



# Building and Improving DEIA within GFDL's workforce

Q4: How can GFDL build a more diverse, inclusive, equitable, and accessible (DEIA) workforce? How can GFDL accelerate progress in this area, including recruitment and retention?



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JANUARY 28-30, 2025

# Q4 Agenda

9:00-9:30 - GFDL DEIA Accomplishments and Challenges

9:30-10:00 - Panel Discussion with DEIAC Members and Reviewers

10:00-11:00 - Open Discussion with Reviewers

**How can GFDL build a more diverse, inclusive, equitable, and accessible (DEIA) workforce? How can GFDL accelerate progress in this area, including recruitment and retention?**



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# A Call to Action: GFDL 2019 Review and Executive Orders

## 2019 Review Recommendations:

R1: Strengthen internal collaboration with GFDL/Princeton. Specifically improve onboarding process.

R2: Promote a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## 2021 Executive Orders:

EO 14035: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce

EO 13985 & 14091: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government



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# Definitions of DEIA

**Diversity** within an institution requires the recruitment, retention, development, and fair and equitable opportunity for advancement of people with a range of different identities, backgrounds, views, and experiences. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, demographic diversity (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation), experiential diversity (e.g., affinities, hobbies, and abilities), and cognitive diversity (e.g., sensory processing and problem solving) and the intersection thereof.

**Equity** is the pursuit of equal access to resources and opportunities for all community members while fully recognizing and correcting for and revising existing systems and structures. Equity requires determining existing barriers and addressing those barriers directly.

**Inclusion** is a culture of welcoming, accommodating and appreciating the unique attributes and experiences and backgrounds of all. An inclusive environment is supportive; fosters trust; guarantees psychological and physical safety; allows for equal access; and thus, provides a sense of belonging. Inclusion requires active and intentional engagement on the part of every member in our community.

**Accessibility** is the purposeful design of products, services, platforms, or environments such that they are usable by people with disabilities. Accessibility measures often provide co-benefits that improve equity and inclusion for people with disabilities and diverse other identities.



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# Formation of a GFDL DEIA Committee

Immediately following the 2019 GFDL Lab Review a GFDL DEIA Committee (DEIAC) was formed and input gathered from the entire GFDL community on potential action items and initiatives.

- DEIA Community Forum formed.
- The DEIAC began in 2020 with 8 members and has grown to 21 members.
- Focus on two main areas of work:
  - Recruitment and Strengthening the NOAA Workforce
  - Retention, Culture, and Community Building



# DEIAC Accomplishments at GFDL

- FY20-22 highlights:
  - Established GFDL's Core Values, Code of Conduct, and DEIA statement
  - Participated in the Unlearning Racism in Geosciences (URGE) program
  - Drafted proposals for community listening sessions and long-term sustainability for DEIA activities
  - Started community forum as a way for all lab members to discuss DEIA topics in an informal setting
- FY23-24 highlights:
  - 1 Full time and 1 Half Time DEIA focused employees
  - Outreach/Engagement/Recruitment: MSI's, and existing NOAA educational partnership programs
  - Improved Onboarding: Revamped orientation, improve postdoc onboarding, GFDL Buddy Program
  - Community Building: Small Talk Forum; Seminar Coffee Time; Partnering with GFDL Employee Association; Community, Inclusivity, and Belonging Week with LCDR Karber



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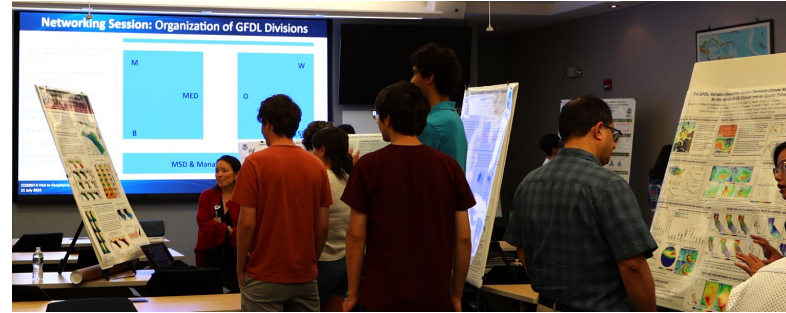
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# Recruitment and Strengthening the NOAA Workforce

- Diversity is a strength to an organization, we want to work towards building a GFDL and NOAA workforce reflective of the society we serve

## Some Key Activities:

- Engagement with NOAA Cooperative Science Centers with Minority Serving Institutions
  - Hired a former intern for full time employment
  - AMS, AGU NOAA Booth Meetup
  - Hosted 19 students from CESSRST for a 1-day symposium (July '24)
  - 3 more summer interns in '24
  - Hampton University and City College Visits, Guest Lectures in their coursework



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# Recruitment and Strengthening the NOAA Workforce

