



GSA Actions to Support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

A number of call-to-action documents have been distributed amongst the geoscience community recently. These petitions outline recommendations from geoscientists and others from the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) community on how organizations, agencies, and societies can move the needle in equalizing the sciences for all individuals.

The Geological Society of America recognizes that these issues remain after decades of first neglecting equity and

then attempting sporadic efforts at best to address and change the situation. Over the past decade, GSA has taken intentional and strategic steps to begin to make a difference.

Our [2019–2029 Decadal Strategic Plan](#) integrates diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into all our aspirations and goals. The following are specific examples of GSA's policies, programs, funding efforts, and values that are making a difference. GSA also understands that more can be done, and we will be reviewing our activities to reflect recommendations.

Strategic Plan Aspirations and Goals specific to DEI

ASPIRATION: Advance Scientific Discovery, Rigor, and Integrity

3. Bolster scientific offerings by working toward greater inclusivity.
4. Lead the geosciences in building a culture of professional ethics, rigor, and integrity.

- A statement of solidarity is featured under “News and Announcements” on the GSA [homepage](#), on the homepage carousel here, and the [diversity page](#).
- GSA's [Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct](#), Section 4, “Promoting a Culture of Respect, Fairness, and Inclusivity, states in part: “GSA does not tolerate discrimination or harassment based on protected characteristics, which include race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, creed, religion, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, etc.”
- GSA's [Events Code of Conduct](#) lists examples of unacceptable behavior, including “[d]o not engage in harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination in any form; [d]o not make verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, national origin or any other identified characteristic outline in the GSA [Diversity Position Statement](#).”
- GSA's Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct is an enforceable policy that applies to our members' professional activities

regardless of where they occur. Under the Code, members are held accountable for violating mandatory standards, even if their conduct takes place at their home institutions.

- Increasing diversity among GSA journal and book editors is a priority and discussed by editors, associate editors, and reviewers at every editor summit and committee meeting. GSA does outreach each year to recruit diverse individuals. GSA staff has also altered the requirements to entice more candidates to apply.
- GSA changed its policy in November 2019 for accepting third-party recruitment advertising for publication. All advertisers are asked to confirm that their policies agree with GSA's diversity position statement. Before a new ad is published, the advertiser must agree to the following: “By checking this box, we, the advertiser, have read, and agree, that the organization's EOE practices align with GSA's Diversity Position Statement that encourages participation regardless of ‘race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, creed, religion, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran status, marital status, medical condition, pregnancy, education, class, political affiliation, or parental status.’ GSA will, in good faith, publish the client ad, providing the above box has been checked. The advertiser understands that GSA reserves the right to decline or remove advertising if it determines an advertiser's employment policies are inconsistent with the GSA Diversity Position Statement.”
- In GSA's Graduate Student Research Grant program, GSA has committed to increasing the diversity of students who apply for and receive grants. To accomplish this, GSA reviewed the application and evaluation process and implemented changes in

- December 2019. Another round of changes will be implemented by December 2020. These processes will be reviewed each year.
- In 2019, GSA made a written commitment to the National Science Foundation to increase the level of diversity in its Research Grants Committee, which annually selects more than 300 graduate students to receive research grants.
 - GSA is an inaugural member and on the leadership council of the [Societies Consortium on Sexual Harassment in STEMM](#). The Consortium's strategic focus is "building communities that are actively intolerant of sexual and intersecting bases of harassment." This includes developing model policies and procedures, many of which can be applied broadly to address many different forms of bias.
 - GSA's Diversity Committee, led by Chair Steve Emerman, is working on a collection of best practices and case studies of inclusive field camps, retooling field-camp culture, and emphasizing alternatives to field camp, such as lab camps or other experiences that may take the place of a traditional field camp.
 - GSA's Field Camp Scholarships and the GSA/ExxonMobil Bighorn Basin Field Award are determined based on three criteria: diversity, financial need, and merit.
 - Field Camp Excellence Award applications are assessed based on diversity criteria, including the accessibility of the field camp and the number of diverse field camp attendees the camp serves.
 - GSA has published an internal gender and ethnicity/race report since 2013. This report summarizes internal data relating to the cumulative gender and race/ethnicity of members who serve in leadership roles, recipients of GSA awards, fellows, editors, applicant, and award demographics of GSA programs (e.g., GeoCorps™ America, Geoscientists-In-the-Parks, Graduate Student Research Grants, Field Camp Scholarships, Bighorn Basin Field Program, and On To the Future). Data on GSA staff are also included. GSA should build a culture of data management among departments to actively collect and assess these metrics over time. Data that should be added to the report include the gender and ethnicity of session conveners, meeting attendees, invited speakers, and award/committee/fellowship nominees.

