Preliminary Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Five-Year Strategic Plan
July 28, 2016

Executive Summary

The University of Michigan has taken strides to become a leading institution in diversity and inclusivity. To facilitate this, the university’s President, Mark Schlissel, has asked units on campus to create a five-year strategic plan. The process began with a kick-off event in September 2015, and the final version of the plan will be approved in fall 2016.

Planning Process

The School of Natural Resources and Environment formed a diversity, equity, and inclusion task force in April 2015 and selected a committee to produce the five year plan. The committee met one to two times per month from September 2015 through May 2016. The committee consisted of the:

Planning Lead:
Dorceta E. Taylor, Professor and SNRE’s Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Planning Staff:
Samantha Shattuck, Program Manager and Alumnus

SNRE’s DEI Committee:
Professors Mary Carl Hunter, Ivette Perfecto, and Brad Cardinale
Sara O’Brien – Director of Office of Academic Affairs
Kela McClure – Director of Human Resources
Elena Huisman – Diversity Representative of the Student Government
Planning Process Timeline:

Timeline 1. The 2015-2016 Strategic Planning Process

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Data Collection and Community Engagement

Surveys – Key Findings

Survey conducted, sample sizes, and response rates:
- Students: 137 respondents (47.7% response rate)
- Alumni: 201 respondents (29% response rate)
- Staff: 37 respondents (44.6% response rate)
- Faculty: 51 respondents (37.2% response rate).

a. The Extent of Inclusion
   Generally speaking, respondents considered SNRE to be a welcoming place and one in which they felt like they belonged (see table 7 and figure 5). More than 60% of all the respondents gave a high rating to both of these factors.

   In contrast, all stakeholder groups thought SNRE did a poor job of including low-income persons into the school. Students and alumni also perceived SNRE to be less inclusive of all racial/ethnic groups than staff and faculty.

b. Cross-cultural Social Interactions
   Less than 35% of the respondents gave themselves a high rating when asked to assess the following statement, “My experiences in SNRE have led me to become more understanding of racial and ethnic differences.”

Demographic Trends in SNRE

Students:
The percentage of international students enrolled in SNRE rose from 13.2% in 2010 to 29.3% in 2015. The percentage of domestic white students fell from 70.2% to 51.9% in the same period.

Faculty and Staff:
SNRE’s faculty is predominantly male accounting for 63.0% of the 46 tenure track faculty. However, women dominate the research scientist and staff positions: 62.5% of the research scientists, 55.0% of the research fellows, and 71.1% of the staff are women.

SNRE faculty are overwhelmingly white: 63.5% of the primary faculty are white, and 80% or more of the adjuncts, dry appointments, and supplemental faculty are white. Staff members are also predominantly white (78.3%).
c. The Prevalence of Insensitive Language and Discriminatory Behavior
   Students were most likely to report hearing insensitive comments and seeing discriminatory behaviors directed at particular racial/ethnic groups (26.7%), international persons (23.7%), and women (20.9%) in the past 2 years.

d. The Extent of Stereotyping and Targeting
   In no instance did the percentage of respondents reporting being the target of any kind of stereotyping or discrimination exceed 16%.

e. Feelings About Compositional Diversity
   None of the faculty expressed a high level of satisfaction with the number of domestic minority students in SNRE or in their fields of studies; only 2.5% of students were satisfied at a high level.

Student Town Hall

A student town hall was held in SNRE on January 25, 2016. The event provided an opportunity to share summary results from the student survey with students and to discuss the results. Forty students attended the two-hour event. The top issue participants indicated they wanted to see was more funding for minority and low income students in SNRE.

Focus Groups

A total of 12 focus groups, led by external facilitators, were conducted. The eight involving students had 43 participants; 12 people participated in the staff focus group and six people participated in the faculty groups. The focus groups examined the following themes:

- Perceptions of diversity in SNRE
- The role of diversity in recruitment and enrollment
- The climate in SNRE
- Support and mentorship.

SNRE students reported a lack of both diversity in the school and attention paid to diversity and inclusivity of underrepresented students. One student remarked that “There is a non-existent focus on diversity” in the school.

Doctoral students expressed concerns about the lack of racial diversity in the student body in general and within the doctoral program in particular. Focus group participants reported that they were surprised to find that so few students shared their social identity once they enrolled in SNRE.
**Issues Identified and Suggested Actions on the Surveys**

**Students:**
Respondents stated that they wanted to see increased attention paid to diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) in the school. More specifically, respondents felt that SNRE should put more effort into recruiting a wider pool of students over the next five years. Half of those mentioning recruitment suggested that the school should expand and intensify efforts to recruit domestic minority students.

**Alumni:**
Most alumni wanted to see a more diverse student body in SNRE. Alumni were most concerned about infusing DEI content into the curriculum; respondents mentioned this 24 times. Alumni also suggested that DEI content should be incorporated into core areas of the curriculum. They also wanted to see more environmental justice courses added, and DEI training made available to everyone in the school.

**Staff:**
Staff were most concerned with training (mentioned eight times) and SNRE-wide diversity (mentioned five times). There were also five mentions of staff-specific issues such as: facilitating career growth, providing safe spaces for conversation, and designating a staff room or area.

**Faculty:**
Faculty focused most frequently on faculty-related DEI actions. Ten mentions were made of activities such as the hiring of faculty of color, faculty training, and the recruitment of postdocs.

