

# NCEAS Strategic Plan for Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion (JEDI): 2021 Update

## Goal 1: Foster an informed, welcoming, and inclusive culture at NCEAS

### Strategy 1.1: Center JEDI in all NCEAS activities and leadership decisions

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - Diversity Team co-chairs presented to the Exec Team in Oct 2020 & July 2021.
  - While developing plans for a major new research proposal & the future vision of the center, the NCEAS Exec Team centered JEDI and identified partners who could advance this mission.
- *Future actions:*
  - Continue biannual Diversity Team updates to Exec Team (next in Dec 2021)
  - Add language to **onboarding email** that says “By joining the NCEAS community, you agree to abide by the Code of Conduct”

### Strategy 1.2: Ensure that everybody at NCEAS has a forum to engage in JEDI issues

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - Held annual Roundtables (summer 2020 and 2021) for the NCEAS community to solicit feedback on the JEDI Strategic Plan (and in 2021 to provide updates about URGE activities)
  - Created an anonymous survey for feedback on JEDI issues. We received no responses over the last year and are re-evaluating this strategy.
  - Hosted a very productive [Unlearning Racism in Geosciences \(URGE\) NCEAS learning pod](#).
- *Future actions:*
  - Revisit the work done by the NCEAS community during 2020 **#shutdownSTEM** day of action, and incorporate any action items from that doc into resources relevant to the Strategic Plan
  - Encourage **participation in JEDI initiatives** (e.g., actions from this plan) from NCEAS community, especially URGE members, to keep them engaged
  - Consider **setting aside** days or time periods for dedicated community work towards Strategic Plan goals (e.g., following hacky hour or URGE pod model)

- Seek avenues for **funding** to formalize service and JEDI contributions (for one, ask Scripps how they secured funding for student JEDI engagement efforts)
- **Formalize JEDI contributions** (e.g., including the work as part of job descriptions)
- Consider options for **anonymous surveys** of residents about “NCEAS climate” topics, including diversity and inclusion, at regular intervals

Strategy 1.3: Clarify our public commitment to JEDI

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - Updated the [NCEAS diversity statement](#) in 2020.
  - Shared the new Strategic Plan and diversity statement with the NCEAS mailing list, in the letter from the Director
  - Updated the [Welcome to Town](#) website with an eye towards anti-racism, removing references that may be alienating and adding new resources to try to attract and welcome a more diverse group of people to NCEAS
  - Integrated specific language about respecting culture and customs into the Code of Conduct
- *Future actions:*
  - **Revisit the current NCEAS [diversity statement](#)** with URGE pod members and wider NCEAS community
  - Consider asking WG leaders to read/share an **excerpt from our Code of Conduct** at the start of each NCEAS-hosted meeting

Strategy 1.4: Provide required JEDI learning opportunities for all NCEAS residents

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - Established an URGE pod, an optional anti-racism reading group geared towards implementing actions & policy
  - Considered no-cost JEDI workshops offered through UCSB (NCEAS has applied for a workshop, and has yet to hear back)
- *Future actions:*
  - Research & schedule an **in-person JEDI session** for Winter 2022 at new NCEAS building for residents
  - Consider what is included in the **optional** “JEDI Education Package” or the other opportunities listed in the URGE Safety Plan deliverable, see if they meet NCEAS needs
  - Explore what the current UCSB requirements are, and whether NCEAS can/should **require additional education**

Strategy 1.5: Provide centralized resources for NCEAS residents interested in learning more and engaging in actions around anti-racism

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - Created **Google Drive folders** for URGE curriculum (only for URGE members) and for JEDI resources for the entire NCEAS community.
  - Created an **#action-for-justice** Slack channel for sharing news, activities, and other resources
  - Compiled resources as part of the **#ShutDownSTEM** day in 2020
- *Future actions:*
  - Ensure that all community members know the resources available on the **Google Drive** (e.g., through onboarding processes, welcome website)
  - **Build out the collection of resources** (based on URGE deliverables) in the Drive folder
  - Create an **expectation/culture** around using these guidance documents.
  - In the new NCEAS building, identify a **physical space** to post flyers/articles, and use this to advertise anti-racism events and resources
  - **Print and bind/laminate current versions** of the NCEAS diversity statement, Strategic Plan, and Code of Conduct to post in an NCEAS common space.

Strategy 1.6: Identify new funding streams for special JEDI programs

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - Diversity Team chairs met w Sarah Sikich from **UCSB Development** re: securing new funds to launch JEDI programs
- *Future actions:*
  - **Create budgets** for specific initiatives, run by development & Exec teams, and **identify and apply for** potential funding sources
  - Consider application to the UCSB **'Social Justice Faculty'** grant (up to \$10,000)

Strategy 1.7: Research tools and strategies for JEDI in other institutions and organizations.