## Some Key Activities:

- Professional Society Engagement
  - National Society of Black Engineers Annual Meeting ('23, '24),
  - National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP) and National Society of Hispanic Physicists Joint Meeting ('24), NSBP Innovate Seminar
  - Several GFDL DEIAC members were key organizers for NOAA booths and sessions.
- Other Outreach
  - CUNY Hunter College, Bronx Community College, Mercer County Community College, CUNY Lehman College, Howard, Mercer County Boys and Girls Club, Monmouth Junction Elementary School, Trenton 9th grade academy, and more



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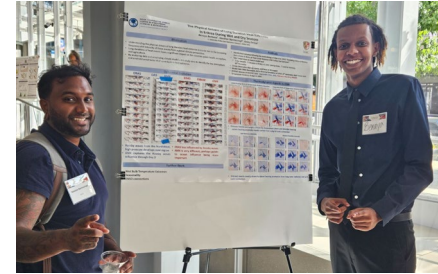
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# Recruitment and Strengthening the NOAA Workforce

## Key Activities Continued:

- Internship experience
  - Our members have helped host numerous interns
  - We've also informed and organized parts of the internship experiences, i.e.:
    - Welcoming Activities
    - In-house workshops:
      - Graduate Application Panel with NOAA Cooperative Institute and Cooperative Science Center faculty
      - Data Visualizations and Effective Presentations
    - Social Activities
    - And more

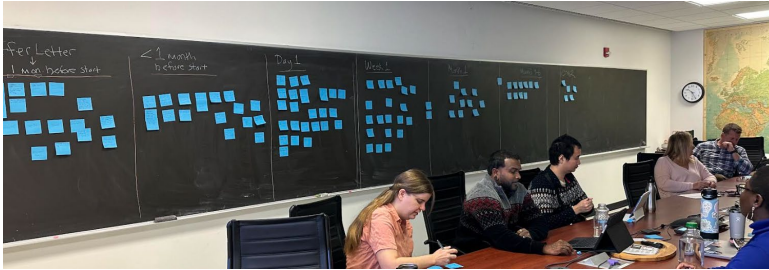


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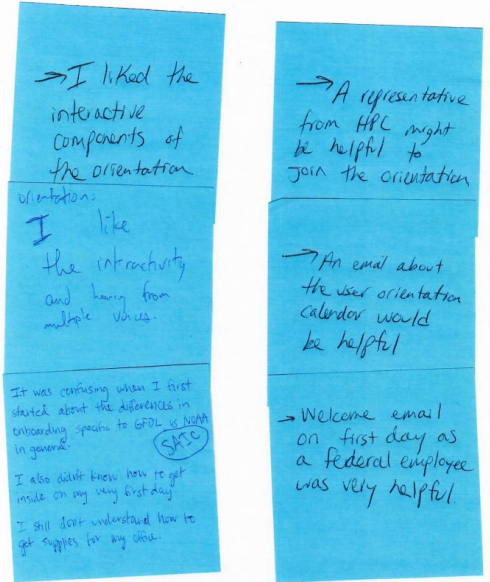
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# Retention, Culture, and Community Building



## Key Activities

- Onboarding
  - Revamped User Orientation including more voices and perspectives
  - Host Orientation in the works
  - Buddy Program
  - Mapping out the Postdoc Journey and Working to address challenges they face



# Retention, Culture, and Community Building

## Key Activities

- Culture and Community Building
  - Open Communication
    - Front Office Meetings
    - Open meetings with the whole GFDL community
  - Partnering with GFDL Employee Association
  - Small Talk Community Forums
  - Community, Inclusivity, and Belonging week with OAR's Behavioral Health and Wellness Officer
  - Pre-seminar Coffee Time



# STRENGTHENING EMPLOYEE RETENTION VIA ENGAGEMENT

GOAL- ENSURE POSITIVE WORKFORCE CULTURE WITHIN GFDL



## Goal Description

Cultivate an Organizational Culture That Values Diversity and Inclusion

## Desired Outcome

Support an evolving organizational culture that is diverse and inclusive by developing and sustaining progressive initiatives which cultivate employee wellness and engagement, strive for transparency, and support a community of diversity and inclusion within GFDL to improve the employee experience and retain the cohesiveness of the culture.

40+ one-on-one engagements/interviews and a lab-wide survey with a 112/231 people responding

*GFDL leadership has **recognized** and **acknowledged** publicly that inequities exist within the lab, and the creation of the DEIAC and their participation in community forums have shown that there is a desire to improve DEIA within the lab.*

*My immediate supervisor has worked to **diversify my group** after concerns were shared regarding permanent hires through our contractor and lack of diversity.*

*Without change new employees will encounter a culture where they do not feel a sense of **belonging**. They will not have role models who look like them, and are likely to be overlooked for meaningful, promotable opportunities. These individuals may choose **to leave** or they may choose to stay and 'put up' with things as they are.*

*Leadership says they have an open door but I'm **not comfortable** walking through it.*



