Thank you for meeting with the Committee for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) and the Workplace Climate Committee (WCC) to solicit our input on search priorities. Here is some additional material regarding the importance of strong leadership on Diversity and Inclusion (D&I). WHOI has made great strides in establishing a culture of strong interdisciplinary work. For example, we implement and support strategies to promote strong scientific collaboration between departments, through the Interdisciplinary awards that encourage crossing the boundaries of traditional disciplines.

We need to apply similar strategies to increase diversity and inclusion; we must make a serious investment in advancing inclusion and increasing representation. It is critical for the success of our core mission and our credibility as leaders of exploration and discovery in a diverse and connected world.

Sincerely,

Gwyneth Packard

Senior Engineer, AOPE

Co-chair of Committee for Diversity & Inclusion

Leading the way forward

Any leader who we expect to broaden our pool of resources, whether that be financial support or additional hiring, has to come with one of two things; either an in depth understanding of the issues I have laid out here, or a commitment to hire and rely on someone who does.

While the CDI and WCC and other committees can do some of the Institution's work on D&I, it really requires commitment by the leadership, because it has to be baked into the structures of what we do. It can't be an additional layer that sometimes gets attention. We should always be examining every avenue of our discovery and discipline with a critical eye for whether barriers exist to who we are working with, where we are looking for answers, how data are collected, and how we communicate our findings. The leadership has to set the tone and expectation for this, , as well as provide appropriate tools to the WHOI community.

We have our work cut out for us. GeoScience is 90% European American and overwhelmingly able-bodied. While there is near equal gender representation in some sub-disciplines, other sub-disciplines hover around 10-12% female representation. Even in the fields where the numbers reflect progress, there are substantial issues with equity, advancement, and attrition. Woods Hole and the surrounding area is largely European American, but more and more groups are arriving who we could engage with on several levels. While we must avoid having diverse representation only in menial labor positions, we should be striving for representation throughout every facet of the Institution. The most barriers exist at the tenure track level, but we can't ignore the barriers impacting representation in our skilled labor, the shops, the ships, the technical staff, as well as our administrators, facilities workers, librarians, etc.

- Racial diversity in the Woods Hole research community
- Racial diversity in GeoScience

Racial representation

The numbers show that the scientific research community in Woods Hole is overwhelmingly white. In order to address this, we have to seriously examine the nuance of the forces that brought us here. Different stereotypes are applied to different populations; and addressing the negative effects of one stereotype on one population does not necessarily guarantee that one has addressed the negative effects of another stereotype on another population. For example, the forces that work to exclude Asian scientists and engineers from geoscience are different from those that work to exclude African American scientists and engineers.

We are attempting to remedy the enormous imbalance between majority representation and marginalized group representation. Even framing that problem and establishing metrics for success can suffer from the very lack of representation we seek to address. Frequently, efforts to address representation measure success as increased representation of any non-white group. However, success in overcoming the harms of the Model Minority Myth on Asian scientists does not by itself indicate progress or even effort in overcoming the long national legacy of anti-black bias in America.

"People of color (POC)" is a useful construct to shed light on the pervasive use of the construct of whiteness as the default, the normal, and the bar for entry and excellence. But this term does nothing to address the narrative of black inferiority that was still codified in the law of the land for the first four decades of WHOI's existence. It does nothing to address the specific bias against the local Wampanoag people who still live among us, who were the first people to make oceanographic measurements in our local waters, and who have been betrayed by our local authorities and our national government as recently as this year.

We need more diverse voices at the table even while we are framing the difficulties of getting more diverse voices to the table.

- Impact of Model Minority Myth on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
- Persistent anti-black bias

Intersectionality

Beyond racial diversity, we need to bring the same rigorous strategies and tangible incentives to addressing other areas in which we are not currently making progress. We can bring about change in these areas. We can address the cultural barriers that have arisen between the PhD/tenure track scientists and the infrastructure staff. We can look at areas where we have not yet achieved gender parity.

Every population, including the majority population may face additional hurdles. This can include being First in Family: a circumstance that sees individuals arrive in the system without the same knowledge of how to collect reference letters, connect with labs whose work interests

them, and overall engage the system as well as their studies. It may include stigma associated with being an out member of the LGBTQIA community. It can include ability; as we have seen from the examples of Drs. Amy Bower, Britt Raubenheimer, Caroline Solomon, and Anita Marshall, people with vision, hearing, and mobility issues to contend with may also have interest, curiosity, talent, and discipline to perform rigorous, disciplined, and successful field work.

