



Fostering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the BC Biology Department



The Biology DEI Committee:

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Mission of the Biology DEI Committee

We recognize that the history of Science and the current practice of research in higher education take place within the context of a fundamentally unequal and biased society. Racism, sexism, and discrimination against other marginalized identities causes talented scientists to be continuously excluded, marginalized and minoritized within Academia.

While we as individuals, as a committee, and as a Department cannot “solve” the bias and discrimination endemic in our society, we work towards building diversity, equity and inclusiveness within our own community. It is our goal to raise awareness about racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination in our Department, provide support and resources for members of our community with a range of identities, and to promote discussions that can help us grow as a more diverse and inclusive environment.

Our Biology Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee aims to:

1. Understand the current state of DEI within the Biology Department and be responsive to the needs of our community
2. Make specific recommendations to the Department to promote recruitment, retention and support of women, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color), LGBTQ+ and individuals with diverse lived experiences
3. Act as a conduit between the Department and groups at Boston College working towards promoting institutional DEI
4. Create opportunities, events, conversations and spaces that increase the inclusivity of our Biology Community.

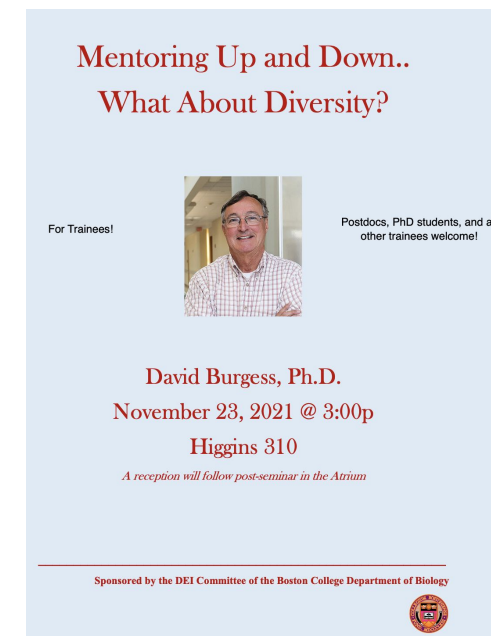
Perceptions about the state of DEI in the Biology Department

In order to make informed decisions about DEI efforts, we have created numerous opportunities for members of the Department community to provide their input. Through **in-person workshops, listening sessions and anonymous online surveys**, several themes have emerged:

- There are polarized attitudes and experiences relating to DEI issues
- A lack of diversity among tenure-track faculty leads to a lack of role models for underrepresented trainees
- There is a perception that underrepresented members of the department are expected to do more service
- Many trainees are concerned about a lack of communication with Department administration
- There is an overall lack of trust in the Department and broader BC administration
- There is a perception that harassment complaints are not adequately dealt with
- Extreme power differentials across the Department and University create anxiety

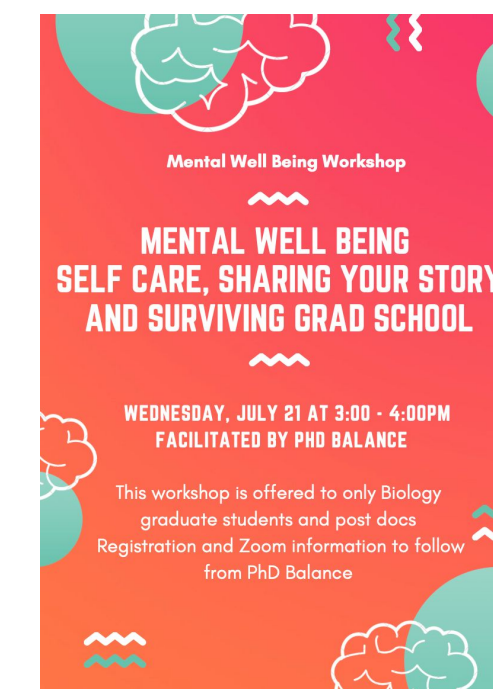
DEI Events in the Biology Department, 2021-22

The Biology DEI Committee has organized several events to begin addressing the needs and concerns of our Community:



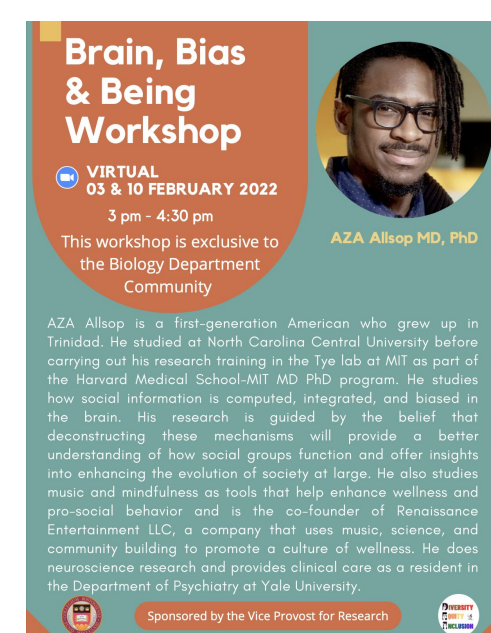
November 23, 2021
Mentoring Up and Down: What About Diversity?
Led by Dr. David Burgess