Planned Activities for Fall 2020 and Beyond

- GSA is partnering with ADVANCEgeo to deliver two 2.5-hour virtual workshops this fall: (1) *Implicit Bias Workshop*. Target audience: Council, Nominations Committee, Membership & Fellowship Committee, Research Grants Committee, Geology & Public Policy Committee, Congressional Science Fellowship Committee; (2) *Bystander Intervention Workshop*. Target Audience: Respectful, inclusive scientific events (RISE) liaisons, Student Advisor Committee, Section secretaries, Division leadership. These will serve as pilot workshops so that GSA can evaluate what to improve, who should take them, and how to offer them on an ongoing basis.
- These trainings should be expanded to include those committees that review and select for GSA awards and student programs, such as the Academic and Applied Geoscience Relations (AAGR), Professional Development, and Awards Committees. Training could also be offered to GSA's scientific Divisions to balance their selection process for awards and student programs and to the Publications Committee to ensure that the standards/process guiding reviewers is fair and thoughtful. Optional groups to be trained include GIP and

- GeoCorps mentors and mentors at GSA meetings.
- GSA circulated the ADVANCEgeo workplace climate survey, to which 1,100 people responded. This data may shed light on the lived experiences of BIPOC and underrepresented groups.
- Modernize the GSA nominations and elections process to remove structural barriers for BIPOC and other underrepresented members.
- Modernize the Fellowship nomination process and review for structural barriers for BIPOC and other underrepresented members.
- Learn how other societies and private companies increase their pool of diverse nominees. GSA can build a pipeline of diverse nominees.
- Review rules and guidelines that govern the work of nominations/awards committees to codify the expected changes.
- Ethical guidelines for sourced products sold by exhibitors at the Annual Meeting are being developed by the GSA Culture Task Force.
- Section 3.1 of GSA's Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct includes aspirational standards of conduct relevant to these concerns: "We will responsibly conduct sampling activities in our research to preserve Earth's geoh heritage for future generations," and "We will strive to communicate our knowledge about Earth to protect the environment and provide appropriate stewardship of natural resources."
- Explore standards or best practices for professional responsibility when conducting research on indigenous lands and/or collaborating with indigenous stakeholders.
- Incorporate [land acknowledgment statements](#) in meetings and events.
- GSA is in the process of updating the field safety policy and procedures to make it clear that the Events Code of Conduct and RISE apply to field situations.
- Council will review the recommendations in the GSA Diversity Position Statement and the [GSA Removing Barriers to Women in Geosciences Position Statement](#) and prioritize those recommendations to implement them immediately.
- Invite experts on environmental justice and the geosciences to write an article for *GSA Today* and *Speaking of Geoscience* (the GSA blog) to serve as a starting point for an ongoing conversation and to present at GSA annual and other meetings.
- Use our Geoscience Policy office to advocate for increased funding for environment-focused geoscience funding.

ASPIRATION: Host Premier Conferences and Meetings

2. Utilize the latest technologies to make meetings more effective, creative, and accessible to a larger, more diverse audience.

- In 2018, GSA launched an accessibility survey to learn about the needs of members with disabilities and to help guide staff on ways to make meetings more accessible.
- Diversity and inclusion questions are asked in annual meeting surveys. Responses help guide changes and adaptations to events. For example, survey comments related to accessibility, diversity, inclusion, and [RISE](#) are provided to the Diversity Committee and Culture Task Force to help make necessary recommendations.

