

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

URGE Demographic Data for Wood Hole Oceanographic Institution and the Physical Oceanography Department

This is what was found by the PO(d) at WHOI 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:**
 - Organization, Company, University Current Staff/Student Demographics
 - WHOI institution wide data is not currently publicly available, nor is it available at the PO department level. The 2017 WHOI “Assessment of the Climate for Working, Learning, and Living Executive Summary” contains voluntary demographic data from 684 respondents (~62%) who completed the workplace climate survey administered by Rankin & Associates. It is available on the WHOI internal webpage at: <https://web.whoi.edu/yourvoice/executive-summary/>
 - Analysis of past invited speaker demographics
 - The PO department has not kept a record of demographic data for the PO departmental seminars (invited and volunteer). However, names and affiliations of speakers are publicly available back to December 2011 (available at <https://www.whoi.edu/what-we-do/understand/departments-centers-labs/po/po-events/>).
 - Very recently, Adam Subas (MC&G) has led an effort to begin collecting voluntary speaker demographic data via an online survey. The WHOI URGE slack channel has the current, cross-departmental summary statistics from this survey.
 - If data is not available, what is the reason for not making it public?
 - Based on other WHOI pods’ correspondence with Human Resources (HR) and the Academic Programs Office (APO), both HR and the Academic Programs Office (APO - Joint Program students & Postdocs) have compiled some data, but it is not made public. Both HR and APO have indicated this is because of small numbers and cite privacy concerns.
 - Within the PO department, demographic data is not currently tracked.
 - If data is not collected, what is the reason?
 - No reason was given by the PO department for not tracking demographic data.
- **How does your organization compare to others, or to the field as a whole?**
 - It is challenging to assess diversity (and past progress in increasing representation) at WHOI because demographic information is not publicly available (and not easily obtainable internally).

- Many institutions make demographic data easily accessible, including [MIT EAPS](#) (Earth, Atmosphere, and Planetary Science), [LDEO](#), and [UCSD](#). In this respect, WHOI does not compare favorably with similar institutions. One of the reasons cited for withholding demographic information is a small sample size (leading to potential privacy concerns). While we are not able to assess this risk, the MIT EAPS department is a similar size to WHOI, and has publicly available demographic information on enrolling graduate students (see link above). UCSD provides demographic statistics by division, including the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, for academic personnel, undergraduate students, graduate students and staff.
- **Public goals on demographics or increasing representation:**
 - Are there general goals stated at your organization for achieving representation?
 - WHOI has several statements about the importance of diversity/representation, including the [DEI landing page](#) (“Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution recognizes that increasing representation and advancing inclusion is critical to our core mission of exploration and discovery in a diverse and connected world”) and an [HR page](#) related to employment opportunities (“We welcome and encourage diversity in our candidates and continually assess our recruitment and hiring processes and procedures to ensure that there are no barriers that would prevent diverse candidates from applying and feeling welcome at our Institution...”). The Vision statement (internal) also indicates diversity as a general goal.
 - Are there measurable goals stated at your organization for achieving representation?
 - Measurable goals for increasing representation at WHOI, in the PO department or institution-wide, are not publicly stated and we are not aware of internal, measurable goals.
 - Suggested additional goals for your organization:
 - The goals for the organization and department should be measurable with the end goal of WHOI demographics, within all job types (Academic, Staff, Students, Postdocs) reflecting the demographics of the country.
 - Many well researched goals and suggestions for implementation of policy changes at WHOI have been previously compiled in the 2017 Workplace Culture report, the 2018 Livingston Report, the JP Student Charge for Measureable Progress in Diversity & Inclusion, and the Postdoc Diversity Charge.
 - Leadership, funding, and power structure must align to implement change, and to maintain effort over long term.
 - More actionable, small goals & policy changes which came up in group discussions include:
 - Support at least X under-represented minority (URM) PO seminar speakers each year (following [Lamont](#))
 - Provide a small grant to URM speakers (beyond travel reimbursement) to alleviate burden and incentivize coming to WHOI

