



CONNECTIONS

Linking EEO, Diversity and Science

Special Edition

EEO/Diversity Newsletter for NOAA Research

April 2019

Diversity & Inclusion Summit

3rd Annual NOAA Diversity and Inclusion Summit

A Note on Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) by Craig McLean, OAR AA

I congratulate everyone who contributed to this year's Diversity and Inclusion Summit, and in particular Kenny Bailey, who has brought renewed emphasis to this effort through his leadership of the NOAA level attention to D&I. OAR employees also were a key part of the success of this event, including Kandis Boyd, who served on a panel for the affinity groups, and Catalina Martinez, who facilitated a discussion after the "Can We Talk" film and who was pivotal in bringing the film to the Summit. OAR's EEO Office was also instrumental to the Summit's success, as they are day-to-day to the success of the OAR leadership team.

We also have to thank and recognize Ben Friedman, our NOAA DUS, for keeping the focus of D&I alive during the transition of Administrations after the election. Fortunately for us, when RDML Gallaudet, Neil Jacobs, and the rest of the policy team arrived, it was clear that they too were vigorous supporters of D&I, and continue to be so. I am grateful to all of our collective leadership for committing to sustain the value of this subject.

The workforce has spoken by voice and actions to reinforce that D&I is important to us and will define our continued technical success, our ability to recruit talent, and our ability to be enriched by the collective and



Photo: OICR staff and Line Office EEO and Diversity Program Managers after their panel discussion, "Ask the Experts." L to R: Richard Grant, OICR, Pete Hill, NWS, Michelle Crockett, NOS, Nicole Mason, OAR, Natalie Huff, NMFS, Eli Salahuddin, NESDIS, Andrea Bynum, OMAO and Kenneth Bailey, OICR. All line offices contributed funding for the Diversity and Inclusion Summit. Credit: Dennis Hansford

diverse talents of our work mates. All of you who attended the D&I Summit are the advocates we need to help distribute this understanding within our various components of OAR. Sharing your experiences and what you learned from the Summit within your work groups will expand the understanding of this important core value of what NOAA is and what NOAA employees stand for.

There are multiple ways to measure diversity, and we have many aspects

of diversity already in OAR, and in NOAA. We have many employees from other nations, multiple technical disciplines, and different ways of approaching a challenge. That we choose to celebrate and recognize the benefits of diversity will continue to strengthen our work force. Where we need to do more work is in finding our work force to be the reflection of all America. We gain when we bring greater diversity to our recruitment process and have a more diverse pool of applicants from which to choose.

I want to share a recent meeting of both the Research Council and the Education Council, during which we discussed the various programs that enable enrichment and recruitment of academic talent to the subjects that NOAA works in. I encourage everyone to look at the programs administered by the NOAA Education Office, under the Educational Partnership Program, where NOAA invests in Cooperative Science Centers, located at Minority Serving Institutes of higher education. Utilizing the programs as we do enables a pool of candidates for positions in NOAA, in the contractor work force, and for our Cooperative Institutes. Utilizing these programs to their fullest potential is my goal, and I hope that you will help in doing so. Find out more about the programs, how to use them in your work area, to discover emerging talent that can become part of our future.

Please keep up your excellent efforts – in the administrative work that enables every aspect of our science missions, in the technical science and engineering, in the IT that connects and enables all, and in the human exchange of respect, inclusiveness, and kindness that we all owe to each other.

The Face of NOAA is Changing for the Better

By Gary Matlock, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Science, Co-chair, OAR Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee Chair (ODIAC)

The power and benefits of a diverse workforce are well known. But, the benefits NOAA is accruing from a more diverse demographic are less recognized. Admiral Gallaudet's opening of our Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Summit provided the best evidence of NOAA's evolution toward greater representation of legally-defined protected classes. What an inspirational message—just look at the successes our diverse workforce is achieving. We need to do more of what we're doing.

The face of NOAA is changing for the better, and the need to speed the evolution was apparent. Over my 27-year career in NOAA, I have seen an exponential increase in the number of women that comprise the ranks of NOAA employees, even in the ranks of our Senior Executive Service (SES). For example, our last two permanent Under Secretaries were both women, and we've had about 10 Assistant Administrators (AA's) or Deputy AA's over the past 10 years. Before that, women SES'ers were extremely rare. Further, most of the NOAA employees at meetings I attended in the 1990's, whether in the field or headquarters, were exclusively or predominantly white males. But, today—not so much.

I often hear that one of the biggest obstacles to evolving faster is the absence of qualified minority and women available for hiring. Indeed, this message was reiterated at the Summit. I would argue that we need to look harder instead of lamenting the myth that qualified folks



Photo: Employee Resource and Affinity Groups Roundtable Discussion. Dr. Kandis Boyd, OAR, (4th to the right) spoke about the Federally Employed Women (FEW) organization). Credit: Dennis Hansford

are not available to fill NOAA jobs. We could begin by looking to NOAA's Educational Partnership Program (EPP) graduates. The Office of Education manages a collection of four Cooperative Science Centers that are incredibly successful. For example, this program has graduated more African American Master's and Ph.D. students trained in NOAA sciences in the past 15 years or so than all other similar federal programs combined. Greater reliance on these students as part of our recruitment pool could increase the number of employees who could shape a different face of future NOAA. Remarkably, EPP is little known across NOAA. Indeed, I was struck by the absence of extensive discussion of this remarkable program at the D&I Summit. Perhaps the next Summit can expand the recognition and inclusion of EPP in the agenda.

