

SAFS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2018-2021

From the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences (SAFS) Strategic Plan:

Mission

The mission of the School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences (SAFS) is: to excel in providing multidisciplinary and experiential learning for undergraduate and graduate students interested in aquatic environments, to conduct ground breaking research on topics pertinent to understanding and managing these environments, and to communicate our findings to regional, national, and international audiences.

The School aims to be a group of researchers, teachers and students within a broad set of disciplines who are known as being world leaders in solving problems of societal importance relevant to aquatic systems, locally as well as internationally. The School also aims to provide all students with a unique educational experience that includes lab and field programs, and to increase diversity within the field by providing support for students and researchers from all backgrounds who can add to the ability of School to achieve its mission. This strategic plan aims to outline the activities that SAFS believes needs to be undertaken for it to continue to be the leader in the field of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, and to be considered the ‘go to place’ for the top students, as well as agencies, organizations, and communities desiring information on problems related to aquatic and fishery systems.

SAFS’s success is dependent on the cohesiveness of the SAFS community – students, faculty, postdocs, research staff and administrative staff. Our people are our most important asset. SAFS is committed to providing a safe work environment, allowing our community to thrive and to excel at our work.

The SAFS strategic plan lists six goals:

1. Strengthen excellence in research at the nexus of science, management and society.
2. Ensure that students graduating with SAFS degree are adaptable to new conditions and prepared to work as professionals in their chosen fields.
3. Hire faculty who are capable of taking the school into the 21st century.
4. Increase collaboration with the state, federal agencies, Native American tribes, and conservation groups.
5. Obtain, replace and better utilize infrastructure.
6. General/administrative.

The SAFS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan 2018-2021 focuses on the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion and is created with the purpose of better serving the members of the SAFS community in accomplishing our DEI goals. This plan establishes a foundation to guide our strategies and action items. The DEI plan aligns with the 2017-2018 SAFS Strategic Plan, the 2017-2020 UW Diversity Blueprint, and the 2018 College of the Environment Short-term Diversity Action Plan.

Background

Various grassroots activities lead by graduate students and staff took place during the 2017-2018 academic year. Town halls, diversity lunches and the founding of an outreach program brought attention to diversity related issues. These events culminated in an all-hands meeting that addressed diversity, equity and inclusion at SAFS, and initiated the advancement of some DEI initiatives. Several those initiatives were the SAFS diversity statement and draft of a hiring tool.

Mission

The mission of the DEI strategic plan is to outline specific actions to support the SAFS diversity commitment:

The School of Aquatic and Fisheries Sciences (SAFS) values the strengths and professional experience that students, faculty, and staff bring to our community. We are committed to providing an excellent education to all of our students, regardless of their race, gender, class, nationality, physical ability, religion, age, or sexual orientation. We are proud of the different roles that our students, staff, and faculty play in the community of School and the College of the Environment. We also recognize that science is richer and the SAFS community is more vibrant when a diverse group of people participate in research.

To this end, we pledge to increase diversity among our students, faculty, and staff, and create a welcoming and supportive environment for learning and discovery.

Our diversity strategic goals are:

1. Recognize critically the value of diversity within the SAFS community, and increase the recruitment and retention of diverse students, staff and faculty.
2. Create a culturally fluent and safe work place environment.
3. Maximize student success in cultural fluency, communication, and leadership.
4. Create a website that mirrors the SAFS community.
5. Reinstate the diversity committee.
6. Develop mechanisms to effectively communicate internally and externally (with the College of the Environment and other UW units).

Goal 1. Recognize critically the value of diversity within the SAFS community, and increase the recruitment and retention of diverse students, staff and faculty.

The broader SAFS community is composed of a variety of people from diverse professional and personal backgrounds, enriching the knowledge and experience of the School. Maintaining and expanding this richness is necessary to acknowledge and adapt to the demographic changes in the country and state (1). We have many efforts in place to attract students, faculty, and staff, and need to increase our efforts towards retention (2,3). This goal will focus on the creation of a network of people and resources to support retention of students, faculty and staff (UW blueprint goals 2, 3 and 4 focus on attracting and retaining a diverse student body, staff and faculty).

Strategies:

- a. Recognize the location of SAFS on the Salish Sea peoples land.

Action Steps

- i. Provide guidance on best practices to acknowledge the land.
- ii. Include the statement acknowledging the Salish Sea peoples on the School's website, and other documents issued by SAFS.

“The University of Washington acknowledges the Coast Salish peoples of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations.”

