Actionable Steps to Make our Community More Equitable

Suggestions to ways members of our community can help make things more equitable right now (a living list):

There have been many resources for folks to help with current events, see, for example, [1], [2], [3], and, for places to donate [4]. We also suggest using Google to find local resources, such as Black-owned businesses to support.

Here, we want to make suggestions for members of the planetary science community to make planetary science a more equitable environment

• Listen! Learn about issues affecting members of our community who are also members of underrepresented groups. This means research! Google is your friend!

• PCCS reading list: [5]

• Diversity talks from DPS meetings: [6]

• Astronomy in Color blog: [7]

• Women in Planetary Science blog, particularly the one about effects on the decadal survey: [8]

• Follow scientists of color on twitter.

• Encourage governing bodies to postpone upcoming deadlines.

• Request NASA to extend upcoming deadlines, particularly ROSES, in order to give people space to deal with the current civil unrest

• Request NASA to extend late June and July deadlines to give scientists time to prioritize decadal survey white papers

• If the decadal survey deadline cannot be delayed, NAS/NASA/the decadal co-chairs need to come up with other ways to ensure voices of our marginalized colleagues are heard.

• If you are the supervisor of a scientist of color, particularly for BIPOC, give them space. Send a message telling them that if they miss deadlines, meetings, etc, that it is NOT a problem. Tell them that they are important and their needs come first. Offer help. DON'T call and ask how they're doing. They're likely not doing well and they don't need to go over it all with you. They may not even respond to your message. And that's ok, this isn't about you

• Let your colleagues of color, particularly African-American colleagues, at your workplace be what they came there to be: scientists. Ask us if they would like to be involved in new diversity agenda items rather than assuming that they have time. Realize that in addition with all that comes with being a scientist by profession, they are also more likely to be overburdened with uncompensated mentoring and dealing with the current events. Don't assume that African-American (or other minority) scientists...
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Published on Division for Planetary Sciences
(https://dps.aas.org)

(including those that are early career) have loads of free time.

• Speak up when colleagues make statements that are incorrect. Don’t wait for our marginalized colleagues to speak up. For example, when folks say they don’t see color or when someone says that “if individuals really care they will make time”, step in and point out what is wrong with those ideas. If you don’t know, go to step 1.

• Know (or learn) how to pronounce your colleagues names. If you’re chairing a session or otherwise introducing a speaker, ask them privately beforehand to make sure you are pronouncing it correctly.

• Be aware of your own implicit biases. See https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/ [9].

• Amplify voices of scientists that are least likely to be heard

• Be aware of your social capital and use it to help members of URM groups

• Fill out surveys after meetings, include positive & negative comments

• Bring considerations of diversity, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of doing science.

• Think along multiple axes: race, gender, LGBTQ+ status, ability status...

• Learn how to apologize [13]. Mistakes WILL happen.

• Pay attention to whom you work with. Who is missing from your collaborations? What can you do to fill those gaps and engage with different people?

• Fill out demographic information when asked by, for example, DPS or nspires

• Ask people at periphery of your network for new networking opportunities

• Ensure that diversity efforts don’t fall into the arena of “colorless diversity”: efforts that focus solely on gender, ability, etc. are often ineffective at including members of racial and ethnic minority groups

• Encourage your organizations to have explicit, well-defined expectations and criteria for hiring, admission, etc.

• Encourage your organizations to have clear anti-harassment policies that explicitly include policies about racial harassment. Use training that works. Sanction perpetrators. Protect members of marginalized groups.

Note that most of the above list comes from publications by Julie Rathbun, Lynnae Quick, Serina Diniega, and Kennda Lynch (see, for example https://www.hou.usra.edu/meetings/lpsc2020/eposter/1594.pdf [10]).
Source URL: https://dps.aas.org/inclusivity/actionable-steps

Links
[1] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tL9_hulWj_iekHzK5PSli00u-C25w0jrExhpjpuNHII/edit
[8] https://womeninplanetaryscience.wordpress.com/
[9] https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/