OWAQ EMPLOYEES SHARE THEIR KEY TAKEAWAYS



Photo: OWAQ Staff at the Summit. L to R: DaNa Carlis, John Cortinas, Kandis Boyd and Mark Vincent.

KANDIS BOYD

Two of my key takeaways from the event:

- 1) Kenneth Bailey documented the statistics regarding the number of women and minorities at NOAA, which are in some cases lower than the national average.
- 2) I participated on a panel that discussed affinity/inclusion groups at NOAA. It was interesting that a person in the audience offered to spearhead a new group with a focus on people with disabilities.

JOHN CORTINAS:

The NOAA Diversity and Inclusion Summit took place on April 2-3, 2019, in Silver Spring, MD. The Summit included numerous presentations covering topics such as the impact of implicit bias, sexual assault, creating a trans-inclusive workforce and obstacles that minorities face in STEM fields. The presenters were experts in their fields and several presentations and panels were provided by NOAA leadership, such as Dr. Neil Jacobs, Dr. Tim Gallaudet, the Director of the DOC Civil Rights Office, the Director of the NOAA Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights, and all the NOAA Line Office and Diversity Program Managers. The NOAA Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights

will post all the presentations on their website - <https://www.eeo.noaa.gov/noaa/>

DANA CARLIS:

The 3rd Annual NOAA Diversity and Inclusion Summit was a home run in my eyes. The talk by Dr. Kate Ratliff on implicit bias and the information that she shared regarding our hidden biases was fantastic. Soon, I plan on taking the Implicit Association Test (IAT) to learn more about my biases because we all have them.

In addition, the talk by Alex Roberts on Creating a Trans-Inclusive Workplace was my first time getting training on transgender issues. Moving forward, I feel like I have a better understanding of some of the issues within that community and I'll be able to help them successfully integrate into the office structure in the future. The action that I took from the session is that we could create a more inclusive culture if we add our pronouns to our email signature.

Finally, the film by Dr. Kendall Moore was extremely powerful. I identified with many of the stories in the film such as people not thinking I'm a scientist because of my race. There were other stories in the film, but my

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main takeaway from the film is to not judge people. We should always give the benefit of the doubt and allow ourselves time to know more about our coworkers and their capabilities before making a decision on that person's character. In closing, we have a lot of work at NOAA to do in order to foster an inclusive culture for people from underrepresented groups to thrive. If we can create policies that improve inclusion, I believe we will retain more women and minorities in the future.

CHANDRA KONDRAGUNTA:

I really enjoyed participating in the diversity and inclusion summit. It was very well organized and ran smoothly without any glitches.

The presentation by Sara Minkara was really moving. Despite her disability, she showed so much energy and positive attitude at everything, so touching. After her presentation, I decided to complain less in life. The presentation by Alex Roberts is a new thing for me. I did not have much experience with Transgendered people. There was a lot to learn about how to deal with transgendered people not only at work, but even outside as well.

The Diversity and Inclusion Summit was very well-organized, featuring engaging activities and speakers who really made you think about the perceptions and work place culture that many of us experience, and how we can work together to make our worklife and interactions better for all and for the future.

Carol A. Stepien, Ph.D.
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MARK VINCENT:

1) Logistics: Mark Vincent OWAQ had the opportunity to attend the Summit via webinar on the early morning of April 2 and in person the late morning of April 3. Both methods of participation were effective and worthwhile.

2) Tone from the Top: The attendance by many SES including AAs and the kickoff presentation by RDML Gallaudet established a clear message that this was important to NOAA. I was very inspired by the message of Dr. Gallaudet's presentation where he highlighted and celebrated the positive impact of the many types of diversities, including immigrants, at NOAA. This is not a message we often hear from the Administration and cable news.

3) The Journey of Ken Bailey: I was impressed to learn Mr. Bailey's journey from Murphy Holmes, Baltimore, through the military (including Japan), to the Director of OICR. His relating his real life experiences, trials, tribulations and learning experiences to the "growing" of his inclusion and engagement was impactful.

4) The Importance of recognizing Implicit Biases: Dr. Kate Ratliff related her studies and experiments into the important field of implicit bias. Results of this unconscious behavior can be as detrimental as explicit bias.

5) The Robustness of the Employee Resource and Affinity Groups: Although I have been peripherally exposed to several of these groups, I was very impressed to learn more of the opportunities, activities, openness, tenure, and geographic range of many of these groups such as FEW, BIG, and Latinos@NOAA.