- GSA sponsors the Diversity in the Geosciences Reception and the LGBTQ+ social events at Annual Meetings.
- OTF sessions at the meeting are led by the Diversity Committee chair and invited Council members, and others in leadership are present to network with students and encourage them to play a part in leadership opportunities (the Student Advisory Committee, other Committees, and Divisions).
- GSA hosts diversity technical sessions, short courses, field trips, and Pardee Symposia at annual and section meetings. GSA also addresses these topics via the Fireside Chats. Sessions on these topics and their placement and timing are under consideration by the Culture Task Force to be more prominent at meetings.

2020 Technical Sessions

- T246. The Transformative Role of Field Instruction: Research on Student Experiences and Impacts on Persistence in the Geosciences and Career Intent through the Lens of Gender, Culture and Elements of Diversity
- P4. The Next Generation of Geoscience Leaders: Strategies for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion
- T238. Incorporating Identities to Advance Diversity throughout Geoscience Disciplines
- T250. Expanding Opportunities in the Geosciences: Exploring Examples of GEO-STEM Learning Ecosystems that Promote Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- T235. Building the Workforce of the 21st Century: Understanding Diversity, Intersectionality, Ethics, and Inclusivity in the Geosciences and Implementing Transformative Change in Our Culture

Past GSA Annual Meeting Technical or Pardee Sessions (last 3 years)

- T199. Enhancing the Geosciences by Empowering Indigenous and Latinx Students I (2019 Annual Meeting)
- T111. Broadening Participation in Paleontology: Approaches for Enhancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (2019 Annual Meeting)
- T182. Practical Ways to Promote an Ethical, Diverse, Inclusive Culture across the Geosciences (2019 Annual meeting)
- Inclusive and Effective College Science Classrooms: Engaging Students, Designing Lessons, and Integrating Diversity into Curriculum (2018 Short Course)
- P4. Fostering an Inclusive Academic Culture for the 21st Century: Advancing Policies, Departments, and Supporting Faculty to Address the Needs and Challenges for Building a Healthy Geoscience Enterprise (2017 Pardee Symposium)
- Session 3: Geoscience Education & Indigenous-Centered Research, Education, and Learning (2020 North-Central Virtual Meeting Session)
- P1. The Changing Face of Geoscience in the 21st Century: Increasing Diversity and Inclusion to Solve Complex Problems (2017 Pardee Symposium)
- Supporting Diversity in Two-Year College Geoscience Programs: Broadening Participation of Underrepresented Groups (2017 Short Course)
- The Rise of Pinnacle Reefs: Islands of Diversity in Seas of Despair (2017 Accessible Field Trip)
- “Navigating ‘Me, too’ in the Geosciences,” 2018 GSA Presidential Address, Robbie Rice Gries

ASPIRATION: Provide a Sense of Community and Venues for Networking

1. Lead efforts to provide a safe and inclusive culture for members worldwide to participate, contribute, and feel a sense of belonging to the profession.
 - In March 2020, GSA established a Culture Task Force, led by the chair of the Diversity Committee. As stated in the invitation to recruit members, “GSA is launching this task force because we want to continue to make our meetings feel safe and welcoming for all participants, particularly ethnic minorities, women, and people with disabilities. GSA’s Events Code of Conduct and RISE (Respectful Inclusive Scientific Events) program provide a strong foundation, and post-meeting survey results tell us that most participants report feeling safe. Nevertheless, we recognize that there may be a gap between GSA’s official policies and programs and the way some meeting attendees actually feel. GSA’s President, Don Siegel, has asked our Diversity in the Geosciences Committee to take the lead in recommending concrete changes that will make a positive impact at the Montréal meeting and beyond.” The Culture Task Force includes (61% from BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, People of Color]).
 - [Diversity Committee](#) (incoming as of 1 July 2020, 70% BIPOC). The makeup of this committee was years in the making and took substantial efforts by the committee to change their charge, and significant recruitment by the Career and Diversity Officer. Similar efforts should be made to diversify the makeup of other committees.
 - The On To the Future program ([OTF](#); 64% BIPOC) has a one-to-one mentoring component, which was added in 2013. An important requirement of the mentorship is for the mentor to introduce the mentee to at least five contacts to expand the student’s network.
 - GSA is partnered with the University of Arkansas to offer professional development workshops twice a year that help OTF students write cover letters, apply to internships/jobs, and craft résumés/CVs. Students are mentored in small groups and given individual feedback on their documents. Students are also awarded travel funding and meeting registration to a GSA annual and/or section meeting. These students are tracked annually.
 - While OTF is an award-based program, GSA accommodates BIPOC students who are not a part of the OTF program (i.e., recipients of Expanding Representation in Geosciences [ERG] Scholarships, or others) who are attending the annual meeting. They are invited to OTF sessions and events and sometimes participate in the OTF mentorship program.
 - GSA should attempt to identify ways in which it has failed BIPOC and other minority groups. Groups like OTF (647+ students and early career professionals) can be a valuable resource to listen to and learn from. The OTF program survey could be adapted to include questions of this nature.

