4) In 2018, the proportion of women and black job applicants was significantly greater than the proportions of those groups hired by SOSE;
 - 5) Within the ocean sciences as a whole, there are also disparities in diversity.
- From our data, it is not possible to parse the reasons for the lack of diversity within SOSE. No doubt many different factors come into play. For example, lack of racial diversity within the geosciences is well-known and can stem from



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various historical and personal cultural issues as well as outright prejudice (Dutt, Nat. Geosci. 13 [2020] 2). Likewise, the “leaky pipeline” for professional women can reflect workspaces that are not inclusive (e.g., Leventon et al., Nature [2019] doi: 10.1038/d41586-019-00019-x) potentially leading to the loss of women from the academic system at all career stages (Huang et al., PNAS [2020], doi:10.1073/pnas.1914221117). A limitation of the SOSE hires dataset is that the applicant pools for all SOSE hires are lumped to generate the statistics, while the composition of applicant pools may differ between technical, administrative, and scientist/faculty positions.

- ⊘ Are there general goals stated at your organization for achieving representation?
 - ⊘ Diversity and inclusion are recognized as important at USM as noted on the institutional diversity and inclusion web pages (<https://www.usm.edu/diversity-inclusion/about.php>):

- ⊘ Are there measurable goals stated at your organization for achieving representation?
 - ⊘ In February 2020, the Ad Hoc committee on diversity outlined the following goals.
 1. Within USM, the EEO Coordinator as well as certain faculty members have expertise in diversity, inclusion, and implicit bias. Inviting some of these people to faculty meetings or a SOSE colloquium could provide a useful initial training effort. The EEO Coordinator could also provide advice regarding doing a diversity and inclusion survey of SOSE personnel.
 2. Memberships in organizations that help facilitate diverse student populations (e.g., the AGU Bridge Program as well as the Institute for Broadening Participation) may be a cost-effective means of reaching out to a wider student applicant pool.
 3. Funds can be sought or redirected for internships and scholarships oriented towards increasing diversity. Examples of such programs exist within USM (e.g., <https://www.usm.edu/psychology/go-gold-diversity-fellowship.php>) as well as elsewhere (e.g., <https://www.famemaine.com/scholarships/the-maureen-d-keller-undergraduate-scholarship/> and <https://www.anjaliboyd.com/ecendowment/>). NSF REU awards (both as sites and grant supplements) can also be an effective way of broadening participation.
 4. Studies have shown a GRE bias against minorities and women over 25 in using the exam as a predictor of graduate school success. An initial self-study could be made of the GRE scores of SOSE students, with an eye towards modifying or entirely eliminating the use of GRE scores in the admissions



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process. Note that the USM Graduate School allows programs to drop the GRE requirement so long as the program can demonstrate there are adequate means of evaluating potential success of applicants.

5. Consideration should be given to student recruitment efforts aimed at broadening participation. SOSE could: a) use a student recruiter directed to bring a special focus on underserved populations, b) strategically bring in prospective students, c) send faculty to schools such as HBCUs (USM Graduate School funds may be available for such efforts), and d) have targeted open houses such as with the R/V Pt. Sur.

6. Some of the issues that have been discussed by the committee are broader than the school itself; for example, issues relating to maternity (e.g., see <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-00019-x>). We need to seek a broader college- and university-wide discussion to begin to address this.

- ∅ Suggested additional goals for your organization:
 - Goal 1: “We will strive to include a minimum of 3 underrepresented persons as seminar speakers per year.”

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

- ∅ Self-reported identification demographics are collected from applications.
- ∅ Data are available to faculty and staff, but if we need to do a deep dive on things (e.g. faculty applicant demographics), specific data can be requested from the Institutional Research Office.
- ∅ General public with specific requests are able to contact the office and get a report on their requested data, but it is not made publicly available.
- ∅ We recognize a limitation in self-reporting in that in cases where a person selects multiple categories for their race/ethnicity, the Office of Institutional Research data process in some cases would mis-classify or under-classify certain groups (e.g., someone who identifies as Black, but is a non-resident alien, may have only been categorized as a non-resident alien). Improving the Office of Institutional Research reporting could be something that our faculty bring to the attention of our Faculty Senate.

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

- ∅ <https://diversity.ideo.columbia.edu/seminardiversity> - Increase diversity in seminars
- ∅ <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03784-x> - No all-male panels



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☞ <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-and-guidelines-racism-and-racial-discrimination/part-3-%E2%80%93-guidelines-implementation-monitoring-and-combating-racism-and-racial-discrimination> - more information on collection of demographic data in Canada.