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - URGE pod collected many resources through its work together
  - Diversity Team co-chairs contacted heads of other synthesis centers and compiled advice and ideas, which informed the creation of this Strategic Plan
- *Future actions:*
  - **Review publicly-available resources** and/or **schedule conversations** with EDSIN (Environmental Data Science Inclusion Network), UCSB Office of Equal Opportunity & Discrimination Prevention, other synthesis centers, and other relevant orgs/institutions
  - Add these resources to the **shared Google Drive** folder

## NEW STRATEGIES for 2021:

Strategy 1.8: Provide a resource map for residents and WG members to foster a sense of belonging & inclusion.

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - The URGE pod drafted a [resource map](#), which will be adapted into the Welcome to Town website
  - Created a new **#nceas-residents Slack** channel where people can ask for, and offer, assistance around rides, vehicles, housing assistance, referrals, etc.
- *Future actions:*
  - Evaluate if NCEAS can/should carry out a local **assessment** from a JEDI and safety perspective to benefit our community (e.g., of safety of public transportation, hotels, parking lots, area around NCEAS)
  - Review and update the NCEAS **onboarding process** to make communication more strategically timed
  - Consider additional “welcome to NCEAS” **support, mentoring, or guidance** we can develop to better foster a culture of belonging and ensure that new arrivals are well-oriented to navigate (physically, logistically, administratively, etc) NCEAS and the SB community (e.g., coffee with community members, peer mentors, template for introductions at Klatch, new Slack subchannels as necessary)
  - Update [Welcome to Town website](#) w/ resources for new community members and prospective residents (based on URGE deliverables), including info related to health and wellness, professional development, a land acknowledgement, events, on- and off-campus social groups and communities, information on JEDI plans (with special attention to resources for different racial/ethnic groups, parents, women, people with disabilities, and other groups)

Strategy 1.9: Support Indigenous data governance in WGs and other NCEAS research

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - NCEAS hosted roundtable speaker to discuss Indigenous data governance in a **roundtable**
  - NCEAS URGE pod **self-educated** around this issue through readings & curriculum
- *Future actions:*
  - Incorporate FAIR/CARE principles for **indigenous data governance** into a guidance doc for NCEAS

Strategy 1.10: Ensure that everybody at NCEAS has a forum to report bias incidents and unacceptable behavior

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - Drafted a new Code of Conduct, with updated instructions about how to report unacceptable behavior and how NCEAS/UCSB will respond to such reports

- *Future actions:*
  - Upon community approval, finalize a new Code of Conduct & reporting policy and share on NCEAS website and Google Drive.
  - Integrate incident reporting form into NCEAS onboarding and orientation email

Strategy 1.11: Create best practices around coding & collaborative work that will ensure a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable work environment

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - The URGE pod identified this new strategy and outlined some actions around it.
- *Future actions:*
  - Touch base with **other groups** at NCEAS (e.g. ADC and Learning Hub staff) who are already developing (or have developed) this sort of guidance
  - Develop & consolidate **NCEAS best practices for coding and collaboration** to remove barriers to entry, and streamline analysis by leveraging shared knowledge (e.g., judgement-free, correct code with kindness/affirmation, rotate leadership opportunities, let everybody weigh in on design of software architecture/goals). These practices can be shared with WGs and residents

Strategy 1.12: Create guidance document about the language we use, and why.

- *Future actions:*
  - Research existing documents in this space, and explore possible problematic language used at NCEAS (e.g., learning vs. training, historically excluded vs. under-represented)
  - Draft NCEAS-specific guidance document.
  - Plan for annual audits of a guidance document (to keep it up-to-date)

## Goal 2: Support more diverse and inclusive working groups (WGs) at NCEAS.

Strategy 2.1: Require a short diversity statement from all WG proposals

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - No action was taken on this strategy this year.
- *Future actions:*
  - Check with Exec Team re: existing diversity statements in RFPs, and use this to craft a generic prompt for a **required diversity statement**, to be included in all future NCEAS WG RFPs
  - Require all WG selection committees to review proposals' diversity statement according to guidelines, and have each committee **formalize a Selection Plan**, to ensure equal opportunity and equity throughout the process

Strategy 2.2: Provide guidance and resources to WG Principal Investigators (PIs)

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - Some resources (and requirements) are provided to WG PIs, but these resources have not yet been 'standardized' across NCEAS programs
- *Future actions:*
  - **Review current materials** used by NCEAS programs to support WG collaboration & facilitation, and ID potential improvements for diversity outcomes.
  - **Develop an 'action plan'** for how to support and implement improvements or new strategies.

