URGE
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

This is what was developed by the AGU Earth and Planetary Surface Processes Podlets 1 and 2 on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

This deliverable is an audit of the hiring and, if applicable, the admissions process of your organization. EPSP is an all-volunteer organization, so we don't really do hiring and admissions. However, we do have elected officials, an executive committee, various subcommittees, and awards. For this deliverable, each podlet is going to evaluate a series of questions related to how people become involved with these parts of EPSP.

Podlet 1 questions

Signatures of Approval by Podlet 1: Noah Snyder, Kimberly Hill, Kate Leary, Claire Masteller, Julia Carr, Lisa Tranel, Colin Phillips, Brandee Carlson, Anastasia Piliouras, Andrew Moodie

What are the ways that new volunteers are encouraged to participate in the EPSP Executive Committee? Are there criteria by which candidates for the EPSP Executive Committee are evaluated? Who is on the selection committee for candidates for the EPSP Executive Committee?

The current membership of the EPSP Executive Committee is available on the EPSP "About Us" page. As EPSP is a relatively new section, the process for adding new members to the committee has been ad hoc. There are no formal criteria. In practice, EPSP has a big supergroup, which essentially all of the volunteers on any of the subcommittees and task groups. There is also an Executive Committee, which is composed of the officers and one representative who leads each task group and subcommittee. However, this is not formalized and the lines between these two entities are not clear. At present, the EPSP leadership is in the process of developing bylaws, modeled on those of the Hydrology section. We recommend that the leadership develop these bylaws through a DEI lens, as was done by the Student Committee, and the bylaws get reviewed by a separate group, such as the Executive Committee. Clarifying aspects like how people are rotated on and off of subcommittees, and the composition of the Executive Committee are very important.

What are the ways that new volunteers are encouraged to run for the elected positions in the EPSP leadership? Are there criteria by which candidates for the EPSP elected leadership are evaluated?

- We are not sure how initial candidates we vote on are selected to run. We have some examples of other elected officials appointing positions, at least when other positions step down.
- This process is opaque. For some, the burden is on interested parties to reach out to leadership and ask to be included, so there is a strong filter based on network.
- In practice, the leadership reaches out to people who are deeply involved in the subcommittees and encourages them to run for elected positions.
- The ad hoc process has been OK for a new section, but it's now time to develop a more intentional process.
- Having descriptions of what the leadership actually does (and sending those out to the community) might help encourage more people to run.
- Could add a nominating committee to the bylaws.

What are the ways that new volunteers are encouraged to participate in the EPSP Student Committee? Are there criteria by which candidates for the EPSP Student Committee are evaluated?

The EPSP Student Committee adopted a set of bylaws in January 2021. They include an annual application process for potential new members and rubric by which candidates are evaluated. The application includes a question about commitment to DEI work.

What recommendations do we have for how we find and evaluate volunteers for the new EPSP DEI committee?

- Advertise widely: website, AGU connects (encourage members to use AGU connects account), Gilbert club, Twitter, other?
- Advertisement could have a link to the website and particular application for a committee.
- We need to actively include people that are not only in our Pod.
- We could use an open application, which is what the EPSP Student Committee uses. And publishing a rubric is also important. Establish equity checks throughout the review process. Questions on that process: Who would review these applications? Would it make sense for that to be a blind process?
- We need to develop questions for the application (and a rubric for evaluation). We could do this as part of the ongoing deliverables for URGE.

Potential application/questions for DEI committee:

- General info: Name, contact info, research area or sub-discipline, current institution, and job title

- Optional: Please feel free to share the way(s), if any, in which you self-identify as being a member of an underrepresented group. This is not a required question and is not a requirement for being on the committee.
- Please explain what diversity, equity, and inclusion mean to you and why they are important.
- What is your past experience, if any, in DEI efforts? People at all levels of experience are welcome.
- What are your goals in joining the DEI committee? What specific topics are you interested in working on to enhance DEI in EPSP?
- What do you see as the biggest challenges facing EPSP and/or the geoscience community in regards to diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- Where do you see the greatest opportunity for enhancing DEI in EPSP? Do you have any ideas about what changes EPSP might make to enhance DEI within our section or within our scientific community?

