

CERF Broadening Participation Comprehensive Plan

The Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) is dedicated to broadening participation in coastal and estuarine science and management. Rising TIDES (Toward an Inclusive, Diverse, and Enriched Society) is a comprehensive program for enhancing the diversity and inclusion of our scientific society and CERF conferences. As a scientific society, CERF respects and values the many facets of diversity. These include differences among individuals in social identity such as race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender identity and expression, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, and socioeconomic background, as well as differences in discipline, career path, and life experience. From these differences arise a wide range of perspectives and approaches to problem-solving. CERF is also committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all; CERF has developed a robust Event Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics that does not tolerate discrimination, bullying, or harassment in any form.

Rising TIDES focuses on increasing the diversity of our society and improving our capacity to harness the power of that diversity in all its forms. Just as a rising tide lifts all boats, as CERF is enriched by diverse backgrounds and viewpoints, the relevance and effectiveness of coastal and estuarine science in tackling complex ecological and societal issues will be enhanced. Broadening participation is also a social justice issue; CERF acknowledges the biases that have limited underrepresented minority engagement, and through this comprehensive plan charts a path toward a diverse and inclusive society.

One of CERF's primary objectives is to broaden participation for the society by promoting an inclusive culture and opportunities for underrepresented and underserved minorities in coastal and estuarine science at all career stages. The Broadening Participation Council developed this Comprehensive Plan to enact this vision. The plan is based upon input received from CERF members and attendees during facilitated workshops and guided discussions at the 2017 CERF conference. The plan is focused on three categories: building **representational diversity**, or the proportional representation of underrepresented minorities within CERF membership, activities, and disciplines; committing to **structural diversity**, or the incorporation of diversity into leadership, policies, and practices; and fostering **interactional diversity**, or opportunities for people with diverse backgrounds and life experiences to interact in meaningful ways.

- I. Building representational diversity: bringing a more diverse set of people to CERF and the discipline
 - a. *Invite and Include*
 - i. Invite underrepresented and underserved minority high school and early college students to Affiliate Society meetings, the CERF Biennial Conferences, and other relevant CERF events.
 - ii. Continue to provide assistance to CERF members and attendees from emerging and developing nations by providing discounted membership and conference registration.

- iii. Continue outreach to underrepresented minority students in environmental sciences through venues such as SACNAS - The National Diversity in STEM Conference.
- iv. Seek a diverse pool of keynote and featured speakers at Affiliate Society meetings and CERF Biennial Conferences.
- v. Connect to local minority communities.
 - 1. Provide volunteer opportunities within the local community.
 - 2. Involve local underrepresented and underserved minority students in CERF and Affiliate Society activities.
 - 3. Ensure that the CERF Biennial Conference and Affiliate Society meetings seek connections to the communities in which they are located, and bring diverse local perspectives into the conversation.
 - 4. Connect with local affinity groups for exposure and knowledge sharing.
- b. *Enable*
 - i. Seek sources of funding to provide more travel grants for underrepresented and underserved minorities to attend Affiliate Society meetings and CERF Biennial Conferences.
 - ii. Continue and expand the Rising TIDES conference mentoring program for underrepresented and underserved minority students, both during and outside of the CERF conference.
- II. Committing to structural diversity: reflecting the commitment to diversity in practice, policy, and governance throughout the organization
 - a. *Govern with DEI in Mind*
 - i. Maintain a Broadening Participation Council across Governing Board cycles.
 - ii. Revisit policies such as the Event Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics to ensure they continue to support broadening participation efforts.
 - iii. Promote diversity throughout all levels of the organization, including CERF leadership.
 - b. *Infuse DEI Everywhere Possible*
 - i. Integrate the Broadening Participation Council's work into the CERF Biennial Conference and Affiliate Society meeting planning.
 - ii. Engage the Broadening Participation Council across Governing Board initiatives.
 - iii. Leverage the work of like-minded organizations to enhance CERF's broadening participation efforts through the development of partnerships and collaborations.
- III. Interactional diversity: increase the capacity of diverse individuals to interact and to realize the benefits of diversity
 - a. *Educate, Train, and Empower Members to Practice DEI*

- i. Define respectful behavior and ensure that conference attendees agree to definitions via a robust Event Code of Conduct.
 - ii. Organize a plenary session at the Biennial Conference about DEI.
 - iii. Provide training for CERF members interested in broadening participation in coastal and estuarine sciences, such as hiring for workplace diversity, allyship, and raising awareness of unconscious biases.
 - iv. Initiate discussions of DEI in CERF newsletters, social media, and other venues.
- IV. Measuring progress: develop metrics to evaluate CERF's progress in increasing and achieving diversity

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