6) Two quotes from speakers that resonated with me: Mission First. Look after your people and they will look after the mission Mentoring is what we should do every day. It should be part of our work fabric.

7) Networking: While in attendance Wednesday, I was able to reconnect with many colleagues in attendance. The mutual consensus was the Summit was very beneficial and we will be back next year!



Photo: L to R: Kenneth Bailey, OICR and guest speaker, Alex Roberts, National Center for Transgender Equality. Credit: Dennis Hansford

Video and Discussion - *Can we Talk? Difficult Conversations with Underrepresented People of Color: Sense of Belonging and Obstacles to STEM Fields.*

By Catalina Martinez, OER

Of all the wonderful speakers who participated in NOAA's 3rd Diversity and Inclusion Summit, I think I felt most affinity with Tinisha Agramonte, Director, DOC Office of Civil Rights. Her story of overcoming adversity as an at-risk student and navigating barriers to find professional success resonated deeply with me. I'm thrilled by her efforts to elevate the special challenges faced by first generation professionals through the initiation of a DOC First Generation Summit this September, which I hope to attend. I probably learned the most from the courageous and informative presentation by Alex Roberts from the National Center for Transgender Equality. As a result, I've now added my pronouns to my email signature, and broadened my vocabulary and mindset around transgender identity. Powerful inspiration came from Sara Minkara, who led us through introspective activities to challenge our 'visual' stereotypes, judgments and biases. She and I spoke about the potential to collaborate in the near future, so I very much look forward to that opportunity. Hearing Kelley Bonner describe NOAA's new Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program was as important as it was surprising, as this was the first I had heard of this initiative.



Photo: L to R: Kenneth Bailey, OICR and panelist who were in the film: Catalina Martinez, OER, Sabra Comet, NOS, Vernon Morris, Howard University, Hernan Garcia, NESDIS. Credit: Dennis Hansford

Of special note was the screening of URI Professor/filmmaker Kendall Moore's documentary titled *Can we Talk? Difficult Conversations with Underrepresented People of Color: Sense of Belonging and Obstacles to STEM Fields.* Since this documentary was first premiered at URI's Inclusive SciComm Symposium in 2018, followed by screenings at SACNAS and AGU, the interest in using the film as an educational tool to initiate dialogue around difficult topics has been immense. Dr. Moore produced a short introduction specifically for the NOAA D&I Summit that was shown prior to the screening, and I helped provide some context and preparation for those watching, as some of the topics addressed can illicit triggers and emotional responses in certain individuals. I facilitated a post-screening panel with Hernan Garcia (NOAA NESDIS), Sabra Tallchief Comet (2018 NOAA Knauss Fellow), and Vernon Morris (Howard University/ NOAA EPP NCAS Director), all of whom were interviewed for the film (as was I). The response NOAA-wide has been incredible, so we are currently working with Dr. Moore to develop ways for NOAA to use the film more broadly. Special thanks to Kenneth Bailey, Director, NOAA Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights, for sharing his powerful personal story, and to all who worked so hard to pull this fabulous event together. I was humbled and delighted to contribute in some small way this year and hope to do so again in the future.

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ABOUT US

VISION OF EEO OFFICE: To assist the Agency in creating a diverse workforce that is inclusive and free of discriminatory and retaliatory actions.

EEO MISSION: To bring awareness to employees, applicants for employment and management about EEO through the following:

Empowerment: Consultation services to employees, managers and applicants for employment.

Exposure: Recruitment and outreach activities for short and long-term recruitment.

Education: Federal EEO Mandated training, Special Emphasis programs and *Connections* newsletter.

Evaluation: Monitor employment statistics to prepare reports for NOAA, DOC, EEOC and OPM.

CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

Connections is published quarterly by the OAR EEO/Diversity Program Office. The purpose is to share accomplishments and to link Diversity, EEO and Science within all of the OAR laboratories and program offices. If you have any newsletter ideas, suggestions and stories to contribute, please email Georgia Madrid - georgia.madrid@noaa.gov.



Website: eoo.oar.noaa.gov

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EEO COUNSELING:

Federal law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy discrimination), age (40 years and over), physical or mental disability, including the provision of reasonable accommodations for qualified applicants and employees with disabilities or genetic information (GINA), gender identity, and retaliation for participating in activities protected by the civil rights statutes. In addition, NOAA prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Employees, NOAA Corps Officers, or applicants for employment with NOAA who believe that they have been discriminated or retaliated against may contact an EEO Counselor. The Counselor will attempt to resolve the matter and furnish information about filing a complaint of discrimination. To preserve your rights under the law, you must contact an EEO Counselor within 45 CALENDAR DAYS of the date of alleged discrimination.

To initiate EEO Counseling or for more information, contact:

NOAA Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights
Phone: (301) 713-0500 or 1-800-452-6728

Fax: 301-713-0983

Website: www.eeo.noaa.gov

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

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www.noaa.gov/opportunities/student-opportunities#page=1