Podlet 2 questions

What does the nominating committee do? What should it do? What is the process for recruiting and adding new members? What should the process be for recruiting and adding new members? What are the ways that award nominees (here referring to Leopold, Williams, Gilbert, and AGU Fellows) are found and how are nominators encouraged and supported to nominate someone for an award?

What does the awards committee do? What should it do? What is the process for recruiting and adding new members? What should the process be for recruiting and adding new members? What are the criteria by which awardees are evaluated?

There is currently no EPSP DEI committee. What should an EPSP DEI committee do? What should the process be for recruiting and adding new members?

General recommendations:

We recommend that the EPSP website should have a web page that lists all the EPSP committees and what each committee is/does in a couple sentences. We recommend the elected officers and their roles be included at the top of this web page. We also suggest that each EPSP committee should have its own webpage that includes the charge of the committee, who is on the committee, its bylaws (if they exist), how to apply to get on the committee, and the rubric used for assessing new member applications (if one exists).

Canvassing Committee:
(Conor McDowell, Lisa Luna, Udita Mukherjee, Kyle Straub, Robert Mahon)

Recommendations for Selecting Committee Members:

- Provide a form (using a similar form to the student committee template), advertise its existence annually through Gilbert Club and other avenues to ensure diverse pool of committee member nominees
- Make its members publicly known
- Make the time commitment publicly known and transparent
- Ensure the committee reflects diversity in career stage, subfield, and demographics
- Use a rubric/scoresheet (similar to student committee) to evaluate candidates for committee membership
- Make the process, rubric, etc. public and transparent - currently it is not even known who selects the committee members
- Have a student rotator on the committee for shorter terms, possibly from the Student Committee, as long terms of commitment are challenging for students
- Make known what are the benefits to serving on this committee

Recommendations for the Committee Charge:

- Every year the committee shall review existing nominations to evaluate if there is sufficient number of nominations and ensure it highlights the demographic and subdiscipline diversity of the community
- Committee should be charged with being the nominator/advocate, including for some time after public nominations have come in
- Solicit potential nominees that don't necessarily have a full advocate.
    - Could canvass/survey the EPSP membership for names directly via a survey. Perhaps some worthy nominees have support but no proactive advocate. Committee could identify and serve as the advocate in these cases.
    - Committee members may then seek an external advocate/nominator or the committee itself may serve that role.
- Committee members should not have conflicts of interest (such as outlined in standard NSF conflicts form or AGU Conflict of Interest Policy) for anyone they put forth to nominate.
- Committee members should each bring 3 names per award/medal to meeting/discussion, potentially after the nominations deadline has passed to discuss whether further nominations should be solicited.
    - Nominators responsible for multiple names are more likely to nominate a more diverse set of candidates, so charging each committee member with multiple names may increase the diversity of the pool of names.
    - If the committee is large enough to permit, perhaps each committee member only brings 3 names for a single award (as opposed to single names for each award).
- The committee should collect and make public the demographics of all nominations to allow the EPSP community to gauge effectiveness
- The committee should establish self-assessment criteria and evaluate annually. These can be cross-developed with the EPSP DEI Committee
- DEI Committee should be charged with evaluating metrics by which the Canvassing Committee evaluates itself regularly and set aspirational and attainable goals for the committee's nominee pool.

Awards Committee:
(Danica Roth, Dorothy Merritts, Joanmarie Del Vecchio, Xin Sun, Michele Koppes, Hima Hassenruck-Gudipati, Nicole Gasparini)

For this deliverable, we researched information on other AGU section Awards Committees: Ocean Science, Planetary Sciences, Cryosphere, Tectonophysics, Hydrology, and Natural Hazards. Five of these six sections had websites that were easily findable with information on their awards committee or subcommittees. (Some sections had different committees for each of the section awards.) There was no uniformity as to how or where information on Awards Committees was presented. Here are some observations:

- Some sections had information such as committee members or task of the awards committees on the individual section portion of the AGU website (e.g. https://connect.agu.org/hydrology/ or https://connect.agu.org/oceansciences), some sections had all information listed on the AGU Honors and Recognition pages (https://www.agu.org/Learn-About-AGU/About-AGU/Governance/Committees/Honors-Recognition-Committee), and some had information scattered among multiple places. Some section awards webpages had broken links.
- Some sections list who is on the awards committee and the charge of the committee (e.g. https://www.agu.org/Learn-About-AGU/About-AGU/Governance/Committees/Honors-Recognition-Committee/Gilbert-White-Committee), but not all sections had that information easily findable.
- About half of the committees had information on how people become members of the committee. From what we saw, awards committee membership seems to be by appointment.
- We could not find any posted rubrics for evaluating nominees.

