



JULY 2021

Earth Institute Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism Action Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01.** Message from the Director
- 02.** Overview
- 03.** Foundations of the Plan
- 04.** Earth Institute DEIA Action Plan
- 05.** Priorities and Goals
- 06.** Looking To The Future: The Climate School
- 07.** Conclusion

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

The Earth Institute is committed to providing access, opportunity, equitable and just treatment, and advancement for all, across our entire institution. Our community should reflect the wide variety of backgrounds, opinions, experiences, and perspectives that reflect the world we live in. We cannot be excellent without being diverse in the broadest sense of that word, and we must strive to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential.

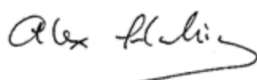
This Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism (DEIA) action plan is a culmination of work done over the past three years at the Earth Institute. In Fall 2018, we launched a new process to assess and promote DEIA. Over the past year, we have engaged in data collection and action-planning for the Earth Institute and many of its centers. This plan sets out goals and strategies to improve, while recognizing and reflecting the Earth Institute's transition into the Columbia Climate School where DEIA will be embedded in so many different facets of our work.

While off to a good start, we know our work is far from complete. The events of the past year have highlighted the devastating impact of racism and racial inequality on our society and communities. Disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities of color, the tragic murders of Black people by police, and the alarming surge of anti-Asian bias and violence, all show how we must do even more to combat racism and make our work more inclusive for all people.

It is critical that we continue to cultivate a workplace that makes equality, diversity, and openness priorities – a workplace that sets an example for the greater community. We must continue to listen, learn from, and teach one another in inclusive environments with respect for different perspectives, backgrounds, and abilities. I am confident we can rise to meet this challenge.

Thank you to everyone who supported the development of this report and who have supported the ongoing DEIA work in other ways. Your involvement is valuable and deeply appreciated, and I look forward to continuing to collaborate with the entire community during this important and worthy process.

Alex Halliday



Founding Dean, Columbia Climate School
Director, The Earth Institute

OVERVIEW

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism (DEIA) is central to the Earth Institute's mission, excellence, and success. We are committed to developing an inclusive, welcoming, and diverse workplace for our faculty, researchers, staff, and students. The cultivation of diversity in academia, particularly in science, is instrumental to our core values, as well as to the viability and impact of our work. This report presents a framework for implementing our broader institution-wide goals and strategies to address DEIA.

Our commitment follows and aligns with Columbia University's pledge and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Racism, prejudice, and inequality have a direct impact on academic settings. Dismantling structural inequalities in academia is a critical, yet challenging, task. There are no simple solutions to these complex issues. To achieve our aspirations for change, we must integrate and incorporate DEIA within our daily operations, standard practices, processes, and initiatives.

To learn more about the Earth Institute's commitment to DEIA and ongoing efforts, please visit our website: www.earth.columbia.edu. This site includes important links and University resources available to the Earth Institute community for reporting any misconduct, harassment, and discrimination.

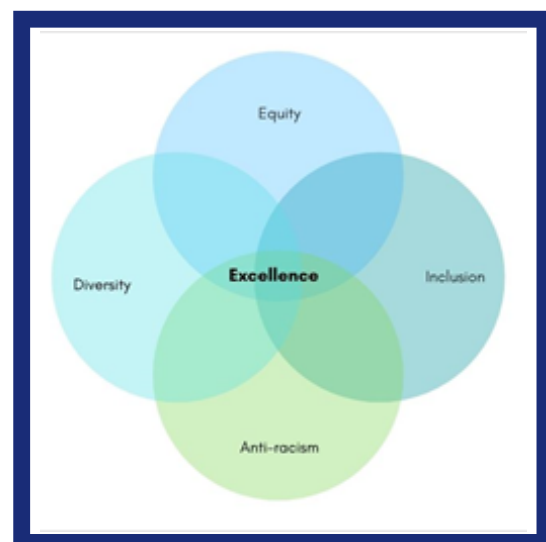
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles serve as the foundation for this action plan and our aspirations for the future:

- The Earth Institute and the Columbia Climate School are committed to promoting a culture and work environment that is diverse, equitable, inclusive, safe, and welcoming for all.
- We seek to establish the Earth Institute and the Columbia Climate School as exemplary institutions that actively attract, support, advance, and retain diverse students, faculty, and staff at all levels, through:
 - Commitment to fairness, social justice, and antiracism
 - Cultivation of inclusive, respectful, and vibrant communities
 - Abiding dedication to research, practice and education that benefits all, particularly the members of marginalized and vulnerable communities
 - Encouragement and support of each individual in the achievement of their full potential.
- By engaging in research, education, and practice that values equity and inclusion, we hope to contribute to a more just and sustainable world for all.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE PLAN

This action plan is the culmination of activities and planning at the Earth Institute since 2018 and builds on the great foundation of existing diversity work and programs undertaken at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory (LDEO) over the past decade. It also draws on and connects to the diversity and related efforts of Columbia University as a whole.