Other ways GSA is addressing geoscience culture:

- GSA has been committed since 2015 to submitting at least one culture change proposal to appropriate foundations or funding partners.
- In 2017, GSA hosted the *Unity of Purpose for Equitable Representation in Geosciences Workshop* with geoscience

organizations, minority-serving professional organizations, minority-serving academic institutions, government agencies, and large facilities with an interest and capacity to positively affect change within their organizations around broadening participation efforts.

- GSA is partnering with the University of Arkansas in a proposal to NSF's Research Coordination Network to address geoscience culture among GSA's Associated Societies and GSA's Ad Hoc Culture Task Force.
- GSA will utilize the Culture Task Force, Diversity Committee, and OTF program to identify other ways that culture is manifested in geosciences.
- Session at 2020 North-Central Virtual Meeting: "Teaching the History of Geology: Recognizing and Addressing Geology's Ties to Colonialism and Imperialism." GSA will encourage more sessions, workshops, and publications to address these issues.

Other Actions

Ethics and Compliance

- Ethics Committee
- Ethics Policies and Procedures
 - Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct
 - Policy & Procedures for Handling Potential Ethical Violations
 - Ethics disclosures for honors, awards, and leadership roles
- Events Code of Conduct/RISE Program for events
- Annual Ethics Report
- Two-year monitoring of Ethics Program by Council

Awards

- Specific awards for early career professionals, women, and People of Color (Donath, Outstanding Woman, and Bromery Awards).

Student Programs

- Expanding Representation Scholarships (ERG) awarded to six undergraduate students each year

- Minority-Serving Institution travel awards to attend the 2018 GSA Annual Meeting. These were offered to faculty and students who might not have otherwise been able to attend.
- GeoCorps™ America partners with the Bureau of Land Management's Direct Hire Authority / Resource Assistants (DHA/RA) program to provide internships to diverse geoscientists. (The program is on hiatus in 2020, but is expected to resume 2021.)

Policy Activities

- Position Statements (Career Progression, Diversity)
- GSA covers and supports, when appropriate, legislation and Executive Branch efforts to increase diversity in STEM.
- One of the suggested "asks" for participants in the 2019 GeoCVD (Congressional Visits Day) was "Support efforts to create a more diverse workforce and provide a safe and welcoming environment for all in STEM. Examples of legislative efforts include:
 - Combatting Sexual Harassment in Science Act of 2019 (H.R. 36, S. 1067)
 - STEM Opportunities Act of 2019 (House only H.R. 2528)
 - These bills advanced after the visits.
- Updates are provided to GSA membership on policy efforts, including blog posts, "[House Science, Space, and Technology Committee Passed STEM Diversity Related Bills.](#)"
- Technical sessions at the annual meeting. Example: [GSA's Role In Building A Healthy Geoscience Enterprise](#) in 2019.

Human Resources

- Employed staff
 - Career and Diversity Officer (66% time dedicated to diversity—including OTF)
 - Ethics & Compliance Officer (full time)
- GSA job announcements are posted to HR websites that focus on diversity, and GSA is an equal opportunity employer. These efforts could be strengthened by increasing efforts to recruit BIPOC and reviewing job descriptions for implicit biases.
- Diversity/inclusion training for staff.