Dear AOS community,

The AOS DEI committee has now been in place for one semester, and we’d like to share with you some of the progress we’ve made, as well as ideas we have for future activities, and encourage you to provide feedback, as well as get involved.

The AOS DEI committee was formed as an outcome of discussions held over the summer in the aftermath of the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. The committee members are: Gabe Vecchi, Sonya Legg, Stephen Griffies, Yong-Fei Zhang (postdoc representative), Houssam Yassin (grad student representative).

The goals of the AOS DEI committee
We envision an academically preeminent Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences Program at Princeton University whose actions and decisions also produce a more equitable, diverse and inclusive environment for our faculty, staff, researchers, visitors, and past, enrolled and prospective students. Equity, diversity and inclusion are intrinsically valuable, and an essential element of ethical research and educational practices, but they also magnify the AOS Program’s educational and research potential. Since its inception, the AOS Program has been at the vanguard of many of the crucial innovations in our discipline, and we can now build on that part of our tradition to take concrete and broad action to produce real and meaningful change that will enhance the educational and research environment in our Program, Princeton University and our academic disciplines across the world.

Activities undertaken in fall 2020

1. **GRE** is no longer required for AOS graduate admissions
2. **Values Statement**: This is placed prominently on the homepage of the AOS program at https://aos.princeton.edu/
3. **Faculty training in Interrupting Bias in Graduate Admissions**, presented by Shawn Maxam (Senior Associate Director for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion).
4. **Improvements to AOS website**: the graduate program and postdoctoral program web-pages have been rewritten, to remove exclusionary language, emphasize the student experience, and provide greater information on the application process, to remove barriers to application. See https://aos.princeton.edu/phd_program/overview, https://aos.princeton.edu/phd_program/prospective-students, and https://aos.princeton.edu/postdoc_program.
5. **Discussion groups/journal clubs for learning about DEI**: AOS members are invited to join the GFDL community discussion forum led by Aparna Radhakrishnan and Jess Liptak (see https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nK43WKSf21948UU1nyQzdoALi84jygV7MjEk81_MQuk/edit?usp=sharing for past discussions, and to sign up to lead a future discussion), and the upcoming Geoscience/AOS Unlearning Racism in Geosciences (URGE) pod coordinated by Geo student Jenna Lee.
6. **Diversity statements in applications**: Graduate student applicants already have the option to include a diversity statement with their application. An optional diversity statement is now included in the AOS postdoc application. In October, we organized a discussion for grad students and postdocs on writing DEI statements, using material shared at a workshop at the SACNAS conference.
7. **Outreach at National conferences** with participants from historically excluded groups: In fall 2020 AOS program members have attended Princeton grad-school virtual open houses at 2020 SACNAS (the National Diversity in STEM Conference) and National Society for Black Physicists conference, leading to Q&As with prospective students.
8. **AOS/Geo virtual open house** for prospective students: Several AOS faculty and students attended this 2-hour event in December 2020, coordinated by the graduate school.
9. **Interactions with minority serving institutions**: Continuing our connection with Bronx Community College, 2 AOS/GFDL researchers presented virtual seminars to BCC students in fall 2020, and participated in Q&A about career paths in AOS.

10. **“Who are we in the AOS community?” Survey**: initiated by grad student Maya Chung, to emphasize community, [https://forms.gle/D9nkTXaCZ9Bu8KJq6](https://forms.gle/D9nkTXaCZ9Bu8KJq6), ongoing.

**Coming soon!**

1. **Internal AOS peer-mentoring program**, to ensure incoming graduate students and postdocs have access to helpful near-peer connections: sign-up will begin in a few weeks.

**Possible future activities**

1. Expand AOS participation in National conferences serving participants from historically excluded groups
2. Expand AOS connections to minority serving institutions, beyond Bronx Community College.
3. Establish AOS connections with student organizations on Princeton and Rutgers campuses serving historically excluded groups.
4. Communicate and coordinate DEI activities initiated by individual members or small groups within AOS, to encourage continuity and greater involvement.
5. Additional training workshops for faculty and/or full program.

**How can you get involved?**

Please participate in existing activities (e.g. DEI discussion groups, virtual open houses, connections with minority serving institutions). Please let us know of actions you would like to see the DEI committee take on, and/or provide feedback on current and suggested future activities. If you are engaged in activities to improve DEI in AOS, please share with us. Note that CIMES funds are available to reimburse expenses (travel, materials) associated with DEI-related activities, and the Geoscience program also has funds for DEI activities initiated by students/postdocs.