

“Inclusive Excellence” Call to Action 2021 Report

Submitted by Anna Katharine Mansfield, Associate Director

What challenge area you are addressing?

Since August 2020, the Cornell AgriTech DEI Council (formerly Committee) has begun to address two of the four D&I Challenge Areas:

- Recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce: developing a pipeline to support inclusive excellence.
- Reaching/working with underserved populations.

What actions have you taken?

- Created, completed, and analyzed data from internal climate survey
- Initiated integrated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council
- Drafted and initiated three-year DEI plan:
 - Yr 1. Internal climate
 - Yr 2. External climate
 - Yr 3. Metrics and accountability
- Initiated informal monthly meetings of principal DEI leaders at Cornell AgriTech, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- Hosted, or have secured speakers for, station-wide talks or workshops on:
 - The history of indigenous peoples at Cornell AgriTech
 - Anti-racism initiatives in Cornell Cooperative Extension
 - Microaggressions in the workplace
 - Gender and sexuality
- Drafted agenda and programming for an AgriTech employee onboarding program to include community expectations and cultural norms for international employees (to be completed in May 2022)
- Encouraged and supported formation of Employee Affiliate Groups (EAGs) for Minority Genders in STEM and LGBTQ employees
- Initiated planning for student assistantships and internships for underrepresented minority candidates
- Two faculty searches were conducted with emphasis on diversifying candidate pools; both were filled with diversity hires
- With the help of Cornell’s American Indian and Indigenous Studies program, land acknowledgement language was drafted and is under review for consideration by the historically dispossessed Seneca Nations

What resources have you deployed?

- Associate Director effort reapportioned to include DEI initiatives
- Discretionary funds used for professional training in DEI programming for DEI Council co-chairs
- DEI training and programming available from Cornell

- Commitment to invest discretionary funds in student assistantships and internships for underrepresented minority candidates

What gaps will you address?

- Cornell AgriTech community is largely white, male, and cishet; training on the realities of normative culture and privilege and its implications for recruiting and retaining diverse candidates
- Critically assessing current demographics and cultural norms to improve inclusivity for underrepresented groups within the AgriTech community
- Critically assessing stakeholder reach to determine what groups are being overlooked and how extension and outreach programming can be more accessible and welcoming
- Support and encouragement of individual growth for all community members
- Acknowledgment and 'credit' for DEI work in annual reviews

What goals are you seeking?

- To provide baseline education about normative culture to all community members
- To support critical, open discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of current culture, and create a common vision for change
- To identify and empower leaders within the community to advocate for equity for minority segments
- To create a self-aware, accessible culture where individuals can bring their full, authentic self to work

What does diversity and inclusion look like on your campus or station?

- Majority white
- Age-stratified such that white, cishet men still hold most leadership positions, but younger leaders and more diverse
- Diversity largely consists of women and international academics
- Student and staff population is more diverse in almost all parameters than faculty

How does this CTA fit into your station, college, or university DEI strategic plan?

- Cornell AgriTech made a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in late 2019; the social upheaval in 2020 prompted rapid action in the development of a DEI Committee. In 2021, this committee was transformed into an integrated DEI Council, and charged with the development of a DEI strategic plan.
- In the spring of 2021, DEI strategic plans were requested from the College for all units, including AgriTech; so the still-developing strategic planning document was reformatted to fit the college template.