Staff members focused more on their experience as members of the SNRE community and the importance of an inclusive community, rather the amount of diversity in their ranks.

Faculty focus groups were separated by position, with faculty, research faculty, and post-doctoral faculty sessions. In the latter two sessions, the most salient point of conversation was inclusivity and respect from peers in the school.

Faculty members also discussed, at length, the level of diversity in the student body and the need for sensitivity training for all members of the school, including faculty.

**SNRE DEI Draft Plan Review and Listening Sessions**
SNRE’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee hosted four sessions to review and gather feedback on the draft DEI strategic plan on March 23 and 25, 2016. Two sessions were scheduled for staff and the other two were for faculty. There are plans to schedule student listening and feedback sessions when students return to school in September (there wasn’t enough time for this to occur in the past winter semester).

Nine staff members attended the feedback sessions, while five faculty members attended their sessions. Staff and faculty were asked for input on the following:

- Recruitment goals for students, staff, and faculty
- A process for handling complaints and evaluation for DEI participation
- Intercultural exchanges in the school, and
- Resources needed for the implementation of the plan.
Progress Over the Last Year: Actions and Impacts

SNRE has undertaken several DEI activities in the past year that will help future diversity efforts. Among these are:

- The hiring of additional recruitment and career development staff in the Office of Academic Programs
- The expansion and streamlining of student recruitment activities – particularly those aimed at students historically underrepresented in SNRE’s population
- The participation of increased number of faculty in internship programs for diverse undergraduates from around the country
- The launching of two national diversity programs hosted by the school – the Doris Duke Conservations Scholars Program (for undergraduates) and the Environmental Fellows Program (for graduate students)
- Increased diversity activities aimed at and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transitioning, and queer/questioning students
- Increased diversity activities aimed at and support for international students
- Increased number of keynote speakers who are people of color, and
- The hiring of new faculty and staff of color.

Suggested DEI Committee Structure

The proposed strategic plan will require elaborating on SNRE’s existing committee structure to execute the DEI activities discussed herein. New and existing committees will provide a mechanism for SNRE stakeholders to have input into the DEI process in ways that are manageable. The proposed structure will also allow the school assess progress on action items outlined in the strategic plan as well as make adjustments when necessary. During the 2016-2017 academic year, SNRE will develop a committee structure to facilitate DEI activities in the school. Committee will report on their progress as part of the strategic plan assessment process.

Strategic Objectives, Measures of Success, and Action Plans

SNRE’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategic plan includes all members of the SNRE community (faculty, research scientists, postdoctoral fellows, staff, and students). The strategic objectives needed to further the university-wide goals of diversity, equity and inclusion are summarized below in three boxes.

Each of the strategic objectives in the plan is accompanied by measures of success that will be tracked and evaluated over time. The objectives also have descriptions of single and multiple year actions we will take to accomplish those objectives. For additional detail on this, see Sections VII-X of the DEI Strategic Plan. All strategic objectives and related actions will be pursued in accordance with state and federal law and University policy.
Box 1. Recruitment, Retention and Development

i. **Faculty objectives:**
   1. Increase diversity in the SNRE faculty.
   2. Improve retention rates of all faculty; particularly faculty from groups historically underrepresented in SNRE.
   3. Improve training, mentoring, and development of SNRE faculty.

ii. **Master’s and doctoral student objectives:**
   1. Develop admissions procedures that are more inclusive of and attractive to historically underrepresented students.
   2. Solicit more applications from persons who have been historically underrepresented in SNRE’s student population.
   3. Increase the matriculation rate of diverse students in SNRE by making it more affordable for all to attend the school.
   4. Develop practices that facilitate meaningful engagement of all students in SNRE in the life of the community.
   5. Increase the professional development of all SNRE students.

iii. **Staff objectives:**
   1. Increase the level of diversity of the staff through a more comprehensive hiring process.
   2. Ensure that staff wages are equitable.
Box 2. Education and Scholarship

i. Faculty objectives:
   1. Increase the participation of faculty in DEI curricular activities.
   2. Support increased participation of faculty utilizing inclusive teaching techniques and strategies.
   3. Help faculty to enhance their mentoring activities aimed at students, research fellows, research scientists, junior colleagues, and the staff they supervise.

ii. Master's and Doctoral student objectives:
   1. Create opportunities for enhancing learning about diversity.
   2. Increase awareness about existing campus-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion resources.
   3. Increase student engagement in faculty-student mentoring.
   4. Develop a school-wide peer mentoring initiative.

iii. Staff objectives:
   1. Increase participation of staff in DEI activities.

Box 3. Promoting an Equitable and Inclusive Community

i. Faculty objectives:
   1. Provide resources to help faculty contribute to a more inclusive environment in SNRE.
   2. Assess the climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion for faculty in SNRE.
   3. Provide faculty with a process to report and share experiences of discrimination.

ii. Master's and Doctoral student objectives:
   1. Provide resources to help students contribute to a more inclusive environment in SNRE.
   2. Assess and improve the climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion in SNRE for students.
   3. Provide students with a process to report and share experiences of discrimination.

iii. Staff objectives:
   1. Provide resources to help staff contribute to a more inclusive environment in SNRE.
   2. Assess the climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion for staff members.
   3. Provide staff with a process to report and share experiences of discrimination.
   4. Create a space for staff to interact with each other on a regular basis.