

Planned 2021/2022 Goals

1. Climate and community

- We are building a PB DEIJ page on our website. As part of this work, we have sent out a poll asking folks to self-identify. This will help us assess the diversity in our program, and help us to identify demographics where we should become more engaged and start designing programs (e.g. LGBTQIA+ folks, people with disabilities).
- We will be hosting BRiDGE speakers for workshops and seminars in spring and fall 2022.
- We will be working on assessing our success as a committee (Spring 2022).

2. Education

- Dr. David Cort ran a DEIJ module in PB core I on 10/13/21.
- Our Hollaback training on bystander intervention will be held on December 8, 2021

3. Recruitment

- We'll be tabling again at SACNAS and at MANRRS in the UMass booth.
- Come up with recommendations for the admissions committee.
- Build on our initial contacts with GCC and HCC (Spring 2022)

Progress on 2020/2021 Goals

1. Climate and community

- a. We had diverse seminar series in the spring and fall – XX% of fall seminar speakers and YY% of spring seminar speakers were from minoritized demographics
- b. Sent out an [anonymous poll](#) (that remains open if folks want to comment). One of the themes emerging from responses is that folks wanted to hear more from the committee about what we'd been doing. To address this, we are working on building the PB DEIJ website which will include periodic updates.
- c. Supported a PB Gilgut DEI fellow (Miriam Hernandez-Romero). As part of her work, Miriam helped re-invigorate the UMass SACNAS chapter.

2. Education.

- a. Ran a PB/BRiDGE Panel on dismantling racism in plant biology.
- b. Instituted a DEIJ module as part of PB core 1. The first iteration of this in Fall 2020 was run by Dr. Jennifer McDermott, and focused on implicit bias, structural racism, and campus resources for improving equity.
- c. Planned a Hollaback training on bystander intervention, to be held on December 8, 2021.

3. Recruit a diverse pool of students to our program

- a. Initiated contact with community colleges in the area (Greenfield Community College and Holyoke Community College). Although there are no HCBUs in Massachusetts, both GCC and HCC serve larger populations of minoritized students than UMass does. Indeed, HCC is a

Hispanic Serving Institution. Although we need to continue building on this initial contact, one outcome from these meetings were expanding our virtual seminar access to a broader community of plant biologists in the valley.

- b. Tabled at SACNAS at MANRRS
- c. Interviewed qualified Black, Hispanic, Indigenous and Latine/x demographics that were either US citizens or permanent residents (although this pool was small)

Statement of Goals from Fall 2020

The Plant Biology Graduate Program is committed to build an environment where all students, postdocs, and faculty can thrive, regardless of their race, sexuality, gender identity, or nationality. Most recently, institutional racism has been highlighted as an enduring problem in the US. Plant Biology is committed to working to dismantle this racism, and to working for systematic change. To this end, diversity, equity and inclusion and justice (DEIJ) committee will work with Plant Biology leadership to institute the following in our program, starting immediately:

1. *Climate and Community*. To make PB an environment where BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) students, postdocs, and faculty can thrive, we will:
 - *Improve mentorship in the program*: together with the newly instituted 'Buddy system', where students partner with a faculty mentor that is not on their dissertation committee, the DEI committee will serve as a resource for students to seek advice and support in difficult situations, including referring students to appropriate organizations on and off campus. Plant Biology will continue to require all faculty, and encourage all students and postdocs to take the National Research Mentoring training.
 - *Diversify the Plant Biology seminar series*: In addition to ongoing efforts like participating in the BRiDGE program, we will also incentivize labs and students to dedicate time to finding a broad range of speakers for seminars. The Plant Biology seminar committee will also set aside one additional seminar each semester to be co-hosted with BRiDGE. All seminar speakers will be encouraged to discuss their career paths with students.
 - *Find out what worked and what didn't*: we will poll students, faculty, and alumni, asking them what we can do to make Plant Biology a more inclusive community.
2. *Education*. To help all Plant Biology community members learn about institutional racism and how to combat it, we will:
 - Include a module on diversity, equity and inclusion in the first semester Core I class for incoming students, starting in Fall 2020.
 - Source trainings that empower the Plant Biology community to recognize racism, and work to change it. Possible trainings include active bystander

trainings, allyship trainings, NRMN Entering Mentoring training, and implicit bias trainings. The DEI committee will focus on mentoring trainings for Fall 2020, and actively work to identify others for the future.

- Offer periodic activities for the Plant Biology community to do continuous work on inclusion and equity. Activities could include discussion and reading groups, and workshops on drafting values statements, codes of conduct, and lab expectations. The DEI committee will announce specific opportunities every year.
3. *Recruitment.* To recruit a diverse pool of students to our program, we will:
- a. Send representatives to annual conferences of societies that support and promote underrepresented groups such as SACNAS and/or MANRRS. Plant Biology will support the travel for at least one student and one faculty member to one of these events every year.
 - b. PB will offer signing bonuses to BIPOC students, which could be used to cover moving costs.
 - c. Interview all qualified BIPOC applicants.
 - d. Develop relationships with faculty teaching BIPOC students at PUIs and Historically Black Colleges and Universities – including funding faculty seminar visits

In the future, the DEI committee will expand on these efforts to create an environment where all students can thrive. Our future work (beyond Fall 2020) will include building a mentoring network of alumni and current students, and creating a paid Research Assistantship position for a Plant Biology DEI fellow that will help enhance and expand our efforts.