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# SERVE Survey Results

| Question around Communication and Transparency                                         | Yes | No  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| GFDL procedures and processes that are required to do your job are written and clear   | 56% | 44% |
| Information about what is going on in GFDL is openly shared by FOL and I feel informed | 56% | 44% |
| I am aware of when organizational updates will be shared by FOL                        | 45% | 55% |

| Question around DEIA and Belonging                                                        | Yes | No  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| I have not observed favoritism by leaders in GFDL                                         | 49% | 51% |
| I am comfortable speaking up in GFDL meetings with my division                            | 84% | 16% |
| Perspectives of people from all cultures and backgrounds are respected and valued at GFDL | 83% | 17% |

| Question around Leadership                              | Front Office Leadership | Your Division Leader | Your First Level Supervisor |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Communication from the following leaders is transparent | 50%                     | 81%                  | 85%                         |
| I have trust and confidence in the following leaders    | 65%                     | 84%                  | 86%                         |
| I feel the following leaders are approachable           | 53%                     | 80%                  | 90%                         |



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# SERVE action plan summary

- Identified 3 key areas of improvement:
  - DEIA and employees' sense of belonging
    - Increase diversity via improving recruitment, retention, relationships with MSI's, organizations focused on diversity in STEM, and connections with NOAA employee resource groups
    - Improve the onboarding process
  - Communication
    - Intranet upgrades
    - Quarterly all-hands meetings
    - Policy and procedure updates
    - Managerial training on communication, transparency, sensitivity
  - Leadership
    - Open communication via office hours, informal meetings/gatherings, structured forums
    - Provide resources for managers for mental health support, mentorship opportunities, reporting procedures
    - Organize supervisor training programs on leadership and management



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# Formal Seminar Speaker Diversity

- GFDL formal seminar speakers have **historically lacked diversity** along the dimensions of race, gender, and career stage.
- In 2019, the formal seminar co-ordinators and GFDL leadership **created explicit guidelines for speaker invitations from underrepresented groups**.
- The following years' formal seminars have been the most diverse in GFDL's history:

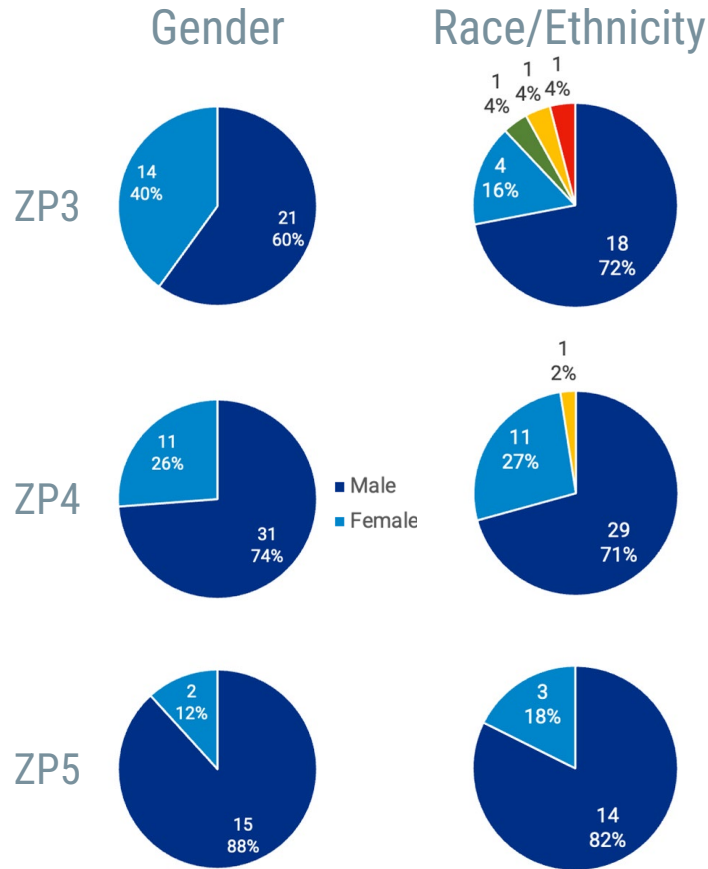
| Demographic Category | Pre 2020                   | Post 2020                  |
|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Gender               | ~ 30% women; 70% men       | ~ 50% women; 50% men       |
| Race                 | ~ 15% non-white; 85% white | ~ 25% non-white; 75% white |
| Career Stage         | ~ 20% early career         | ~ 35% early career         |

- Challenges remain: Black, Indigenous and Latinx speakers make up a small fraction of the formal seminar speaker pool relative to their population demographics.



# Persistent Challenges

- Recruitment & Retention: Building a more representative workforce
  - Including at multiple career levels
- Vertical and horizontal communication
  - Procedural transparency & documentation
- Challenges of a blended workforce
  - Inclusivity for all employee types
  - Alignment with all partners



## Diversity by Pay Band (ZP) at GFDL

*\* as of Sept 2024*

- White
- Asian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- Two or More Races



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