- b. Develop community engagements among peer groups.

Action steps

- i. Host and facilitate community building events throughout the school year.
- ii. Facilitate access to gathering or meeting spaces for working teams, labs or student groups.
- iii. Organize an entire School event to showcase the research and diversity of people, ideas and creativity.

- c. Create recruitment and hiring materials that value diversity.

Action steps

- i. Create and implement a hiring tool to recruit faculty, staff and students.
- ii. Provide information on affinity groups and/or student groups in SAFS and the UW.
- iii. Offer a list of diversity resources at UW.

- d. Create best practices for support and advancement of staff, students and faculty.

Action steps

- i. Ensure equity and inclusion aspects are included in on-boarding materials for new student, faculty and staff hires.
- ii. Create opportunities for professional development for staff and students.
- iii. Design career growth plans for staff and postdocs.
- iv. Facilitate peer mentoring groups for undergraduate students and staff, and/or among groups (students-staff).
- v. Share knowledge of funding sources for the professional development of staff and students. And post opportunities on email listserv.
- vi. Facilitate training and workshops with UW HR in the area of organizational and professional development.

Goal 2. Create a culturally fluent and safe work place environment.

Caring for the diverse community currently working at SAFS represents an opportunity to create a culturally fluent and safe work environment, where professional and respectful behavior expectations are a norm. It is a responsibility of the School to provide a professional work place for all its members. SAFS is a pioneer in developing a code of conduct within the College of the Environment and can expand this effort by addressing cultural fluency (UW Blueprint goals 1 and 6 encourage departments to cultivate an inclusive campus climate, and improve accountability and transparency. Similarly, goals 3 and 4 are linked to inclusiveness by increasing retention of underrepresented staff and faculty).

Strategies

- a. Create a code of conduct that applies to all SAFS groups (delegated to SAFS360).

Action steps

- i. Facilitate an annual all hands meeting.
- ii. Identify concerns and putative institutional changes per peer group and as a community.
- iii. Establish a leading team directing the code of conduct process.

b. Increase cultural awareness at the work place.

Action steps

- i. Work towards a full participation on cultural responsiveness training.
- ii. Offer two events (workshops, seminars, etc.) per year for the broader SAFS community.
- iii. Compile a UW cultural and work environment resource directory.

c. Modify institutional culture towards transparency and inclusivity.

Action steps

- i. Increase transparency on decision making by including appropriate SAFS groups on hiring committees, etc.
- ii. Increase community knowledge and understanding of institutional processes and decision making, including processes for communicating decisions to the SAFS community.
- iii. Include DEI issues in the semi-annual meetings for staff and postdocs. And in the administration plan.

d. Increase safety (well-being and professionalism) in the work place.

Action steps

- i. Raise awareness of well-being trainings and resources for students, staff and faculty.
- ii. Create a catalog of well-being resources and contacts.
- iii. Host annual forum on well-being.
- iv. Organize safe space gatherings for community of color.

e. Assess SAFS working climate.

Action steps

- i. Coordinate with UW [Center for Evaluation & Research for STEM Equity](#) to survey the SAFS community on working climate and cultural fluency.
- ii. Create a baseline to measure SAFS progress in achieving cultural fluency and a safe work place environment.

Goal 3. Maximize student, faculty and staff success in cultural fluency, communication, and leadership.

Although staff and students have a variety of opportunities to increase their cultural competency, communication skills to non-scientific audiences, and to be leaders, they do not have incentives to do so. Many volunteer their time and experience with UW and non-UW outreach or student groups. These endeavors are not only central for recruitment of prospective students and staff (UW blue print goals 2 and 4) but for their professional development.

Strategies

a. Plan and implement professional development opportunities and incentives related to cultural fluency.

Action steps

- i. Create a physical library with items related to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- ii. Offer and/or promote courses to expose and have conversations on diversity, equity and inclusion in relation to science.
- iii. Publicize UW sponsor events related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

- iv. Continue to investigate a professional development certificate where students and staff are recognized for their extra-curricular activities such as outreach, teaching, science communication, etc.
- v. Design and implement diversity, equity and inclusion activities for faculty and staff.

Goal 4. Create a website that mirrors the SAFS community.

There is a strong community in SAFS with academic excellence and innovation, and many of its members are leaders on their area of expertise and among their peers. It is essential to showcase the wealth of the full SAFS community on the SAFS school website.

Strategies

- a. Design a website that is inclusive and representative of the SAFS community.