In general, the lack of uniformity and information is confusing and could be a hindrance for nominators, especially for new nominators and letter writers. ***We advocate for easily findable information and as much transparency about all aspects of the process as possible.*** We suggest that transparency will lead to the submission of better award packages (in the sense that the packages are better prepared to address what the committee is looking for) and more diverse nominators and nominees.

Recommendations for the EPSP awards committee:

- The names of Awards Committee members should be posted online and easily findable.
- There should be clear instructions for applying to be on the awards committee or it should be clear how committee members are chosen for appointment.
- A rubric should be posted for how nominee packages are reviewed.
- Guidelines for what goes into a strongly written nomination letter and supporting letters should be posted online.
- The Awards Committee should provide feedback for nominators about whether or not a package was competitive and how that package can be made more competitive.

- The Awards Committee should reevaluate the charge of the awards to reflect EPSP community values. We urge the committee to affirm that the definition of research excellence includes making sure all people can participate in research.
- The Awards Committee should consider resources available to nominees when evaluating a nominee's contributions and impact. These resources include but are not limited to funding, mentorship, personal resources, and prestige of training and working locations. If possible, these resources should be normalized among nominees.
- EPSP covers a wide range of study areas. The awardees should reflect this diversity of study areas. Less funded and/or less flashy research also represents important contributions to our field and should not be discounted.
- The Awards Committee should perform an internal audit to see where changes may be needed. This audit should include:
    - Data on who has been doing the nominating: If the nominators are not diverse, this should change. If the same people do most of the nominating, this should change. The Awards Committee can work with the Canvassing Committee to broaden participation, if needed.
    - Data on who is getting nominated: If the nominee pool does not represent the diversity of our EPSP committee, reflection and action are required.
    - Data on who is getting nominated versus who is being selected: If nominees with relatively less resources are routinely getting overlooked despite their achievements, this should be addressed.

DEI Committee (Risa Madoff, Leonard Sklar, Karin Lehnigk , and Jeffrey Kwang)

Consensus from podlet 2's sub-group generated the following recommendations for the formation of an EPSP DEI Committee. We were given this assigned topic during the fifth URGE session on the topics of selection and hiring and the role that bias plays. As an entirely new committee, there were no historical precedences, but we discussed issues that arose from this session's topics. Therefore, the topic of the selection of an exploratory committee that would be responsible for finalizing Bylaws, administrative actions, and member selection of the new DEI committee carried high consideration.

LAUNCHPAD committee (Risa, Leonard, Karin, and Jeffrey) Timeline:

1. Sent our proposal of the launch committee to Nicole, Noah, Dorothy, Gordon, and Kimberly (early next week)
2. Submit this proposal within our biweekly deliverable to both pod1 and pod2 for approval.
3. Send out applications (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1PD-RIZberEJJIqMSt2bK9OmK6Vm_PMD0uQFZEUoVZ2g/edit) for the Launch Committee chosen by us???
4. Form Launch Committee by the end of URGE and task them to form the DEI committee within X (weeks?, months?).

Questions we were tasked with answering:

1. **There is currently no EPSP DEI committee. What should an EPSP DEI committee do?**

2. **What should the process be for recruiting and adding new members?**

In response to these questions, we are developing a proposal for how to launch the DEI committee, including a draft outline of committee bylaws and the formation of a temporary launch committee to oversee recruitment of committee members.

Suggested process for launching the EPSP DEI Committee

Create a launch committee (exploratory committee) to oversee the selection of committee members. This work would include:

- Drafting an initial set of bylaws to guide the first phase of the committee's work
- Designing the membership composition scheme
- Writing an announcement soliciting nominations/applications for committee membership
- Evaluating submitted nominations/applications and selecting committee members

The launch committee could be composed of volunteers from the EPSP URGE pod, and should include both people who are, and who are not currently in EPSP leadership positions.