- Implement demographic tracking for all committee memberships, speakers at institutional events, etc.
 - Implement blind application reviews and more transparency around hiring
 - Multiple people should review job ads to ensure job requirements advertised match requirements actually needed for the job (ex. no unnecessary physical requirements, unnecessarily specific)
 - Board of Trustees and Members of the Corporation should reflect population demographics
 - It can be easier to bring people in at the postdoc level, recruit more diverse postdocs, provide longer postdoc funding
 - Provide additional early career funding/startup packages for URM
 - Provide billable project numbers for URM serving on committees etc. to reduce [time tax](#)
 - Provide better training for mentors and revise mentor program with lessons learned from past
 - Make accommodations part of the general thinking
 - Encourage sharing and emphasize the historical context of discoveries and theories in courses.
 - Imagine/Implement changes to cultural norms (how seminars (posters), meetings, etc are organized and structured) which create a more welcoming, collaborative, community structure that allows people to bring their whole identity into the field (rather than feeling like assimilation is necessary). Stop idolizing the lone genius.
 - Examine how and who we memorialize.
 - Institutional support and advocacy for changes within funding agencies - they direct the field and are gatekeepers.
- **Policy or proposed policy for collecting demographic data at your organization:**
 - Proposed policy for collecting, reporting, tracking and utilizing demographic data:
 - We propose that all future PO (and institution wide) seminar speakers be asked by seminar organizers to complete the voluntary, [online survey](#) (circulated by Adam Subhas).
 - We propose that past PO seminar speakers be surveyed using a similar form. There is a record of past speakers dating to 2011. Depending on the time commitment for this effort, there is also the possibility of obtaining funding from the department for a data collection project.
 - To ensure this seminar data is used for measurable change, it must not be private. We propose that the PO seminar website include links to survey data once available and clearly state the PO department's measurable goal (above) of speaker diversity. Survey data should be updated/shared publicly at least once a year and tracked internally more frequently to make sure goals are being met. The importance of the speaker diversity goal and the survey data should be clearly communicated by department leadership each time the seminar organizer is changed.

- We propose to continue pushing and working with HR/APO to make demographic data available. Increasing transparency by making data publicly available (to the extent possible), as other institutions do (e.g. MIT, LDEO, UCSD), will increase accountability and incentivize WHOI leadership to make increasing representation a top priority. Internally, this data is critical for assessing current representation, as well as outlining future efforts (and evaluating past efforts) to increase representation. We acknowledge that there may be privacy concerns associated with small amounts of data; however, several institutions that are similarly-sized or smaller than WHOI have released demographic data. We think that it is possible to work around the “small-numbers problem” at WHOI by releasing limited, masked, or aggregated data e.g. rather than publishing percentages for every URM group
 - publish non-URM vs. URM data, as MIT does
 - mask numbers ≥ 1 & < 5 with “ <5 ” as UCSD does
 - separate data (and surveys) so that cannot link information, ex. race and sexual orientation
 - We propose that WHOI demographic data be added to the DEI website and be updated annually.
 - It is unclear what data HR/APO has currently collected. We propose once that is made available, the types of data collected are evaluated by the CDEI, the new Diversity Officer, and HR (with transparency and opportunity for input from the WHOI community) to see if changes are necessary to measure results against goals (how do we define diversity - URM vs. international, track new data - first generation academics)
 - If HR/APO continues to hold out on efforts to share, collect, and aggregate this data, we propose a voluntary effort for demographic data collection. Coordinating across departments, an anonymous survey similar to the speaker survey or the one administered as part of the culture survey would be done on an annual basis for all employment types.
 - We propose that the WHOI Board of Trustees and Members of the Corporation be publicly listed on the [Board & Corporation website](#).
- **What did you learn about other organizations (or in general) while investigating demographic data?**
 - Several organizations similar in size to WHOI publish demographic data
 - This may be possible by publishing limited data and/or aggregating across categories
 - Collection, tracking, and public availability of data really helps understand where things are failing and how to focus energy.
 - Attrition rate for URMs is much higher compared to non-URMs in MIT’s EAPS department (44% vs. 25%).

- Links
 - AGI - "Diversity in the Geosciences – a Look at the Data and the Actions of the Community"-<https://www.americangeosciences.org/webinars/diversity-geosciences-look-data-and-actions-community>
 - Creating and Promoting Gender Equity and Diversity in Professional Geological Societies - <https://eartharxiv.org/repository/view/2060/>
 - <https://diversity.ideo.columbia.edu/seminardiversity> - Increase diversity in seminars
 - <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03784-x> - No all-male panels
 - <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.