Attended by ~20 Biology trainees



July 21, 2021
Mental Well-Being and Self Care during Grad School

Attended by ~25 Biology PhD Students



February 3, 2022
Brain, Bias and Being Workshop Session I
Facilitated by Dr. AZA Allsop and Dr. Bruce Birren
Department was divided into :

- Trainees (PhD students and postdocs; 46 participants)
- Supervisors (Faculty and administrators; 28 participants)

February 10, 2022
Brain, Bias and Being Workshop Session II
Combined session attended by 63 department members



March 10, 2022
DEI Listening Session
• DEI committee listened without interjection to the concerns of students in the department

Attended by 21 PhD students



April 14, 2022
DEI Design Thinking Workshop
• Follow-up session Facilitated by Allison Reilly from Institutional Research and Planning
Attended by ~20 PhD students



May 12, 2022
Title IX at BC
• Patricia Lowe gave overview of the Office for Institutional Diversity and Title IX and answered questions
Attended by 26 department members

Other Efforts and Resources Established

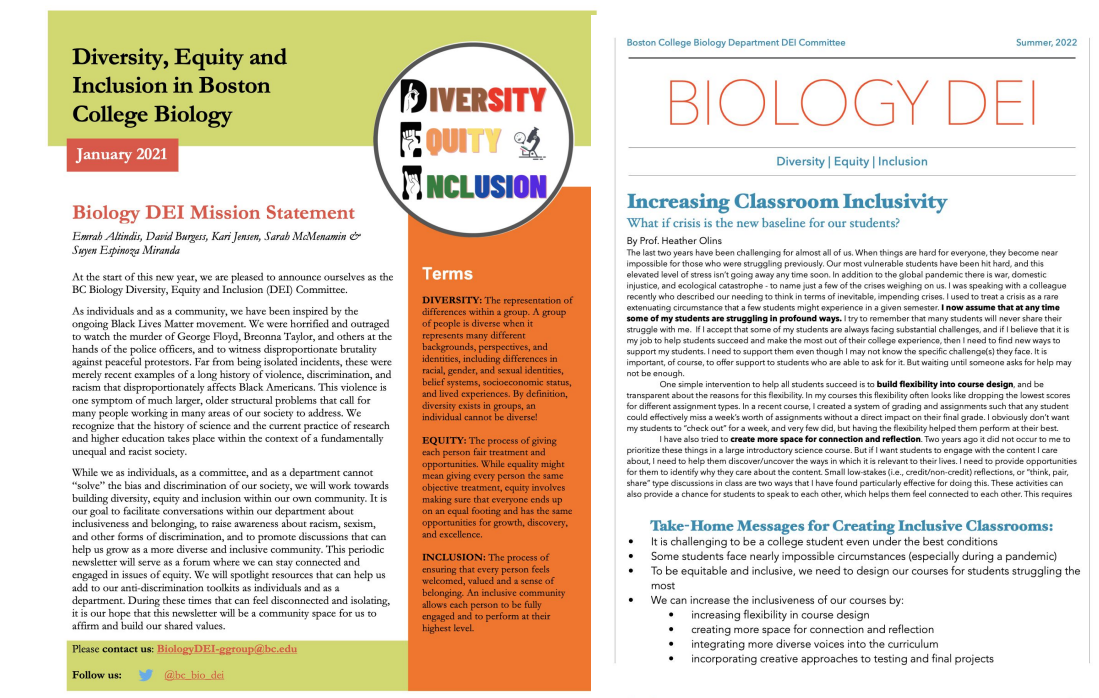
The Biology DEI Committee has established several resources within the Department:



- A **Celebrate Diversity Board** in the Higgins Hall Atrium invites the community to reflect and share their thoughts on DEI issues
- The Board is also used to publicize upcoming DEI events
- Newsletters and additional information are displayed beside and below the Board



- A **DEI Library** in the Biology Department Office provides resources for the community to learn more about diversity and inclusion in STEM fields
- Featured books are profiled and displayed in the Biology Office

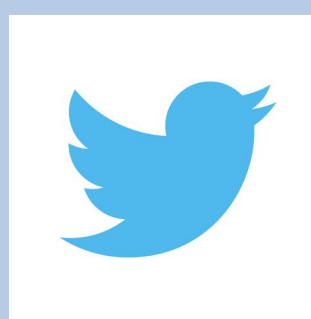


- A quarterly **Biology DEI Newsletter** features original content written by members of our community
- Seven issues of the newsletter have been disseminated digitally and in print

Future Priorities

- Create more channels towards **University resources** related to mentoring, harassment and supporting diversity
- Establish **lines of communication** within the department to regularly discuss and address concerns, including anonymous concerns
- Develop a regular **journal club and coffee hour** to discuss issues of DEI in STEM
- Support a **professional development series** for Biology PhD students with support from the Institute for Liberal Arts
- Make recommendations for the **Biology Graduate Student Handbook**
- **Increase the diversity** of the faculty population
 - **Interested in discussing the possibility of a Diversity “Cluster Hire”?** Please contact us at biologydei-ggroup@bc.edu

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@bc_bio_dei