In the fall of 2018, the Earth Institute launched a new process of self-study and engagement to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism (DEIA), emphasizing both a bottom-up and top-down approach. The following actions were taken as part of that process:

- Collected an inventory of the policies, initiatives, and programming in place to address issues of diversity, inclusion, and harassment across all the Earth Institute.
- Undertook a review of DEIA efforts at peer institutions and examined how we could model our work off the SEA Change Initiative by AAAS.
- Initiated an ongoing analysis of salary equity on gender/ethnic demographics within the Earth Institute and its centers.
- Hosted a range of events, workshops, and trainings focused on bias, anti-racism, workplace discrimination, equity and inclusion, and related topics.

In 2019, we engaged a consulting team from the Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution (MD-ICCCR) at Teachers College to lead the Earth Institute in a DEIA strategic exploration and action planning process. This process included four phases from 2019 – 2021:

1. Developed an Earth Institute-wide diversity climate assessment survey to help identify specific challenges and opportunities for DEIA activities at both the Institute-level and at the center-level, as applicable.
2. Generated feedback reports, using the data collected, for the Earth Institute and participating centers to guide a discussion and action planning process.
3. Hosted an action-planning workshop with presentations and discussion of draft plans.
4. Finalized both center-level and Institute-level DEIA action plans.

EARTH INSTITUTE DEIA ACTION PLAN

This Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-racism (DEIA) Action Plan presents a framework for implementing the Earth Institute goals and strategies to improve DEIA within our organization. It articulates a clear vision and path to be a model in bold commitment, investment, and leadership to promote DEIA in impactful ways. It is intended to inform commitment and leadership efforts within the Earth Institute for the next academic year (2021-2022), with the expectation that the Climate School will establish a new or revised strategic planning process, building on this work outlined in this plan.

The plan was finalized in July 2021, following a strategic planning process and in consultation with a variety of stakeholders across the Earth Institute. The key findings from the Earth Institute feedback report, referenced above, were used to help set goals and actions for the future. This plan is also informed by center-level DEIA plans and seeks to provide a comprehensive strategy for the Earth Institute reflective of the center-level work completed during the planning process.

We propose the following priority areas for the pursuit of inclusive excellence:

Priority 1: Institutional Accountability

Priority 2: Linking Commitment to Funding

Priority 3: Hiring, Promotions, and Retention

Priority 4: Education and Outreach

Priority 5: Research and Partnerships

The DEIA Action Plan is intended as a roadmap to guide the efforts of all community members and units. The full scope of strategies being pursued will evolve with the needs of the Earth Institute and Climate School community.

PRIORITIES AND GOALS

01 Institutional Accountability

Institutional accountability provides the critical infrastructure for DEIA initiatives to have a positive impact and be successful within an organization. This priority focuses on how the Earth Institute (and ultimately the Climate School) will seek to institutionalize DEIA across the institution through the following goals:

- **Goal 1:** Institutionalize coordination, support, monitoring and evaluation for DEIA efforts.
- **Goal 2:** Measure, evaluate and track DEIA trends.
- **Goal 3:** Provide an inclusive and accessible work environment for all.
- **Goal 4:** Support Earth Institute units in implementation of DEIA-related goals and strategies.
- **Goal 5:** Establish and communicate effective and accessible dispute resolution mechanisms for DEIA concerns.

PRIORITIES AND GOALS

02 Linking Commitment to Funding

Integrating DEIA across our organization requires broad-based commitment, sustainable and enduring support, and human and fiscal resources. This priority focuses on how the organization can promote inclusive culture, education, and research by linking funding decisions to DEIA commitment through the following goals:

- **Goal 1:** Link DEIA to funding for research, education, and impact activities.
- **Goal 2:** Incentivize and recognize DEIA work.
- **Goal 3:** Improve diversity of events and programming.

PRIORITIES AND GOALS

03 Hiring, Promotion, and Retention

We commit to continuing to not only diversify our community, but also to work explicitly to recruit and retain staff, faculty, and researchers who come from traditionally underrepresented groups. Despite improvements in recent years, the geosciences remain among the least diverse of the STEM fields. To achieve progress, the Earth Institute and the Climate School must cultivate a diverse pipeline and ensure that hiring, promotion, and retention policies, departmental procedures, and funding models are aligned with our DEIA goals. We must seek to enable a cultural shift, such that DEIA efforts are valued and rewarded, and diverse workforces can be retained. This priority focuses on the following goals:

- **Goal 1:** Recruit and retain a diverse workforce.
- **Goal 2:** Ensure salary equity in both hiring and promotion.
- **Goal 3:** Enhance career development, guidance, support, and resources.
- **Goal 4:** Create a supportive environment for all staff during critical life transitions.