Action steps

- i. Collaborate with the SAFS communications specialist to ensure the SAFS website is inclusive of our community.
- ii. Have a SAFS community open session to provide feedback on the website through an equity lens.

Goal 5. Reinstate the diversity committee.

Prior to the College of the Environment's formation, SAFS had its own diversity committee. When the College Diversity Committee was formed, the SAFS diversity committee was disbanded. In this gap, a group of students, staff and faculty continued to meet to address diversity issues. This group initiated a conversation to be more inclusive and diverse and an outcome of this continued conversation was the reestablishment of the SAFS Diversity Committee. This committee will play a crucial role in increasing the School's accountability and transparency, and in creating an inclusive climate (UW blueprint goals 1 and 6).

Strategies

- a. Establish a diversity committee with representatives of all peer groups to steer actions related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Action steps

- i. Invite SAFS community to be part of the diversity committee.
- ii. Establish and publish a charge for this committee.
- iii. Host one open door meeting for the SAFS community for comments, suggestions and feedback.
- iv. Provide an annual report to the SAFS community.

Goal 6. Develop mechanisms to effectively communicate internally and with the College of the Environment.

Transparency in communication was one of the four top recommendations identified on the SAFS 10-year review in 2014. It is also listed on the College of the Environment Short-term Action Plan (Appendix 2, goal : increase communication with the Dean's office and develop an effective communication process).

Strategies

- a. Review and update existing communication processes .

Action steps

- i. Design, implement and maintain a SAFS SharePoint site for use by the SAFS community.
 - ii. Update SAFS mailing lists on a real-time basis (safsstaff, safsresearchstaff, safspostdocs, safsfac, safscorefac).
 - iii. Send relevant announcements to all SAFS groups: new hires, graduation dates, thesis defenses, future students day (undergraduates), prospective students lunch (graduate students).
 - iv. Update and maintain accurate SAFS directories for all groups.
 - v. Establish and maintain a SAFS events calendar for all groups.
 - vi. Consider a routine SAFS DEI community newsletter.
- b. Establish work flows for communication and collaboration with Dean's office personnel.

Action steps

- i. Identify dean's office personnel according to their role.
- ii. Create resource document: who to talk when this happens..., if you need this, talk to...

Some of the goals in this DEI strategic plan are drawn from the 16 recommendations listed in the report from the 2014 SAFS 10-Year review. This plan also includes strategies that began in the 2018-2019 school year.

References

1. Farrell, P. (2009). Investing in staff for student retention. *The NEA Almanac of Higher Education*.
2. Selesto, JM and Naile, I. (2014). Academic staff retention as a human resource factor: University Perspective. *International Business and Research Journal*, 13(2), 295-304.
3. White, S. (2016). The importance of having diverse administrators on college campuses (essay). *Inside Higher Ed*.

SAFS DEI Plan Strategy Timeline

Goals and strategies	Initiated	Ongoing	Completed
Goal 1. Recognize critically the value of the diversity within SAFS community, and increase the recruitment and retention of diverse students, staff and faculty.			
a. Recognize the location of SAFS on the Salish Sea peoples land.			
b. Develop community engagements amongst peer groups.			
c. Create recruitment and hiring materials that value diversity.			
d. Create best practices for support and advancement of staff, students and faculty.			
Goal 2. Create a culturally fluent and safe work place environment.			
a. Create a code of conduct that applies to all SAFS groups (delegated to SAFS360).			
b. Increase cultural awareness at the work place.			
c. Modify institutional culture towards transparency and inclusivity.			
d. Increase safety (well-being and professionalism) in the work place.			
e. Assess SAFS working climate			
Goal 3. Maximize student and staff success in cultural fluency, communication, and leadership.			
a. Plan and implement professional development opportunities, and incentives related to cultural fluency.			
Goal 4. Create a website that mirrors the SAFS community.			
a. Design a website that is inclusive and representative of the SAFS community.			
Goal 5. Reinstate the diversity committee.			
a. Establish a diversity committee with representatives of all peer groups to steer actions related to diversity, equity and inclusion.			
Goal 6. Develop mechanisms to effectively communicate, internally and externally (College of the Environment and other UW units).			
a. Review and update existing communication processes.			
b. Establish work flows for communication and collaboration with Dean's office personnel.			

SAFS DEI Plan Strategy Team

Goals and strategies	DEI Specialist	Student Advisers	DEI Committee	SAFS 360	SAFS Admin.
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