Strategy 2.3: Provide written Code of Conduct (and related guidance) to all WG members to promote an inclusive atmosphere

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - We reviewed and updated the Code of Conduct, including new policies for how complaints/reports are handled, and we have updated the process for sharing the Code of Conduct.
- *Future actions:*
  - **Share the new Code of Conduct** & reporting policy with all new WGs and provide time at the start of their stay to review materials.

Strategy 2.4: Collect & analyze diversity data on NCEAS WG and educational activities

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - URGE pod created a "[Demographic Data](#)" deliverable
  - The Executive Team is implementing synthesis WG surveys to collect some demographic data of WG participants.
  - We **investigated the legality** of collecting such data for NCEAS residents & employees. There is concern that administration of a similar survey to NCEAS staff and residents is prohibited under CA law, as employees receive "tangible benefit" via employment. However, it may be possible if such a survey is optional.
- *Future actions:*
  - **Monitor demographic data** from new WG survey instruments, and consider how to integrate and explore similar data from Learning Hub and other programs. Report data in aggregate form to ensure privacy of individual participants
  - **Further clarify laws** surrounding when we can ask for demographic data (see questions in [URGE deliverable](#))

NEW STRATEGY FOR 2021:

Strategy 2.5: Write and advertise WG RFPs so as to encourage applications from more diverse groups

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*

- URGE pod discussed this strategy and outlined plans.
- *Future actions:*
  - Develop **best practices for language in RFPs** and **advertisement** of funding opportunities. Offer center-wide guidance to all NCEAS projects, and develop a policy for implementation.
  - **Identify sources of supplemental funding** for proposal/WG participation for diverse groups (e.g., to compensate participants for their time) and develop language for including this funding in different forms

## Goal 3: Increase and support the diversity of NCEAS staff and researchers

Strategy 3.1: Advertise widely, and focus recruitment on channels that reach URG (Under-Represented Groups)

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - The NCEAS URGE pod worked towards all Goal 3 strategies via its Hiring Policy deliverable
  - Created a list of free & paid **forums, listservs, department contacts** (see #ShutDownSTEM brainstorm document)
  - Compiled a list of Twitter hashtags to be managed by personnel in charge of advertising positions (see “Opportunities for Future Recruitment Efforts at NCEAS” in URGE deliverable)
- *Future actions:*
  - Finalize the above lists and share them with NCEAS community
  - Develop **relationships** with organizations that can serve as a stream for future applicants
  - Commit Director’s **discretionary funds to support posting job ads** on paid forums that reach URGs
  - In the longer-term, **seek funding for paid advertising** on forums for URGE in STEM.
  - Compile advertising requirements by the UCSB Office of Equal Opportunity and Discrimination Prevention for transparency within NCEAS
  - Draft language about measurable steps NCEAS is taking towards JEDI goals, to include in hiring calls.

Strategy 3.2: Reduce bias in the hiring process

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - The NCEAS URGE pod worked towards all Goal 3 strategies via its Hiring Policy deliverable
  - Created guidance re: “**Conducting Interviews**” w/ reduced bias
  - ID’d templates for the UCSB Equal Employment Opportunity statement

- *Future actions:*
  - Create **guidance and process** for anonymizing applications before review and structuring the review process to minimize bias, to be shared with personnel in charge of advertising positions.
  - **Research validated and proven methods** (with HR), to minimize unintended consequences and ensure UC policy is not violated
  - Formalize **interview guidance** policy and share w/ NCEAS community.
  - Move beyond box-checking and **consider how we want to evaluate success** in terms of applicant pool diversity.
  - Explore options for **unconscious bias education** for anybody involved in reviewing applications; incorporate this into guidance document (See UCSB resources [here](#))

Strategy 3.3: Consider contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion when assessing job and internship applicants

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - The NCEAS URGE pod worked towards all Goal 3 strategies via its Hiring Policy deliverable
  - Drafted language regarding “Candidate Diversity Statement & Questions,” including guidance for evaluating these statements
- *Future actions:*
  - Formalize guidance regarding diversity statements and their evaluation, to be shared with personnel in charge of hiring. We determined that we cannot require a separate diversity statement for staff at UCSB, but can ask people to address **JEDI in cover letters**
  - Provide **guidance to applicants** on the application website.

Strategy 3.4: Evaluate diversity of applicants and hires at NCEAS

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - No action was taken on this strategy this year.
- *Future actions:*
  - **Compile and evaluate reports** that we get from HR at UCSB, with Michelle & Anthony.
  - Investigate how/where each applicant **hears about job** posting

NEW STRATEGY FOR 2021:

Strategy 3.5: Consider cohort hiring, to bring in groups of people to support one another.