PRIORITIES AND GOALS

04 Education and Outreach

Increasing recruitment and representation of underrepresented communities across our educational and professional communities will greatly enhance the community and culture of our organization. It is also imperative to increase the support and outreach of STEM-related education at the K-16 levels to ultimately build a more diverse pipeline. Building off the existing work at the Earth Institute, this priority focuses on strategies to enhance diverse student recruitment and retention, as well as longer-term strategies to foster connections between outreach and educational efforts at the K-16 levels and placement within our graduate and postdoctoral programs. It includes the following goals:

- **Goal 1:** Increase the diversity among students and learners in the STEM fields.
- **Goal 2:** Enhance, grow, and improve educational outreach initiatives, specifically as they relate to recruiting and preparing underrepresented and low-income students.
- **Goal 3:** Create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students.

PRIORITIES AND GOALS

05 Research and Partnerships

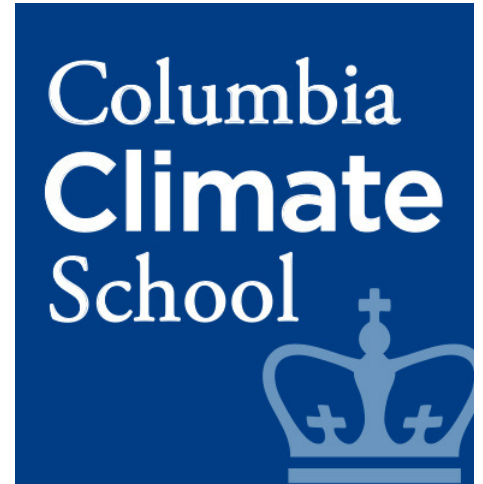
Our goal is to foster research that contributes to equity and justice through explicit recognition that research design and execution assumes value judgments about the participants and objects of study. The Earth Institute and the Climate School will build its research portfolio with a focus on socially just transitions. All research, education and direct impact will have a dedicated focus on co-production of knowledge, working closely with, and recognizing the knowledge of, local partners and stakeholders. This priority focuses on the following goals:

- **Goal 1:** Foster understanding of co-generation of knowledge and active community partnerships for research activities.
- **Goal 2:** Build and enhance community, academic and business partnerships to engage diverse communities.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The Columbia Climate School

In July 2020, President Bollinger announced the creation of the Columbia Climate School, the first new school at Columbia University in 25 years. The Climate School will serve as the integrated center of climate activity at the University and will encompass the Earth Institute and its many research centers and programs. The DEIA strategic planning process for the Earth Institute was already underway at the time the formation of the Climate School was announced. As a result, this action plan is rooted in the data collection and planning process for the Earth Institute and sets out explicit goals and strategies for the Institute. Yet, this plan also reflects the broader aspirations and vision for the Columbia Climate School.



We seek to establish the Columbia Climate School as the platinum standard for a DEIA workplace. This includes the following goals and priorities for the coming year:

- Ensure DEIA is embedded within Climate School design and development activities.
- Building off this plan and existing work, establish the DEIA strategic planning process for the Climate School.
- Provide an inclusive and accessible environment for all faculty, staff, researchers, and students – regardless of race, gender orientation, physical ability, or economic background.
- Advocate for inclusion of Columbia in the AAAS Sea Change Certification process. Continue to offer a variety of DEIA training and learning opportunities for all staff, faculty, and students.

CONCLUSION

This action plan sets out the Earth Institute's and Climate School's institutional goals and priorities for diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism (DEIA). We seek to be accountable in promoting equity and justice for our faculty, researchers, staff, and students. In addition, through collaborative leadership, the Earth Institute and the Climate School seek to foster affirming workspaces, empowering learning experiences and a welcoming, inclusive climate at Columbia University.

This plan recognizes that creating a community of diversity and inclusion does not just happen and requires each of us to embrace diversity and lead by example. Every member of our community has the power to transform our culture by actively working toward the goals identified in this plan. We know the work is just beginning. This plan sets the foundation of the critical steps to come

Thank you to the many individuals across the Earth Institute – including faculty, researchers, staff, interns, and the DEIA advisory committee – who contributed guidance and expertise to this process and the creation of this plan.