**LTER All Scientists Meeting 2012**

**Ad Hoc Working Group**

**Broadening Participation of Diverse Students in LTER Science**

**September 10, 2012**

**Organizer: Teresa Mourad, Ecological Society of America**

**Participants:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **First** | **Last** | **LTER/Org** | **Email** |
| Elise | Benveniste | KBS | benvenis@msu.edu |
| Alan | Berkowitz | BES | berkowitza@caryinstitute.edu |
| Edythe | Ellin | HFR | Ellin@fas.harvard.edu |
| Frank | Day | VCR | fday@odu.edu |
| Jorge | Ramos | CAP | jramos10@asu.edu |
| Daniel | Nidzgorski | CDR | dnidz@umn.edu |
| Omar | Gutierrez del Arroyo | LUQ | omar.gutierrezdela@gmail.com |
| Nick | Oehm | FCE | oehmn@fiu.edu |
| Nancy | Grimm | CAP | nbgrimm@asu.edu |
| Kay | Gross | KBS | kgross@kbs.msu.edu |
| Elena | Sparrow | BNZ | ebsparrow@alaska.edu |

The purpose of the session was to brainstorm ideas to broaden participation of underrepresented minority students in LTER science and to explore ways to deepen the long-standing LTER partnership with the Ecological Society of America's SEEDS program.

The working group generated several interesting questions:

1. What do we know about existing work on diversity among LTER sites?
2. How do we define successful outcomes? Is it primarily a PhD in ecology/biology/STEM?
3. How do we define “diversity”? NSF’s definition focuses on minorities, women and people with disabilities. Do we include first generation college students, low income students, LGBT students?
4. How can we elevate diversity within the LTER network?

**Discussion**

We noted that there has been successful partnership between the Society of Wetland Scientists and the SEEDS program where SWS students have participated in SEEDS leadership program activities and some SEEDS students have participated in SWS activities.

Other successful LTER programs are at the K12 level where there is tiered mentoring.

We agreed that we should not feel restricted by NSF’s definition of diversity if there is a need that we see in our communities. We also agreed that success outcomes should be more broadly measured in terms of the workforce and not the narrow goal of the PhD.

There are a number of pressures that minority students face including financial resources to go to college, parental and peer pressure on academic choices, isolation and lack of role models. One thing that does attract minority students to the field is their strong interest in science that is relevant to people’s lives.

We noted that the LTER Strategic Implementation Plan mentions diversity in only one goal area and even at the ASM, there is little mention of diversity. In the 30 year review by NSF BIO-Advisory Committee referred to the need for diversity. LTER sites need to show what they are doing.

We have done well in K12 programming but we need to do more at the undergraduate level.

There is no current network/structure for diverse students to be part of the wider LTER community. There are a wide range of skills that students need to learn including how to do research, how to make presentations etc. How can we unite LTER REU programs, SEEDS, graduate level programs?

SEEDS is very interested in LTER’s K12 networks as a source of recruitment and information and also very interested in graduate level programs since we don’t currently have a focus for SEEDS graduate alumni in its programming.

Next steps:

1. Continue discussion at upcoming Education committee sponsored working groups
2. Establish a listserv to continue discussion beyond ASM - Teresa will find out if LTER Network can provide this
3. Apply for working group support from LTER Network