

Addressing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness in Biology

Bob Winning, Biology Department

Race Equity Team

- An ad hoc group comprised of approximately half the faculty
- Meet weekly over Zoom to discuss readings, issues, action items
- Goal: change the culture in the Biology Department to make inclusivity and equity part of everything we do
- Started by crafting a mission statement and a set of action items
- Action items focus on areas of access, belonging, mentorship
- So far, changes implemented have been small

Action Items (so far)

- Changed the prerequisite structure for Introductory Biology and made changes to the introductory sequence:
 - Previously:
 - BIO 110/111 – Introductory Biology I – had a corequisite of MATH 104
 - BIO 120/121 – Introductory Biology II – Had a prerequisite of BIO 110/111
 - Beginning Fall 2022:
 - BIO 110/111 – Introductory Biology, Cells & Molecules – no prerequisite
 - BIO 120/121 – Introductory Biology, Ecology & Evolution – no prerequisite
 - Intro courses can be taken in either order
 - All new BIO majors will take BIO 101 – CORE Biology
 - Community, Organization, Research, Equity – increase scientific identity, enhance belonging, strengthen academic skills

Action Items (so far)

- Held a workshop for faculty by Dr. Carmen McCallum and Dr. Julie Libarkin on inclusive mentoring practices
- Revised advising process to be more proactive – students are assigned an advisor in their area of interest. Advisor reaches out to students to make advising appointments.
- Changed process for searches:
 - Faculty searches – requested a diversity statement from candidates; included DEI efforts in screening matrices; used questions about DEI practices in interviews
 - GA positions – added an interview step to the process; included DEI questions in the interview and rubric

Action Items (in progress)

- Rewriting the Biology Department Mission Statement to incorporate our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
- Rewriting the Biology Department Evaluation Document (DED) to give credit for DEI practices/efforts in Instruction, Scholarly/Creative Activity, and Service