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - This strategy was identified by the URGE pod.
- *Future actions:*
  - Seek out grant **funding** to make cohort hiring possible, and figure out creative



ways to make this happen (multiple different funding proposals but people all start around the same time)

- If/when cohort hiring is implemented, have a JEDI strategy in place for these' folks onboarding and integration into the community

## Goal 4: Recognize and engage with diverse perspectives and communities external to NCEAS

### Strategy 4.1: Engage in community outreach in Santa Barbara

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - No action was taken on this strategy this year, due to the pandemic.
- *Future actions:*
  - Create NCEAS **Community Outreach committee** to develop ideas & actions re: engagement w/ local schools, orgs, and volunteer opportunities

### Strategy 4.2: Increase diversity of Roundtable speakers

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - Organized a **special roundtable seminar series** (“Advancing Ecology and Environmental Data Science for a More Just and Equitable Future”). We provided honoraria for three distinguished BIPOC speakers who address the intersection of our fields and JEDI issues. The series was widely-advertised, and each talk attracted >100 attendees and many more views on YouTube.
- *Future actions:*
  - Host **seminar series annually**, and **seek funding** for honoraria AND travel.
  - With the roundtable organizers, discuss strategy for increasing diversity of **weekly roundtable speakers**.

### Strategy 4.3: Incorporate JEDI considerations in NCEAS' Art & Science initiatives

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - No action was taken on this strategy this year, although we discussed this strategy in the context of planning for the new NCEAS building.
- *Future actions:*
  - Encourage artists from URG to apply for the NCEAS **artist-in-residency** program.
  - Showcase art from such individuals in the **new building**.
  - Highlight work by **URG ecologists** through art and other displays.
  - Host an **exhibit exploring race and ecology**, with roundtables and discussions

Strategy 4.4: Support BIPOC-owned business in Santa Barbara for NCEAS catering and in other local purchase decisions

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - No action was taken on this strategy this year, due to the pandemic.
- *Future actions:*
  - Build on the research by the NCEAS community during #shutdownSTEM, plus the URGE pod's work in [Deliverable 7](#) to build a list of vendors and engage NCEAS staff in using this info in purchasing decisions.

Strategy 4.5: Encourage the use of land acknowledgements in presentations

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - Drafted a land acknowledgement that was used in virtual NCEAS events this year.
  - Members of the NCEAS community attended an Indigenous-run workshop on land acknowledgements
- *Future actions:*
  - With approval from Director / Exec Team, add acknowledgement to NCEAS website, shared drive, and inside new NCEAS building
  - Develop guidance and/or resource lists for how to engage & acknowledge indigenous communities in **publications and presentations** (e.g., land on which data were collected).
  - Consider how we might have more meaningful, proactive, and respectful engagement with indigenous groups in Santa Barbara and beyond.

## Goal 5: Make educational and learning opportunities more widely accessible

Strategy 5.1: Create scholarships or tuition waivers for URG participating in fee-based activities (e.g., NCEAS data science courses)

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - No action was taken on this strategy this year by the Diversity Team
- *Future actions:*
  - Determine guidelines and policies for **assessing applicant demographic info**, and incorporate into strategies for application review
  - Look into **funding opportunities/sources**, and ensure that requirements are vetted to ensure no violation of State or Federal law

#### Strategy 5.2: Publicize open-access resources on NCEAS website

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - No action was taken on this strategy this year by the Diversity Team
  - The NCEAS Learning Hub has made many open-access resources available [here](#) and [here](#)
- *Future actions:*
  - Assess if/how best to **circulate these resources more broadly** (e.g. outreach strategy)

#### Strategy 5.3: Develop and host workshops for URG in ecology and data science

- *Progress update (2020-2021):*
  - No action was taken on this strategy this year by the Diversity Team
- *Future actions:*
  - Look into **funding opportunities/sources**
    - See current SESYNC activities
    - Capitalize on [EDSIN](#) and [Power of Data](#)

#### NEW STRATEGY FOR 2021:

#### Strategy 5.4: Increase accessibility of NCEAS educational programs.

- *Future actions:*
  - Identify ways to aid participants who may be in remote locations and/or with limited Internet access.
  - Explore best practices for providing closed captioning/subtitles for remote training.
  - Ensure that training materials and websites are compatible with assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers)

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## Reference

### **2021 community activity: Unlearning Racism in Geosciences ([URGE](#))**

- NCEAS Pod included 18 members of NCEAS community
  - Met biweekly for 16 weeks to discuss anti-racism readings & video lectures
  - Was very well-aligned w/ Diversity Team objectives & activities
- Via collaborative research & discussions, the pod **[developed 8 deliverables](#)** with tangible ideas & proposals for new activities and/or policy changes that could further anti-racist activities at NCEAS
  - [Sample pod deliverable](#)

### **New UCSB Associate Vice Chancellor of Diversity Equity, and Inclusion:**

- “The UCSB Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office is excited to announce the appointment of [Dr. Sharon Tettegah](#) as an AVC for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.”