International Society for Computational Biology
Increasing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Society
Strategic Plan
2020-2021
Scientific workforce diversity, why it matters:

- Diversity is a driving force of excellence and innovation. Research conducted by more diverse teams is cited more often and published in more prestigious journals.
- Different backgrounds breed creativity → Diversity broadens the scope of inquiry.
- Minimizes health disparities.
- Is the fair and right thing to do.

The biggest hurdle to diversity in scientific research is the pervasiveness of bias and failure to make environments inclusive.

How to counter bias and increase scientific workforce diversity

What doesn’t work:

Poor Returns on the Usual Diversity Programs

The three most popular interventions make firms less diverse, not more, because managers resist strong-arming. For instance, testing job applicants hurts women and minorities—but not because they perform poorly. Hiring managers don’t always test everyone (white men often get a pass) and don’t interpret results consistently.

% CHANGE OVER FIVE YEARS IN REPRESENTATION AMONG MANAGERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of program</th>
<th>White Men</th>
<th>White Women</th>
<th>Black Men</th>
<th>Black Women</th>
<th>Hispanic Men</th>
<th>Hispanic Women</th>
<th>Asian Men</th>
<th>Asian Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory diversity training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job tests</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
<td>-10.2</td>
<td>-9.1</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
<td>-8.8</td>
<td>-11.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grievance systems</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
<td>-7.3</td>
<td>-4.8</td>
<td>-4.7</td>
<td>-11.3</td>
<td>-4.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: GRAY INDICATES NO STATISTICAL CERTAINTY OF A PROGRAM’S EFFECT.
SOURCE: AUTHORS’ STUDY OF 829 MIDSIZE AND LARGE U.S. FIRMS. THE ANALYSIS ISOLATED THE EFFECTS OF DIVERSITY PROGRAMS FROM EVERYTHING ELSE GOING ON IN THE COMPANIES AND IN THE ECONOMY.
FROM: “WHY DIVERSITY PROGRAMS FAIL,” BY FRANK DOBBIN AND ALEXANDRA KALEV, JULY-AUGUST 2016
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Mandatory training centered on blaming or shaming not only doesn’t work, it can backfire!
What works:

Programs that do the following:
  o Engage individuals in solving the problem.
  o Expose people from different groups to each other.
  o Encourage social accountability for change.

**Diversity Programs That Get Results**

Companies do a better job of increasing diversity when they forgo the control tactics and frame their efforts more positively. The most effective programs spark engagement, increase contact among different groups, or draw on people’s strong desire to look good to others.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+13.3</td>
<td>+9.1</td>
<td>+9.3</td>
<td>+12.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-managed teams</td>
<td>−2.8</td>
<td>+5.6</td>
<td>+3.4</td>
<td>+3.9</td>
<td>+3.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-training</td>
<td>−1.4</td>
<td>+3.0</td>
<td>+2.7</td>
<td>+3.0</td>
<td>−3.9</td>
<td>+6.5</td>
<td>+4.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College recruitment: women*</td>
<td>−2.0</td>
<td>+10.2</td>
<td>+7.9</td>
<td>+8.7</td>
<td>+10.0</td>
<td>+18.3</td>
<td>+8.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College recruitment: minorities**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+7.7</td>
<td>+8.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+18.0</td>
<td>+9.1</td>
<td>+23.7</td>
<td>+18.0</td>
<td>+24.0</td>
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<td>Diversity task forces</td>
<td>−3.3</td>
<td>+11.6</td>
<td>+8.7</td>
<td>+22.7</td>
<td>+12.0</td>
<td>+16.2</td>
<td>+30.2</td>
<td>+24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity managers</td>
<td>+7.5</td>
<td>+17.0</td>
<td>+11.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>+18.2</td>
<td>+10.9</td>
<td>+13.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*College recruitment targeting women turns recruiting managers into diversity champions, so it also helps boost the numbers for black and Asian-American men.

**College recruitment targeting minorities often focuses on historically black schools, which lifts the numbers of African-American men and women.

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(Adapted from “Why Diversity Programs fail”, Harvard Business Review 2016)
Strategic Diversity Leadership Plan:

A multi-pronged approach to increase diversity at ISCB.

Components:

1. **The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee.** Increasing social accountability for change in the society: develop policy statements and initiatives that clearly communicate society values in regard to diversity and promote inclusiveness at ISCB-associated events.

2. **Obtain data and develop measures to assess progress.**

3. **Voluntary training: The “ISCB Awareness toolkit”.** To mitigate the impact of bias.

4. **Recruitment initiative.** To develop a pipeline to increase diversity in ISCB membership, leadership and honors.

5. **Mentoring.** To develop a program that supports trainees and young investigators from diverse backgrounds to counter the leaky pipeline.

**Action items for 2020-2021** (higher-priority items are shown on top)

1. To obtain data on diversity of ISCB members as well as ISCB-affiliated conferences to use for benchmarking the impact of diversity initiatives.
   - Ensure the already developed EDI membership survey is presented at membership enrollment/renewal.
   - Create a template for consistent reporting of diversity data from conferences.
   - Create a survey to gather information on what (some of) the home institutions of ISCB members currently do in regard to diversity training.

2. To implement the “ISCB Awareness toolkit” (voluntary bias-awareness training) and encourage ISCB leadership and organizing committees of ISCB-affiliated conferences to use it. Assess its global relevance (the toolkit was developed based on NIH materials, does it need to be updated for a more global audience?).

3. To develop a strategic plan to increase representation of underrepresented minority groups (URMs):
   - Obtain data on diversity of nomination/selection for ISCB honors and awards. Seek advice from initiatives geared towards increasing diversity in Computational Biology (e.g., folks in Genomics and Computational Biology, Black Women in Computational Biology) to increase nominations of URMs for ISCB leadership positions and awards.
   - Send delegates to minority centered conferences to promote ISCB and computational biology as a research path to URM trainees (SACNAS, ABRCMS).

4. To develop a centralized webpage in which all ISCB EDI-related information can be easily found, including all policy statements and initiatives geared towards making ISMB more inclusive. Currently those are as follows:
   - **Policies/statements:**
     - ISCB Code of Ethics and professional conduct: [https://www.iscb.org/codeofconduct/file](https://www.iscb.org/codeofconduct/file)
   - **Initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion at ISCB-affiliated conferences**

5. To develop new statements to address additional EDI issues (e.g. a statement on the importance of diversity for the society), including new issues as they arise.

6. To continue fundraising efforts to make childcare at ISMB a permanent offering of the conference.

7. To create mentoring opportunities focused on URMs, such as fellowship opportunities targeted towards URMs and facilitated through ISCB, perhaps in collaboration with the Student Council.