We propose the following committee composition (out of the URGE Pods)
Needs representation from both podlets
X students
X profs
X EPSP leadership
X BiPOC
X non-R1 institutions

Timing:
Launch committee formed and has first meeting before URGE ends (Mid May)

Call for self-nominations

Expectation: Launch committee members will NOT become members of the initial DEI committee. Avoids conflict of interest

Nomination/application questions for DEI committee:

- What is your career stage and how do you identify in terms of race, ethnicity and gender?
- What is your personal experience with DEI issues?
- What aspects of the DEI Committee's goals are most important to you?

- What constituencies within and beyond EPSP could you represent?
- How much time do you have to devote to the work of the EPSP DEI committee?
- Did you participate in an URGE pod? (if so, which one?)
- [As a guide for thinking about the above questions] Self-awareness/self-reflection personal experiences and/or challenges related to exclusion and what you did about it; how might you respond differently now? What do you propose to do in the group that would contribute to advancing DEI values?

Draft outline for EPSP DEI Committee Bylaws
(modeled on EPSP Student Committee Bylaws)

1. Goals and Responsibilities of EPSP Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

- Oversee and advise on decision processes and decisions of other committees: executive and awards; raise issues around differences in goals, i.e. traditional cultural habits that made things exclusive vs new habits that make things more inclusive
- Develop and implement strategy, together with the program committee, for increasing awareness and focus on DEI and environmental justice in EPSP sessions, town halls, web events, etc.

- Liaison with community inclusion efforts and the leadership in identifying problems, areas in need of improvement

- Liaison with AGU and other section DEI efforts, fundraising.

- Engage in professional development/training specifically in DEI leadership

- Implement action plans emerging from EPSP URGE pod deliverables, including:
    - Implementing policy on complaints and reporting
    - Collecting and disseminating demographic information
    - Annual outcome assessment tracking, i.e. improvement in community representation, community culture/climate of diversity
    - Annual program assessment - signs of improvement
    - Use above information to work on maintaining an environment and climate of openness and engagement to those traditionally under-represented in EPSP including diversity in areas of demographics, career stage, and institutional tier.

- Provide point of contact for DEI related complaints, reports, and issues from community members, such as at meetings and events

- Recognition of DEI accomplishments in the community: individual and/or group or organization spotlights (monthly?) (Here is a link to the Early Career Spotlights: https://connect.agu.org/epsp/spotlight)

- Provide resources on DEI for faculty, students and others in the surface processes community to support action beyond AGU, such as in university departments and agency workplaces.

2. Committee Membership

It is important for the EPSP DEI committee to have members that represent a diverse range of career stages and racial, ethnic, and gender identities.

The other committee members would be numerous enough to include a diverse range of career stages and racial, ethnic, and gender identities (5-10 people?).

- Representative of community career stages: grad student, PD/transitional/early career; junior, TT, Mid-career, senior faculty, agency career (USGS, Researcher, other?)
- Representative of a diverse range of institutions, including: R1, “majority minority”, primarily undergraduate.

3. Subsections/issues to address

- Tenure (duration) of membership
- Committee leadership positions (Chair, co-chair(?), secretary, etc.)

4. Regular Meetings

   The EPSP DEI Committee shall meet regularly at X-month intervals.

5. Communication with EPSP membership

Resources on forming DEI Committees

Colorado State DEI Committee FAQ
https://diversity.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2020/12/DEI-Committee-FAQ-.pdf

Rutgers University DEI Committee Good Start Guide
https://nbdiversity.rutgers.edu/dei-committee-good-start-guide

Signatures of approval from Podlet 2: Nicole Gasparini, Udita Mukherjee, Joanmarie Del Vecchio, Robert Mahon, Hima Hassenruck-Gudipati, Dorothy Merritts, Risa Madoff, Kyle Straub,

Russell Callahan, Conor McDowell, Leonard Sklar, Jeffrey Kwang, Michele Koppes, Xin Sun, Karin Lehnigk, Danica Roth