



AGU's New Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan: A Bold Vision for Strengthening the Geosciences

Jill Karsten

AGU Diversity & Inclusion Task Force, Eden Prairie, United States (jkarsten55@gmail.com)

In December 2018, the AGU Board and AGU Council each unanimously endorsed an ambitious new AGU Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. The new plan, which replaces an outdated and largely U.S.-centric diversity plan adopted in 2002, was developed by a dedicated task force comprised of a diverse team of 17 geoscientists and non-geoscientists representing the professional breadth of AGU's membership and expertise in diversity-related best practices. The year-long effort to develop the new plan included: six task force meetings; AGU staff member reports on current demographic data, where known; input from U.S. and international geoscience-related funding agencies, scientific societies, and outside experts; and, a two-month open comment period for the AGU membership. An important consideration for the task force was to articulate meaningful definitions and strategic goals for diversity and inclusion that were relevant for a large, global scientific society. The task force was charged with looking broadly across all aspects of AGU operations – including governance, publications, meetings, honors, and staffing – to determine what policies, practices, and priorities were needed to achieve AGU's goals related to diversity and inclusion. A hallmark of the new AGU Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan is that it reframes the entire conversation about why diversity and inclusion matter, by emphasizing the evidence that diversity is essential for excellence in the Earth & Space Sciences. It prioritizes AGU's role in providing a safe, welcoming environment and cultivating a culture that supports the individual scientific success of every AGU member, regardless of their background or personal identities. Developing resources, incentives, and accountability mechanisms for engaging individual AGU members as diversity "change agents" and for realizing AGU's role as a leader on diversity and inclusion issues within the larger geosciences community worldwide are also recommended goals. Ultimately, AGU seeks to be a model organization for diversity and inclusion, using data to inform policy and program decisions and establishing clear policies and procedures across all operations. In concert with the accountability mechanisms offered by the updated AGU Ethics Policy adopted in 2017 – which defines harassment, bullying, and discrimination as violations of scientific integrity – AGU's new plan offers an important roadmap for making real progress regarding diversity and inclusion in the geosciences. This presentation will provide an overview of the new plan and key recommendations made by the task force, and describe some of the next steps being taken toward their implementation.