"A person without a disability is implicitly given credit for their potential—all the things they could become even though they may not, while a person with a disability is penalized upfront for anything they cannot do, even though they may never be asked (Booksh & Madsen, 2018, p.623)". Reference - The Geological Society of America

- International Association for Geoscience Diversity

Where WHOI needs to lead

We in the WHOI community have to address these barriers for the benefit of the science, the benefit of our scientific community, and the benefit of the communities where we live, work, and learn. Study after study shows that a truly diverse group of problem solvers will outperform a homogeneous group, EVEN IF the members of the diverse group are not individually as talented as the members of the homogenous group. So there is no need to only bring in the super stars. It benefits the Institution and the science to apply the same standards to every population. Bring in the solid achievers who may not be at the pinnacle of their chosen field. Research shows that the increased performance result held true in every case, as long as the diverse group is given the psychological safety necessary for every member to freely contribute.

Additionally, unconscious bias can prevent us from recognizing talent and accurately measuring an individual's impact and potential; this means that some talented individuals from marginalized groups may in fact be overlooked or underestimated. We want to hire "the best", but until we have engaged successfully in D&I, we are not assured of recognizing the best when they are presented to us.

"Consider an experiment by sociologist Devah Pager, who sent pairs of experimenters—one black and one white—to apply for 340 job ads in New York City. She gave them resumes doctored to have identical qualifications. She gave them scripts so that the applicants said the same things when handing in their applications. She even dressed them alike. She found that black applicants got half the call backs that white applicants got with the same qualifications." Reference - Scientific American

We can implement strategies to provide that psychological safety here at WHOI and begin to incentivize commitment to those strategies. We can reward invitation to collaborate with scientists from diverse populations. We can reward work that includes addressing the specific needs of communities when we communicate our results. We can reward outreach that invites new populations to visit the institution, attend our public lectures, and hold a stake in our curiosity and discovery.

We can seek funding from a more diverse pool of donors for our general research needs. As we do that, we can seek funding opportunities that reward advancement in this work. We need to seek motivated donors who want to invest in incentivizing progress through Endowed Chairs, scholarships, or sponsored workshops. We can work together on tangible progress to create an inclusive community that benefits every member, from historically privileged to historically excluded.

- Investors reward diversity
- Donor Diversity in Fundraising
- How Lack of Diversity Limits the Impact of Scientific Progress
- Bias can prevent recognition of talent

Benefits to WHOI, Geoscience, Cape Cod and coastal areas

We have intersecting problems that impact the health and strength of the Institution. In addition to an overwhelmingly homogenous population of scientists, we have persistent struggles with recruiting and retention even within that homogenous population. The work we do to make WHOI more inclusive will also address recruitment and retention issues. Creating an inclusive workplace with a diverse set of investigators positively impacts the quality of our science and our mission to explore and educate.

There are talented and motivated people in every racial population; if we limit ourselves to those from a single racial population then we are shutting out top talent to our detriment. The same holds true for the other marginalized populations I've discussed above. Limiting ourselves in this way impacts the scientific questions that are asked; the breadth of answers that are explored; the way we choose to communicate our findings; the way our findings are perceived by a diverse public; and the impact our information can have on the diverse populations living in the areas touched by our studies.

Acknowledging these issues, being willing to engage with these issues, being willing to lead on the issues, understanding that strategies can be deployed and progress measured on these issues, are all crucial skills that we must require of our leadership moving forward. Our progress in removing barriers will result in better science, improved relationships with individuals in populations who have previously had no representation in or connection with our work, and improved relationships with the communities where we do our work, as well as the communities impacted by our coastal research.

- Groups of diverse problem solvers can outperform groups of high-ability problem solvers
- Fear of Being Different Stifles Talent - Harvard Business Review
- Why diversity helps to produce stronger research

Summary

In conclusion, WHOI already works hard on the challenges of recruiting and retention in general. WHOI, along with GeoScience in general and the town surrounding the Institution, has a marked lack of diversity. We can apply rigorous and data driven solutions and success metrics to these problems to improve life and work at the Institution. We can work on the two separate avenues of advancing inclusion at WHOI and increasing representation. Our work in those two dovetailing, but distinctly different, efforts will not only impact previously underrepresented populations, but also benefit the majority population.

We have to address the complexities of barriers to racial inclusion, gender inclusion, ability inclusion, and LGBTQIA+ inclusion. We have to address the intersectionality of barriers arising from experiences related to being first in family and having English as a second language. We have to create a culture of inclusion for those who are already here; and we have to remove barriers that effect who ends up here.

We need a leader who understands the complexity and nuance of this work; someone who will ensure that our entire leadership team has the skills to address this work. It has to be a priority of the Institutional leadership, and we need leaders who will use the same rigor for which we are known in ocean sciences and engineering, and apply that discipline to designing and implementing strategies to bring us measurable success in advancing inclusion and increasing representation at WHOI.